TURKEY RAISING IN MARYLAND.

Third of Series of Articles Written by W. H. Rice, Poultry Specialst of Maryland University

In brooding and rearing young turkeys the fear of failure with the average turkey raiser, is largely centered around the disease known as Blackhead. While there is yet much to be learned about the life history and control measures of the organism causing Blackhead which are practical in application, experimental work by several authorities in recent years points to the value of certain management, which is sound in other respects as well.

Investigations and experiments by Doctors Smith and Hadley have given much information, but the work of Doctors Tyzzer and Fabyan of Harvard, which is more recent, tends to show that the small round or caecum worm of poultry, especially of chickens, carries the organism causing Blackhead in the spore or infective stage. These investigators claim that Blackhead seldom occurs if the spore from of the organism is not eaten by turkeys. The prevention of infection of young poults, by confining them in runs which have not been used by adult turkeys and especially chickens, is recommended by these authorities, because of the danger of soil used by chickens containing eggs of the small round, or caecum, worm of poultry. These experiments also showed that the danger of healthy turkeys getting the infection from sick turkeys was remote. Confining sick and well turkeys together, as well as the feeding of diseased livers, etc., seldom produced infection in a well turkey, while the feeding of soil scraped from a hen yard produced the disease in well turkeys in every case tried. This apparently points strongly to the spores of the blackhead organism in the small round worm eggs as found in large numbers in soil much used by poultry, especially hens, as being the principal source and means of infection. Doctor Kaupp reports finding the small round worm of the caeca or blind gut in about fifty per cent of the adult birds autopsied.

Therefore, at the outset of brooding young poults in the spring, the importance of using a site for coops and pens which has not been used in recent years by adult birds, especially chickens, can scarcely be overestimated. Aside from the dangers of Blackhead, the danger of infestation by other intestinal parasites is very great when young poults are brooded on ground which has been used by other poultry, especially chickens. Under average farm conditions, it is often difficult to separate the poultry into different flocks because of the labor involved in their care. Hence the foregoing statement that as a rule, large chicken raisers should not try to be large turkey raisers, and vice-versa.

In event of a disease outbreak may be Blackhead, catechu, at the rate of one-third teaspoonful to each gallon of drinking water, may be used as an aid in preventing other poults from becoming infected. A dose of Epsom Salts—one teaspoonful to each eight or ten poults—may also be given in or feed. No cure for Blackhead is known.

From the outset, sick and weakly poults should be promptly killed and disposed of, whatever the cause. After the poults gain strength and commence to want range, as much should be given as can be allowed, and weather will permit, but they should not be allowed to share any run with chickens or the adult flock of turkeys. Young turkeys consume much green food and many insects, and a run supplying these should be provided by all means. When limited to a fenced area of suitable size and character, the poults are much more easily managed, and do well under proper management, in spite of the belief of some that they are ',wild" and must have free range.

Free range turkeys often pick up Blackhead infection when eating with the chickens.

Overcrowding of coops and houses should be avoided, as many poults die of suffocation and trampling in crowded quarters. On the range, all open post-poles should be covered, and boxes and rubbish removed, as many poults may be lost by falling into, or crouching under, such objects during a storm.

The coops should be moved every few days to prevent sour or contaminated soil from accumulating under the coop. Especially should this be done following rains, after the ground has dried off.

The poults should be confined in the mornings when there is dew, especially if the grass is high, until they are large enough to get along in the damp grass. They should be turned out each day, however, when the ground is dry and the weather permits. Range and exercise promote growth and health, and aid in preventing disease.

Feeding—too much importance cannot be attached to proper feeding. The following feeding schedule is used with success by several Maryland turkey raisers. Other home feeds similar to the ones mentioned may be substituted:

FEEDING SCHEDULE

First and Second Days—no feed of any kind. Water to drink.

Third to Seventh Days: bread crumbs and buttermilk or hard-boiled eggs and cottage cheese (crumbly, not sloppy.) Sprinkle a little clean sand or grit over each feed.. Feed five times a day, placing feed on a clean board. Never on Ground. Allow poults to have feed from three to five minutes. Never allow feed to lie around in coops. Give a little tender green feed finely chopped. Give water and sour milk to drink.

Second Week—same as first week, reducing to three feeds a day if weather is good and poults can range. A chicks growing mash, moistened with sour milk, may be substituted for one of the feeds and a little oatmeal added for variety. Avoid overfeeding and never allow feed to lie around. Water and milk to drink.

Third Week—same as second week, introducing chick growing mash in the ration, fed dry. Feed three times a day on the average. Encourage range if weather permits. Water and milk to drink.

Fourth Week—chick mash to replace bread, egg and cheese. Begin adding a little chick grain at night to mash, so as gradually to shift feeds. Two feeds a day may be sufficient if weather is favorable and range is good. Water to drink and milk if available.

Fifth to Eighth Week— chick mash in morning; chick grain at night, working gradually towards morning and night feeds only. Water to drink and milk if available.

Ninth Week to Maturity—no morning feed usually, except in case of bad weather, when poults may be enclosed, and given a light feed only. Good grain feeding at night, equal parts cracked or whole corn, wheat and oats.

Never allow poults to gorge themselves, and never permit a second helping at any one feeding. Induce range and exercise as much as conditions permit. Be on guard for sudden storms, and keep poults so that they may be readily driven to shelter. Close personal supervision is necessary to success in rearing poults.

SEED CORN SELECTION.

CAUTION URGED BY COUNTY AGENT WHO WILL ASSIST

All Kent County farmers are being urged to every carefully select and inspect seed corn for planting this year. Moulded and damaged ears are more numerous than generally thought to be. Each ear of corn contains 400 to 900 seed kernals. Therefore, every bad ear used for seed will mean that many kernals planted which will not germinate or produce a weak plant. The late spring has already delayed corn planting and is a reason for extra care in the selection of seed corn.

In order to assist all Kent County farmers with the selection and inspection of seed corn, County Agent H. B. Derrick, will be at the folliwng places as stated:

Worton, Milk Station, Monday, May 3rd, 8.00 to 10.00 a. m.

Rock Hall, Mr. Biddle's Office, Monday, May 3rd, 2.30 to 4.00 p.m.

Kennedyville, Milk Station, Tuesday, May 4th, 8.00 to 10.00 a. m.

Massey, Milk Station, Friday, May 7th, 8.00 to 10.00 a. m.

Chestertown, Milk Station, Saturday, May 8th, 8.00 to 10.00 a. m.

The plan is that all farmers who desire to do so, bring to the Milk Stations, or to Rock Hall, on the days set above, a sample of their seed corn which they intend to plant. Bring a small bag if shelled or perferably twenty or more ears of seed corn. The County Agent will go over these samples of corn with each farmer. The County Agent will also be glad to assist any farmer to locate the kind of seed corn he desires to plant.

WORTON

Mr. W. B. Willis, Jr., has returned to Philadelphia after spending the week end with his parents here.

Mr. and Mrs. Preston Crowding and little daughter spent Sunday with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Hickman, of Betterton.

Miss Sarah Carter has been spending a few days with Miss Elizabeth Crowding.

Those on the sick list are: Mrs. John Duyer, Mrs. Harry Cooper, Mrs. G. T. Nichols, Mr. Morris Cooper and Miss Emily Matthews.

Mrs. Margaret Duyer has been visiting her son, Mr. John Duyer.

Miss Catherine Loller spent the week end with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Loller.

Mr. McCall Rasin, of Cambridge, visited his parents over the week-end.

Mrs. Bedwell is visiting her sister, Mrs. A. S. Crouch.

STILL POND

Miss Marion Smith, of Philadelphia Pa., spent last week end with her sister, Mrs. Carl Norris.

The Ladies Aid Society held a very interesting meeting at the home of Mrs. Wallace Ford on Wednesday afternoon of this week.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Medders spent several days this week with their daughter, Mrs. Oris Robinson in Baltimore, Md.

We are glad to know that Mrs. Charles Jewell has returned from the hospital and is getting along nicely.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Jewell spent last Sunday with her sister, Mrs. Storey in Philadelphia, Pa.

Mr. and Mrs., Frank Gardner and children, of Claymont, Del., spent last week end with Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Nicholson.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Davis and little daughter, of Baltimore, Md., visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Robinson, Jr., over last Sunday.

Mrs. Sallie Jewell spent last Sunday with her daughter, Mrs. Howard Atwell in Wilmington, Del.

The Devotional Service of the Epworth League will be lead to-morrow evening by Miss Mabel Norris.

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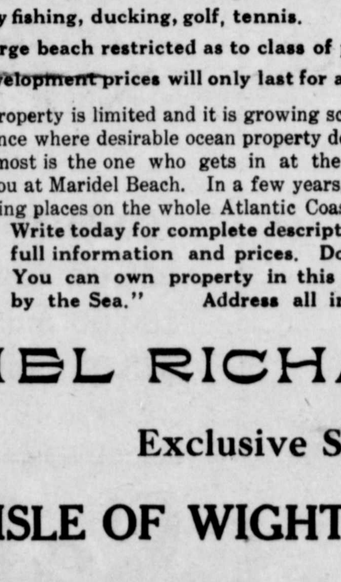
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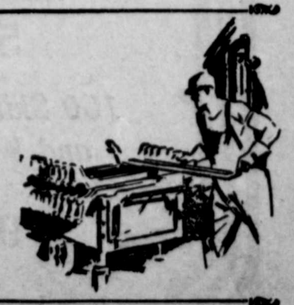
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