

Poultry Department

Conducted by Uncle Joe.

JUST CHICKENS.

Poultry being more generally kept than any other live stock, the advantage of keeping good fowls should be more generally known and acted upon. I know that very many intelligent farmers and villagers keep common or scrub fowls because they believe pure-bred poultry is only for those who keep fowls for recreation without any regard whatever to the loss of profit accruing therefrom. Thus they pass judgment upon good poultry.

But the judges referred to are in mistake. Blooded stock is the proper foundation upon which to build our hopes of large profits. The majority of readers will agree with me in this assertion without argument, as their own experience has convinced them that more profit is obtained from pure-bred cows, horses, hogs, and fowls than from scrub stock of any kind. But lest some be still skeptical, let me state a few facts:

Standard breeds lay more eggs. See records of the last egg laying contest with Wyandottes, Leghorns, Minorcas, and Spanish with large records to their credit.

Standard breeds lay larger eggs. See the size of eggs laid by Minorcas, Houdans, Brahamas, and others; also standard-bred ducks, turkeys, and geese.

Standard breeds grow more rapidly. Watch the growth of Brahamas, Rocks, Leghorns, Bronze, and White Holland turkeys and Pekin ducks.

Standard breeds mature earlier. Leghorns lay at four months, and many of the other breeds at five months and six months.

Standard breeds attain greater size. See Langshans, Javas, Cockins, Brahamas, and Orpington, and many others. Scrubs don't weigh seven to ten pounds for hens and eight to thirteen pounds for cocks.

Standard breeds are the best table fowls. Look at the breast development of a Cornish Indian Game and all the Game fowl family, the delicacy of the Wyandotte, the richness of the Red, and the toothsome of an eight weeks' old Barred Plymouth Rock with cream gravy.

Standard breeds are the hardiest. If acclimated to the section of country, no native beauty or old blue hen can be healthier or withstand more rigors of atmospheric changes.

Need I say anything on the score of looks? I think not, for we all have an eye appreciative of the beautiful, wherever seen, and the great crowds lingering about a fine display of poultry proves that we do like the beautiful forms and pretty feathering of pure breeds of poultry found in our country.

If this were not true, if more of it were true, it would nevertheless be a fact that our farmers would be profited in dispensing with their scrub stock, if for this reason alone. We all know that we will care for that which we take pride in. If a man spends money for good poultry, he will, as a rule, attend to it properly—housing, feeding, etc.—in most approved manner, and as a natural result the stock does well and makes good return. It is just like putting a new man on an old, run-down farm, putting new tools at the work, a new dog on the trail, a new top in the child's hands, or a new gown upon the maiden; it all tends to put new life into the thing, and new and better results always follow.

The farmer who now, as at any

time in the future sees his opportunity and grasps it, will tie to standard-bred poultry. He will see that such is better for all purposes for which poultry is kept. He will see, too, that the wives, the sons, and daughters, even the hired man of the farmers who appreciate good poultry, are more enthusiastic in the work of the farm and more contented with their lot, and their work; seeing all this, he will get the standard breeds of all such fowls as are adapted to the farm.

The Sitting Hen.

The sitting hen must be protected from the intrusion of other hens if you make her sitting profitable. Broody hens insist many times upon sitting several deep. They, too, have fussy notions that are hard to comprehend, but they must be managed. There is no other way. If left to sit where they please and go and come when they choose, soon there will be a nest of broken eggs, fouled nests and an entire loss. They should be caged in upon their nests in some manner, fed and watered daily and given an outing. I attend to mine in the afternoon. They eat and drink and dust and then return to business. Where one has a large flock a room for sitting hens is the best arrangement, with a small yard for exercise.

When chicks are hatched, coops should be placed on new ground, other than that used the previous season, coop floors cleaned and sides whitewashed, and then begins the work of rearing the chicks. Careful watch is kept, and must be for lice. They are the cause of more loss than anything else. People grow tired of the cry of "look for lice" whenever they ask, "What can ail my chickens; I keep losing them so," and are persistently met with the reply that the likelihood of lice being at the foundation of the entire trouble. Nine times out of ten all losses may be attributed to the depredations of lice upon young and old. Dampness and chill kill young chicks rapidly, but with a good mother hen, provided with warm, dry coops, the chicks should thrive.

QUIZZES.

Question: "I have some cockerels that carry their tails on the side. What makes them do it, and can I remedy it?"

Answer: This is wry tail, and I would advise you to sell or eat them. Never breed bolrds with awry tail. There is no remedy that I know of. It is sometimes caused by hens stepping on the chicks when young.

Question: "For some time I have been having trouble with my chicken-house being damp. The birds do not do well and seem to have colds most of the time. The ground is a little low and I wonder if I had better move the house to higher ground?"

Answer: It is certain that you will have trouble just as long as the house is damp. If the ground is very damp I would advise that it be moved to higher ground. Sometimes a place can be made dry by attention to drainage or maybe by filling in the floor of the house with gravel. Make it about six inches higher than the ground outside. Try the open front house.

Question: "Am bothered with

some of my hens being broody and cannot 'brake them up.' Want to keep them laying until March 1, and then begin hatching. What would you suggest?"

Answer: It is the natural inclination of a hen to become broody after she has laid her first clutch of eggs. If you cannot stop them by shutting them up, would suggest that you confine them in a small coop with a floor of slats. This makes them roost all of the time and they will soon stop sitting.

Question: "My hens are picking the combs of each other. What can I do? I feed on good mixed feed, but they are making a great deal of trouble for me?"

Answer? This is caused by lack of animal food in some cases, and for want of exercise in others. I take it your fowls are yarded, and having nothing to do, get into mischief. Make a scratching pen for them, and throw all grain feed in the litter and make them scratch. You might feed them some meat about twice a week.

Question: "What breed do you think lays the best?"

Answer: There is no best laying breed. It's the strain more than the breed that are the best layers. Some strains of White Leghorns are great layers, while other strains of the same breed are poor layers. If you are after eggs, start in and build up a strain that will produce in quantities. You cannot get the two hundred egg hen at once, but by careful breeding you can soon attain it. It's all in knowing how.

Question: "Please tell me some good way to fumigate?"

Answer: Burn sulphur in the hen-house. Put a few live coals in an old iron pot or other vessel, place the sulphur on this, and shut up the house or coop tight, and let it remain so for several hours.

Question: "What color egg does a Rhode Island Red lay?"

Answer: A brown egg somewhat like Plymouth Rock or Brahma lays. All non-sitters lay a white shelled egg, and sitters lay a brown or tinted egg.

Question: "I have a hen that is sick. Stands around in a UNIN—17 corner, eyes closed and feathers ruffled. Very light in weight and eats little?"

Answer: This looks like inflammation of the intestines. It may be due to improper feeding, poisons, worms, lime or paint. Isolate the bird and disinfect the coop. Give one-tenth grain tablet of calomel three times daily. Keep warm and feed bread crumbs, boiled rice and boiled milk.

Question: "How can you tell a male from a female after the chicks are eight weeks old?"

Answer: The comb in the male develops more rapidly than that of the female and the sexes can usually be distinguished by the greater prominence of the male comb, and, contrary to what the average amateur supposes, the tail of the female with chicks of this age of ten shows great development. A little careful observation will soon give one the knowledge necessary to distinguish sexes.

Question: "What is the cause of spots and streaks of blood in fresh eggs? I sell a good many eggs to private families, and do not like to deliver such eggs.

The hens appear perfectly healthy?"

Answer: It is not uncommon to get eggs with spots of blood in them, and I do not know of any way to avoid it entirely. The trouble is, no doubt, due to a slight irritation of the egg organs, resulting from exceptionally heavy laying, laying unusually large eggs, or it may result from an over-fat condition. Usually only one or two fowls in the flock will lay eggs of this kind, and if the trouble persists, I would advise you to find out which they are and remove them. This is the only sure way of getting rid of the trouble.

Question: "What is the cause of sores coming on the legs of two of my best roosters just below the spurs? After a time the sores disappear and the legs swell between the foot and the spur, but the birds do not go lame?"

Answer: Your description of the affection is hardly sufficient to warrant rendering a definite opinion, but it indicates trouble of a rheumatic nature. Keep the fowls in dry, clean quarters where they will get a reasonable amount of exercise and plenty of green food. Anoint the affected parts with carbolated vaseline or camphorated sweet oil. Give internally twenty grains of Epsom salts followed by thirty grains of carbonate of soda (baking soda), in each quart of drinking water.

BUCKWHEAT CAKES THAT HUSBANDS LIKE.

The Woman's Home Companion has been collecting recipes of the favorite dishes of husbands. A number of these recipes have been published, including one for buckwheat cakes. It is said to be an extraordinary recipe and is furnished by a woman in Massachusetts:

"Four cupfuls of warm water, 2 tablespoonfuls of molasses, nearly 3 cupfuls of buckwheat-meal, 1 teaspoonful of salt, nearly 1 cupful of Indian meal, and 1-2 cake of compressed yeast. Scald the Indian meal with just enough water to swell it. When cool, add this to the buckwheat with the measure of warm water; beat till all are well mixed. To this add salt, molasses, and yeast, which should be dissolved in a little water. Beat all together for five or six minutes, set in a warm place to rise overnight. A pitcher is very convenient to pour the batter from when making the cakes. Cover the pitcher containing the batter with a thick cloth overnight. In the morning beat well, and set the batter near the fire for a second rising. Buckwheats are not perfection without soda, which should be added whether the cakes are sour or not, but not till just before they are baked. When the breakfast is on the table, dissolve 1 even teaspoonful of soda in a little warm water, stir it well into the batter, and cook at once. Serve the cakes as quickly as possible from the griddle. Indian meal makes buckwheats more tender than flour. They are much better made with milk than water."

The widow had just announced her engagement.

"But, my dear Maria," said her friend, "you don't mean to tell me that you intend marrying a man you've only known for two weeks?"

"Oh, yes," said the happy widow "I can easily overcome that objection in time. I hope to know him tolerably well after we have been married a couple of years."

Avoid the public drinking cup. It is a germ vender.