

Poultry Notes for July

AN ADVERTISER in The Progressive Farmer has had trouble with a customer over some guinea eggs. He breeds the old, established Pearl guineas, a breed known over the whole country, and that almost every one has in mind when speaking of "guineas." A lady ordered eggs from him, but her mind was set on white guineas, a variety which has comparatively few representatives. Unfortunately the good lady omitted stating it was white guineas she wanted, and asked no questions. Now she is mad because the guineas are the good old kind and considers herself badly treated. Well, although there are six varieties of Plymouth Rocks, no one who ordered eggs from an advertisement of Plymouth Rocks, without stipulating for White, Buff, Columbian or other variety, would have any complaint if they got the Barred Rocks. The lady who got the Pearl guineas has much less basis for complaint. The moral is, exercise care in describing the breed and variety wanted when ordering.

A buyer of eggs—Rhode Island Reds, for hatching—makes a big kick because all the chicks are not alike in color. This is another common fault with inexperienced poultry raisers, expecting uniformity of color of chicks of colored breeds. We have been raising Red Sussex, an older, better established breed than any American, and that are much deeper colored than the Rhode Island Reds. Now of both hen and incubator hatches, from eggs of absolutely typical birds, male and female, we have had chicks, even light buff, dark buff, striped and dark. At three to four months old, all had developed into uniform deep mahogany red and chestnut red—some of the lightest chicks among the deepest colored at four months. Lack of experience is the trouble in almost all cases of such complaints, and our advice to such is, be patient—let the birds develop.

Experienced poultry breeders, men handling pure-bred stock only, men thoroughly versed in mating, breeding and judging standard bred poultry—never expect, even from the best of matings, to have uniform results, either in color or form, and the novice in poultry raising should not be too much disappointed should he have similar results. Forty to fifty per cent of hatches that will score high enough to serve as breeders, we would consider a very good out-turn.

The breeding season is practically over, and the farm poultryman or woman, with facilities for changing runs for all his poultry, both young and full grown, has a decided advantage over the city or village breeder, compelled to use the same ground continuously.

The males and females should now be separated, giving each a good wide range, well shaded, and far enough apart to be "out of sight." These runs, beside shade, should have an ample supply of succulent green feed, and plenty fresh water. Under such conditions, molting will be earlier and more perfect than if sexes are together, and all will get needed rest from a strenuous breeding season.

When so separating the sexes is the best time for culling—severely—both breeders and mere layers. If proper records of pullets have been kept, it will be easy to discard the poor producers and reserve for the next breeding season those only who promise results. Judge by "their works." Hens that as yearlings have proved good, consistent breeders, should be carried over at least for one more year.

The early hatched cockerels by this time are—or should be—fairly well

developed; at least enough for reasonably safe scoring for points as breeders. Cull—cull—cull—keep none that are not up to standard in type—in color—and in minor points. Like produces like, generally, and birds of abnormal type, or off color, or with bad combs or wattles or other defects, will not likely produce offspring of better type. All such "off" birds can best be used by caponizing, and given good runs to develop until fall months when the fattening process can be started.

These flocks, turned out for summer, will not need houses in our Southern climate. Roosts sheltered by a good roof—but with no walls at all, will give the very best results, if the run is in an orchard, or a fairly open wood. Breeding stock so handled should reach the fall breeding season in the best of shape—vigorous, healthy, fully developed and feathered—and the expense account will have been small.

While the winter yards are empty is a good time for thorough overhauling. Have lice and mites been troublesome? Now is the time to get rid of them. Fumigate, whitewash (with hot, medicated wash). Clean out every particle of litter and if possible, take up three or four inches of the dirt floors. Replace with clean soil or sand, and use slaked lime liberally.

In making repairs or changes, or building new, keep well in mind the open front. Almost all our Southern poultry houses are too small, much too close, and lacking in light as well as ventilation. If you have no experience in such matters, get the United States Agricultural Department's free bulletin No. 574, which tells all about poultry buildings—or buy one of the many low-priced books on the subject. It will prove a real economy—to learn how—and build right.

What a comfort to a hen, in hot summer days, to find a good broad roofed shelter, with cool water in clean vessels, and a feeder full of feed. Doesn't need to be a fancy, ornamental structure either. The shade, shelter—is the thing. Be sure you provide these for your fowls' comfort.

Don't overlook a good supply of green stuff—fresh and succulent. It is too late—or too early—for rape, but corn or sorghum sowed thick, or milo or Kafir either, will when fairly started be splendid succulent feed for the hot months.

The runs—winter runs—can now be well cultivated, after liming—and seeded down to green crops in good time before restocking for winter. Rape is one of the best green feeds, and a little later, Abruzzi rye.

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