Protein Value In Poultry Feed Described

While protein analyses of broiler mashes guaranteed by the manufactures have changed little during the past four years a study of a recent report by the State Laboratory Board of Agriculture reveals that the protein actually found in broiler mashes during the past year is greater than it was four years ago, according to A. E. Tomhave, Animal Husbandman and Research Poultryman at the University of Delaware.

"The situation as revealed by the report is to the advantage of the broiler producer because the amount of protein in the ration determines to a great extent the rate of growth," Tomhave said. "The keen competition between feed dealers in the broiler area is probably responsible for the spread between the actual protein content of the broiler mashes and the guaranteed analysis. The higher protein content of the broiler mashes produces faster growth in broilers and this, after all, is what interests the broiler producer, provided the feed is not too high in price," he pointed out.

"This increase of the actual protein content of broiler mashes has not taken place in one year," Tomhave stated. "A study of the reports from the State Laboratory for the last four years indicate that this increase in protein content of broiler mashes has been a gradual development."

The average protein guarantee of ten broiler mashes sold in 1934 was 17.10 per cent. The actual analyses determined by the State Laboratory was 18.29 per cent or 1.19 per cent greater than the guaranteed analysis. In 1937 the protein guarantee of the same ten broiler mashes averaged 17.55 per cent as guaranteed by the feed companies. The actual analysis of the ten broiler mashes was found to be 19.53 per cent, or nearly two per cent greater than the guarantee of the feed companies. In the years 1935 and 1936 the average guarantee of the broiler mashes under consideration was 17.29 and 17.38 per cent respectively, and the actual analysis was found to be 18.61 and 18.86 per cent. These figures show a gradual increase from year to year in the protein content of broiler mashes sold.

In Dorchester Gardens

Nearly every gardener who tries to raise seedlings indoors faces the discouraging loss of numerous plants through damping off. This disease is inherent in almost any kind of soil and many methods have been used to control it—with varying degrees of success. Now a simpler and less expensive way has been worked out at the Agricultural Experiment Station.

In a series of experiments carried on over a period of three years, it has been found that a larger number of healthy seedlings of many kinds of vegetables and flowers may be raised in sand than in soil.

Damping-off destroys seedlings in the initial stages of growth. Either the sprouts fail entirely to emerge from the ground, or the young plants collapse and die a short time after they come up. The fungi causing the trouble thrive upon the organic materials which all fertile soils contain. They are harmless until they come into contact with the germinating seed or with the succulent stem of the seedling. Then they become parasitic and attack the living organisms.

For years growers and home gardeners have been using all kinds of devices to prevent loss caused by damping-off. Many, including probably the majority of commercial horticulturists, resort to some sort of seed or soil treatment, or a combination of both.

Unfortunately, any attempt to insure a good stand of seedlings in soil entails much care and skill, frequently a great deal of apparatus, and sometimes considerable expense. And after all this, the grower often attains only partial success.

The new method is extremely simple. It calls for the use of sand that has been washed clean in hot water (160 Fahrenheit or higher). Any kind of sand may be used. In recent experiments natural sands from the seashore or from inland pits seemed to be superior to the pure quartz variety. The sand should be put in a pan with hot water, stirring thoroughly, and then pouring off the murky residue. This is repeated three or more times until the wash-water is clear.

After washing, the sand is placed at once to a depth of two or more inches in clean flats, pots or crocks, with some arrangement for slow drainage. The next step is to sprinkle a nutrient solution of plant food over the surface. It is well known that green plants require certain elements for growth. In this method, however, the addition of only two—potassium and nitrogen—is needed to carry the seedlings up to the transplanting stage.

As soon as the nutrient is added, the seeds may be sowed broadcast or drilled in rows and covered with a shallow layer of washed sand. No seed treatments are necessary to control damping-off when this method is used. The depth of planting depends in general on the size of the seed. Large seeds are covered deep enough so that they will not be washed up before germination. Very small ones are barely covered from sight. The surface of the sand is now watered and the container is placed in the greenhouse, or on the windowsill. From this point on, the only attention required is to keep the sand moist by sprinkling once or twice a day with a hose or watering can, using a very fine nozzle.

The results with this method compare very favorably with those obtained by using the best soil treatments, such as steam-sterilizing, formaldehyde liquid or dust treatments, or other soil disinfectants. As compared with treatment of the seed, the sand cultures have produced by far the larger number of healthy seedlings from the same number of seeds. Besides, even with the treated soil, recontamination frequently takes place, resulting in heavy loss; whereas, in sand properly washed, only an occasional seedling is lost.

Besides damping-off control, there are other important advantages in the use of sand culture method for growing seedlings. Prominent among these is the much stronger root system of the sand grown plants. Hence they are more readily handled and a larger percentage recovers.

Seasoning Of Foods Important

Using seasoning material is an art that good cooks acquire from practice. Much can be done to keep the daily fare from growing monotonous by the use of even a very few spices and home-dried herbs. A bay leaf or a sprig or two of dried thyme is sufficient to season the gravy for a pot roast, a stew, or a creamed meat or fish dish. (Bay leaf should always be removed from food before serving.) Sage is a well-known seasoning for beef, salt pork, or cheese, and for meat and poultry stuffings, but it should be used in small quantities.

The flavor of cloves goes well with smoked meats such as ham or smoked shoulders. Whole cloves and stick cinnamon, like bay leaf, should be removed before serving. For variety, powdered or root ginger may be used in boiling or pot-roasting meat and in seasoning cooked tongue. A very small quantity of nutmeg or mace is a pleasing addition occasionally to scalloped fish or oysters.

Curry powder, used sparingly, is good with almost any meat or fish dish and with eggs, especially when these protein foods are combined with rice or another cereal. Mustard adds flavor to cheese dishes, ham, fresh pork, beef, and mutton, also to salad dressings.

When not used in the meat, fish, or cheese dish of a meal, some of these seasonings add variety to vegetables or to soup. Cloves or bay go well with tomato soup. Nutmeg or mace is often used in spinach, carrots or pickled beets. Mashed sweet potatoes seasoned with cinnamon or nutmeg are a favorite dish in some parts of the country.

Onions, garlic, celery, parsley, canned tomatoes, lemons and bacon fat and other meat drippings, although all are foods rather than accessories, are useful, too, in making inexpensive dishes attractive. The tops of celery, both fresh and crisp or dried and powdered, are excellent for seasoning. Parsley is easy to grow in the garden or in a window-box or flowerpot. It can be used fresh or dried. Its flavor combines effectively with eggs, meat, and vegetable dishes. A thin slice of lemon provides pleasing flavor in stewed apples, prunes, black bean soup, or kidney stew.

Advise Farmers About Poor Crops

Planting poor crops continuously on poor land may eventually lead to the poorhouse, according to Soil Conservation Service men. Soils subjected to continuous cropping of corn, cotton, tobacco, and other clean cultivated crops are impoverished by erosion, become thin from the standpoint of fertile topsoil, and often are unable to produce a profitable yield. When this happens, farmers are apt to try the next best thing.

They choose a less desirable crop and try to make at least something off the land. Usually this is the first step in a downward cycle. Usually it is not long before the impoverished soil fails to produce anything.

That's when farm lands are abandoned and when soil erosion is allowed to complete the ruin. The remedy for excessive cropping is to retire the badly eroding areas to grass before the damage has gone too far.

Copies of a paper on "Electrification Extension Schools for Rural People," which was delivered by A. V. Krewatch, specialist in agricultural engineering for the University of Md. Extension Service, before the North Atlantic Section of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, are available for those who may desire them, it is announced by Dr. Thomas B. Symons, director of the Extension Service.

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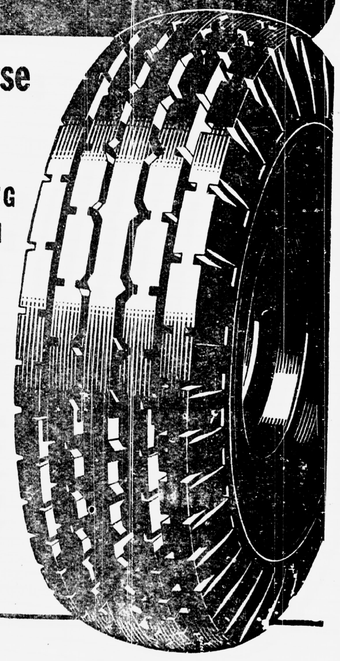
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