

The Poultry Yard.

THE PROFITABLE HEN-DUCK RAISING.

So many farmers and non-farmers dabble in hens. So many have such severe attacks of "hen fever" every spring that it does seem as if the market would be flooded with chicken roasts in autumn and eggs the following winter. And yet it never is. There are too many "absolutely necessary" things overlooked by those would-be egg farmers. Too many people being ignorant, leave off ignorant and end in dead failures.

No hen is a success that does not yield her owner \$1.00 per year. A first-class ordinary hen, blooded, but not fancy, should show \$1.25 to her credit the first year. And she will do it under conditions, and these conditions to be followed in season and out, are embodied in the following six rules:

(1) Good, healthy, pure-blooded stock. (2) Constant, unvarying care, summer and winter. (3) A variety of clean, egg-producing food. (4) Clean water always on hand. (5) Clean houses and yards. (6) Grit, oyster shells, and charcoal if confined.

Pure-bred stock is not a necessity in itself, nor for one year alone. Excellent results may be obtained from crossing a pure blood and a mongrel or of two thorough-breds. But the next year deterioration begins and the fowls especially grow scrubby and poor. In fact, you will soon get scrubs and eventually run-out stock. Nearly any fowl will do well if properly cared for. We do not advocate fine feathers alone. The general utility fowl is the one for the farmer and any quick maturing bird from a good laying strain is the one we want. This good laying strain is of the greatest importance, for it is the egg yield that tells. The poultry is a helpful adjunct, but it is the constant stream of eggs that is the money getter. The profitable hen is the pullet that begins to lay before cold weather.

It is well to separate the pullets or at least the older ones from the rest about the first of September and begin special feeding. Few hens thrive or lay well on an entire corn or over-fattening diet. There must be a balanced ration, and the following bill of fare, with slight changes, has given us satisfactory results for several years.

In the morning all mash is fed that the fowls will clean up in five minutes. This made from a three part meal, composed of corn meal, wheat bran and oat meal. About one-third part of boiled potatoes (or less) is added and all stirred to a crumbly mass. Every other morning a measure of meat meal is added, for even in summer hens in confinement (yarded) do not get enough animal food. This mash is fed in long, narrow troughs, easily cleaned and convenient. At noon, feed whole oats of the best quality and the night feed is wheat five parts to two parts of corn.

To the mash meat meal or beef scrap is added the year around, but the ideal food is green cut bone. Hens will double the winter egg yield when this is fed. Green cut bone can be handled and used very well in cold weather, but is not so convenient for summer use for the reason that it becomes spoiled very quickly, and it is then very dangerous to feed to the hens.

Duck Raising.

Every farm should have at least a few ducks. They are easily reared, require only a small amount of food, and always make delicious

—eating or profitable sellers. Ducklings pip the shell in about twenty-eight days, and emerge on the twenty-ninth. It is usually well not to disturb the mother for a day after the ducklings are hatched, as they are very tender during the first few hours of their life and are easily chilled or crushed. On the thirtieth day remove the ducks to a warm, dry coop, and feed them a bran and cornmeal mash with a little fine grit or sand added. See also that they are provided with plenty of water in a shallow dish, but so arranged that they cannot wet themselves, for cold and dampness are fatal to them. We raise all our ducks by hand for if allowed to run with a duck or hen, the parent bird will travel too fast and far for them, and they will drop by the wayside. Have a pen adjoining the coop to allow them to exercise in. Feed them always in this pen and not in the coop. Have the coop bedded with dry litter, and keep them in this coop at night and on all wet days. At the end of six weeks they will be large enough to be turned out and roam at will, but should always be housed at night until they are fully grown.—E. G. Warden, in *Industrious Hen*.

POULTRY NOTES.

A good way to secure a start of pure bred chickens is to send for day-old chicks. Day-old chicks can be shipped for several hundred miles and come through alive and in perfect condition. The business is increasing.

Bowel trouble and other ailments of chicks may be lessened by providing the chicks with sanitary feeding troughs into which the chicks cannot step with their feet. Feeding chicks on the floor of the brooder where they will pick up their own droppings is one great cause of disease.

Hatch and raise enough chickens and other poultry to make it worth while. Next fall when the flock is ready for housing and laying more houses can be erected. Next winter it will be pleasant and profitable work to feed and care for the hens. The poultry business is no longer a joke among people who are awake to the best methods of handling the flock.

The farmer who is willing to work with poultry can make capital out of the high cost of living. Eggs the first of April this year were twenty cents a dozen on almost all local markets, from 30 to 50 per cent higher than most years, with market poultry correspondingly high. If the prices of feeds and foods remain high, eggs will be a good price all summer, next fall, and next winter again.

Extra high prices are being received this spring for pure-bred eggs, stock and day-old chicks. The man who is in the poultry business right, with pure-bred stock, and enough to fill large orders is sure to make a balance on the right side.

A successful poultryman says that it is his aim to make his hens lay as nearly two hundred eggs a year as possible. To accomplish this he houses them well and supplies them with all of the very best feed they will eat. The more they will eat the better he is pleased, since the quantity eaten by the flock determines to a degree the quantity of eggs laid.

Oatmeal, rolled oats, hard-boiled eggs or stale bread soaked in milk and squeezed dry are excellent chick rations.—Selected.

Be strong: be worthy of the grace Of God and fill thy destined place. —Wordsworth.

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