

The Poultry Yard.

PRACTICAL POULTRY POINTERS.

There are a number of causes for some eggs hatching much sooner than others. A perfectly fresh egg will hatch in nineteen days, if well hovered, while one that has been kept two weeks will often not get out until the full twenty-one days. One hen will stick to her nest "closer than a brother," while her sister by her side will worry about, be on and off frequent, stand part of the time, and perform various stunts that tend to retard the hatch of eggs, while the one that attends strictly to business will get most of hers out before the allotted time, if they were fresh ones.

Our best layers of large eggs are not found among the tight and muscular types of individuals, neither are they found, as a rule, in the very heavy, fat specimens. You will find the ones that are giving us large eggs at the rate of 60 per cent of a daily product, are of a mellow, loose, type, rather soft in the posterior parts. Such looseness of make-ups is conducive to the production of eggs, and large ones as well, if carefully and judiciously fed, and not allowed to go to bed hungry. The rations must be varied and of a variety, yet the changes should not be too radical.

Leave no stone unturned to make your chicks put on all the growth possible. Remember, that one hundred pullets matured in that way, without being stunted one single day of their lives, will be worth more to you than twice that number that have had to fight for an existence all their days. The prime of health means the maximum of profit to the owner.

SHAPE AND STAMINA AND THEN COLOR.

Many an anxious breeder has been greatly disappointed in the development of his chicks, resulting from injudicious matings. They seem to lack in size and stamina and are all too slow in maturing.

Many of us give entirely too much importance to the points of color, comb, eyes, earlobes, etc., to the neglect and detriment of size, form and general make-up, and especially in the larger breeds, where size and shape of carcass is so very important.

Many a long-legged, ill-shaped male is used as a breeder, simply because he has fine markings and perhaps a good comb, utterly ignoring the more important qualities of size, shape and general all-round practical qualities. What we most need in the general-purpose fowl is a good, stout understanding, shanks rather heavy, good, bulky-shaped body, full breast, broad back, etc. These points, with good color, would constitute a fowl worth having, and if he came from a well-established family, the results of his breeding, if well mated, would be all that might be desired or expected.

Too much importance cannot be placed upon these points. What would you think of a breeder of other kinds of live stock who would run all to color points, and pay but little attention to flesh-producing points? The fact of the matter is, he would run them all out at the little end of the horn. A lot of scrubs. It should be so with fowls; size, form and stamina should be the objective points. Do not understand me as decrying or objecting to good color in thoroughbred fowls, far from it. I would say, give us a line of breeding poultry to the development of all the nobler qualities of the fowl in flesh and form, together with the

best possible attainments in color, consistent with them, sacrificing a point on comb, or color, rather than one size or form. For, as the breeding of farm and commercial poultry is the stimulus to the breeding of more and better poultry, it should be the aim of every intelligent breeder of high-class poultry to breed conducive to the interests of the farmer and market poulterer, thus eliciting a trade from those who will make the fancy poultry business take on a regular boom, resulting in ultimate good to all concerned. Not only is it essential to keep our fowls well up and established in size and form to make them more valuable in a market point of view, but how essential to the health of our flocks to select for our breeding birds those of the most growth, largest and best developed bodies, which is indicative of a good, robust constitution.—Southern Ruralist.

WHEN THE HATCHING SEASON IS OVER.

After the hatching is through with and there are no more hens to be set will come quite a trying time with those who give their poultry proper attention. With many, after the number of chicks that are desired are hatched, the flock, or rather the hens, have little or no attention paid to them. Summer is a very trying season on the hens, and on good care at this time depends their usefulness as profitable winter layers.

There will be hens that will want to set during the summer, and they will be persistent in their efforts to do so. They will get on the nest in the hen-houses, much to the annoyance of the hens that desire to go on the nest to lay eggs. These setters will fight away the hens, causing them to drop their eggs outside of the nests. Under such circumstances, the eggs are often broken, and the hens, unless prompt remedies are observed, will soon become a demoralized lot of egg-eaters. The owner of the flock may have become quite disgusted with the many hens that persist in getting broody when they are not wanted, and concludes to "let 'em set." He hears, perhaps, several times a day considerable cackling and fussing in the hen-house and thinks about the broody hens and does not investigate. After a while there is a notable decrease in egg yield. It is concluded, "well they must have a rest sometime," else, he "guesses" they have commenced to moult. He may be a couple of weeks in finding out that his neglect in breaking up or removing the broody hens is ruining the good habits of the other hens. Broody hens should not be allowed to occupy the nests in the hen-house day after day in summer. When such is the case, they become rank sources of disseminating vermin, both mites and lice, in the hen-house.

It is not as some suppose an act of kindness or humanity to allow these out-of-reason broodies to take possession of the nests in the hen-house. They suffer more in the hot hen-houses than they would if they were broken up at once. When all the facts are, therefore, considered, that they are liable to demoralize the flock and start egg-eating, that their presence greatly encourage vermin nuisances, and that it is really cruel to let them set on from day to day, it would seem that intelligent poultrymen would promptly break them up. There should be a yard especially for out-of-season broody hens. Have a roomy shed in it. Keep the broody hens out of this shed during the day. Have no nests in the

part of the shed where the broody hens roost. Such treatment will break them up in a few days. When the hatching season is over all the male birds should be kept by themselves if it is desired to keep any of them over for another season. If not they should be disposed of as soon as possible, for they are an expense that greatly keeps down the profits. It is a good plan to put the broody hens in a yard with a male bird when wishing to break them up.

As far as possible arrange to keep the chickens of different ages in flocks by themselves.

Do not conclude, because the hens have a large range in summer, that they do not need any food but what they can find. While they may get along, they will not be kept in prime condition when fall comes, and you will have to get them in good condition again before you can expect any eggs from them. Use good judgment in feeding hens in summer, both as regards quantity and quality of food.

The feeding of the growing chickens should continue right along with a varied diet. There is little danger of over-feeding if good sound wholesome food is used.

No matter how strictly the rules of cleanliness are observed, or how strictly all sanitary precautions are lived up to, on the best regulated poultry farms, there will be occasionally ailing or lousy fowls or chicks. Close observation, therefore, of the poultry, as well as the premises, becomes necessary. A sleepy or listless hen or chick should be considered a suspicious one. Such should receive prompt attention. Treat for lice, whether they are found or not; use either insect powder or lard.

Of the many essentials to be observed in summer none is more important than furnishing a supply of fresh drinking water, which should always be kept in a shady place. The water should be renewed several times during the day, not by pouring in enough water to fill each vessel up again with what water there is already in them. Each time they should be emptied and filled with fresh water. Wash the vessels out every morning or evening. Spade up a space of fresh ground for a dust bath every two or three days. If the soil is not fine and mellow, make it to with a rake same as you would for a seed-bed, then see how the hens will enjoy it.

Clean the hen-house every morning, and scatter a little air-slacked lime—properly done there will be no objectionable odor. Burn up the old nest material and replenish with fresh material, and if you can secure some tobacco stems, such as cigar-makers throw away, let the nest be composed of one-third of them. Some people use camphorated moth balls, such as are used to keep the moths away from clothes, to put in the nests in summer, one in each nest is enough. Every other week remove all the nests and roosts, and go over them with a brush dipped in kerosene. Of course all this necessitates work, but it is an investment that will pay later on. Good summer care of the poultry lays the foundation for good returns in the winter when the best prices are realized for all poultry products. It is now in order to mark the most vigorous growers of the early broods to be retained for stock purposes. Sell off the early cockerels, after selecting these desired to be kept, as soon as possible. If you have properly studied the breed you have, you should know quite early which are the most promising and are nearest to standard requirements.—E. G. Wardin, Charlotte, N. C.



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