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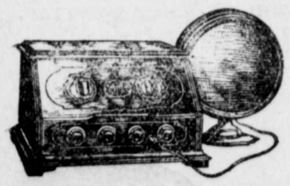

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POULTRY NOTES

ITEMS THAT WILL HELP OUR READERS SOLVE THEIR POULTRY PROBLEMS—OTHER NOTES OF INTEREST

The two local hatcheries—the Bramble Poultry Farm and the Truslow Poultry Farm—are now operating at full capacity, turning out around 85,000 chicks a week, which go to all the states along the Atlantic Seaboard. These hatcheries will be in operation until about the last of July. The two together will probably hatch around 1,500,000 chicks during the season.

Each season of the year brings on its own group of diseases and late winter is no exception to this rule. Pullets that have been rather crowded in space and housing facilities during the growing period may be more or less low in vitality and if such is the case the ever lurking germs of sorehead, also called chicken pox, may gain an inroad and cause more or less trouble. Usually this form of disease does no great damage and the most the caretaker sees is a few pimplelike lumps on the comb, face or wattles or a black spot, which he must differentiate from mosquito bites earlier in the fall and summer. The birds soon straighten up and go ahead with their early winter egg production, but in some cases this condition, causes the birds to fall off some in egg production and if the attack comes late enough may cause a partial neck molt, all of which means loss in egg production. Proper medical attention in these cases will help overcome the difficulty. Among the things to do is to give one-half pound Epsom salts to the 100 birds. The usual method of giving Epsom salts is to dissolve it in the drinking water but in many cases the overflow fountains are used and in this case the salts must be given in another way. Dissolve the salts in water of sufficient quantity to mix with 6 pounds mash for 100 birds so that each will receive one ounce of the mash mixture. This calls for a trough in which to feed it and should be of sufficient capacity so that all birds can get at the feed at one time. Dry mash of the quantity that will be eaten by the birds in one day may be used to mix the Epsom salts with I do not like the continuous use of Epsom salts in the mash, and, from a medical standpoint, it is not considered good practice to mix the Epsom salts with mash and give it continuously to birds. Broken doses every day, day after day, is not good practice. Try it yourself and see what happens.

And then there are common colds and these birds should at once be removed and given comfortable quarters and their nose passage syringed out with an efficient agent. For this there are many medicines that may be used; among which is our own prescription, ten percent argyrol; a purple solution of permanganate of potash; or a heroic treatment sometimes used in cases of roup is the injection of pure iodine. This of course can occasionally be used when the stinking odor occurs. Often times a contagious disease may be stopped by promptly removing a sick bird. After any disease becomes widespread in a flock this isolation becomes impossible.

France has long been noted for the superior quality and flavor of its table poultry. La Bresse, La Fleche, Crevecoeurs and Houdans are rated as the Big Four of the market breeds. In the hands of skilled French poulterers, these breeds produce the finest dressed carcasses for the markets of France where the tender white-skinned, fine-boned fowl reigns supreme. In America, however, the yellow-skinned fowl still commands the trade for the obvious reason that all American breeds and their subvarieties have the yellow skin our grandfathers liked so well, and which the present generation is evidently liking equally well. This naturally handicaps the breeds that carry meat of the highest quality under a white skin. Americans, however, have traveled abroad much in recent years and many have learned to appreciate the superior quality of French poultry, so much so in fact, that we recieve letters every now and then asking advice as to the best table fowl and also the best all-round breed for eggs and meat.

To some people an egg is an egg. If it is of fair size and looks all right they find no difference in quality or taste; age makes little difference, whether it is "fresh" or "cold storage." Others, more discriminating, find considerable difference in egg quality, want their eggs large, heavy, attractive in appearance, well-meated, of good flavor, new-laid from nearby well-fed flocks, and are willing to pay considerably higher prices for the fancy quality selected product. It is fortunate that to some buyers "eggs is eggs." It creates a market for the cheaper grades. The best quality new-laid eggs are seldom in sufficient supply to meet the increasing demand of those who desire and can afford to pay for value received. There is considerable difference in flavor and food value, as well as in size, weight and color of eggs produced under different conditions. Members of my family at once detect the difference if "foreign" eggs, from nearby common flocks, are experimentally substituted for the home produced eggs. I have tried it many times, as a test, and the only eggs that ever get by unchallenged are those produced on some specially egg farm, where conditions of feeding and management are similar to our own.

An ideal first feed is chopped hard-boiled eggs, mixed with bread crumbs or oatmeal and moistened (not sloppy) a little with milk. This should be fed about five times daily (little and often) for the first few days, giving the chicks milk to drink and getting them out of doors in the sunshine the first moderate day, and as often as possible thereafter. More people harm chicks by keeping them shut up in the house, than by allowing them to run outside in a small fenced run, especially after they have learned to come and go from the stove.

After a few days, when the chicks are eating well, the following ration may be substituted gradually for the egg and oatmeal:

MASH—Wheat bran, 4 parts; Ground yellow corn, 2 parts; Wheat flour middlings 2 parts; Meat scrap with bone (50 to 55 per cent. protein) 1 part; Salt, 1-2 pound to each 100 pound.

GRAIN—Fine cracked yellow corn, 2 parts; Cracked wheat, 1 part; Hulled oats, 1 part.

The above mash is to be fed twice daily about 10 a. m., and 4 p. m., dry and in hoppers, and the grain morning, noon and night. Green feed should be given twice daily, and milk and water may both be given. Bone meal should be given in separate hoppers. When the chicks run out of doors, the feed should be given on the outside.

After chicks are about three weeks old, the mash feed should be given only once at noon time, but the grain continued night and morning. Extension Circular No. 49 gives other details of feeding.

4. RANGE ON FRESH GROUND—Before placing the chicks in the brooder, the lot should be rigidly culled, and all under-sized and weakly chicks promptly killed, as they seldom live or develop into profitable birds, and are a menace to the healthy chicks.

Ground which has been used the past year by adult fowls or has had hen manure spread upon it, is a dangerous place for young chicks. Such soil is likely to be contaminated with coccidiosis or worms, and cause losses with which many poultry raisers have already had experience in the past. No satisfactory way of cleaning such infected soil is known, except starving the infection by keeping all birds off the ground, and cultivating it for at least two years.

Fenced adult stock, and movable brooder houses make it possible to keep down such infctions on the premises, and make clean soil available to the chicks each spring, by moving the house to a new site.

The range should be sown to oats, rye, rape, etc., as early in the spring as possible. Alfalfa, or clover, as a range is ideal, and promotes growth by furnishing green feed in abundance. Such range may well be fenced in the case of small farms, so as to prevent the pullets damaging other crops. The range should be large enough, however, so that there is no danger of all the green food being eaten off and becoming bare. If this happens, the range is too small for the number of chicks being raised and should be increased at once.

5. SEPARATE PULLETS AND COCKERELS—As soon as the chicks develop to a point where their sex can plainly be distinguished, the cockerels and pullets should be separated. In the lighter breeds the cockerels annoy the pullets considerably when they reach the age of light to ten weeks, and the pullets are at a disadvantage, especially at feeding time. Poor development of the pullets often results from allowing the sexes to run together.

In the heavier breeds the annoyance is not the facter, but the cockerels seem not to develop as well as the pullets.

It is the best practice to separate the sexes and later select those cockerels to be saved for breeding, and force fatten the culls or surplus cockerels for marketing as broilers.

6. RECORDS—It it important that proper records be kept of the brooding operations.

Undersized and weak chicks should not be counted when the record is started, as they should never be put in the brooder in the beginning. Records should cover the amount and cost of feed consumed as well as the kind of feed, but only kind of feed used will be required in the demonstrations. Daily mortality, and nots on same, should be kept, and will be required of all demonstrations conducted, as this is important information to all concerned.

If you are interested in conducting a demonstration of this nature, communicate with your County or Home Demonstration Agent.

To Do In February

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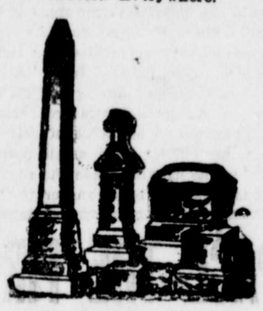

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