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POULTRY NOTES

ITEMS OF INTEREST THAT WILL HELP OUR POULTRY READERS SOLVE THEIR MANY PROBLEMS

BY POLK T. BRAMBLE

The rapid approach of fall, as evidenced by the falling leaves and the appearance of the golden trees in forest of green, means that our poultry raisers will have to watch closely their flocks to prevent, or eliminate, the appearance of roup in their flocks.

The most effective means of combating disease and parasites of all species of animals is to prevent their occurrence. This principle is especially applicable to poultry because fowls are commonly kept in such large flocks that disease may spread very rapidly and cause considerable loss before it is recognized. Furthermore, the value of a single fowl is so small that it is impractical to administer individual treatment to many sick ones.

Disease is very often introduced by new stock. This is more apt to occur with grown birds than with chicks. It is safest, therefore, for a beginner to buy hatching eggs or day-old chicks. Adult birds which are added to existing flocks should be kept separate for at least two weeks before they are put with the others. Even with this precaution the presence of some infections diseases, such as tuberculosis, may be overlooked.

Feeding methods are responsible for the sickness and death of birds in many flocks. Frequently losses from this cause are so numerous as to resemble the effect of an infectious disease. It is quite apparent, therefore, that proper feeding of fowls is an important factor in keeping fowls healthy.

Go into almost any section of the country this month and you will find poultrymen culling their flocks. They have come to realize that it pays to keep selected hens. There never was a time when it paid to keep culls. Culling out the poor birds is selective breeding. The flock should be watched and perhaps some birds removed each month, early in September. It has only been within the past few years that poultry keepers have learned the culling lesson but they have been quick to see the gain and there are more selected flocks upon the farms today than ever before in the history of the country.

Such a condition is most encouraging for it proves that poultry keepers are capable of seeing chances for improvement. They are not self satisfied. They are willing and anxious to make advances and all that is necessary is to prove to them that there is something better and straightway it is adopted.

The work of culling or selecting should be practiced at all times of the year. When a bird is found to be unprofitable, she should be disposed of without delay. The idea of going over the flock once or twice a year and selecting out the best, retaining them and disposing of the others, may sound all right in print but I firmly believe in a sort of perpetual elimination. By such a plan the flock is always up to par and a maximum production can be obtained. This means greatly reduced costs and consequently more profits.

If there is a particular time of the year when I believe this method of selection is especially appropriate it is in September, just before the molt. On the other hand if low producers are sold before the molt one saves considerable feed, as a hen is an expense during the molt. Perhaps the growing stock needs more room and for this reason the old hens should be culled and sold.

Many poultry keepers seem to be in doubt about the right method of procedure when they have pullets which begin to lay early in the fall. Prof. G. F. Heuser in Cornell Extension Bulletin No. 45 gives some valuable suggestions in regard to this:

"With pullets which, due to early hatching or rapid development, have come into production early (August or September), there will be a tendency toward decrease production, due to the shortening days late in September and October and to cold weather. At this time a decided slump in production, followed by a molt and a period of unproductivity, often occurs. This class of birds needs careful observation.

"It is of prime importance to maintain the weights of the individuals. Whenever the birds are losing weight or production begins to decrease, there usually also occurs a decreased feed consumption of one part of the ration or of the feed as a whole. Introduction of milk, wet mashes, or artifical illumination at the proper time will help to overcome this difficulty."

Feed hard grain liberally, but in proportion to the way the birds are producing, 15 pounds for each 100 birds is about the limit when the birds are producing 50 per cent or better and the weather is cold. Remember when garin is fed liberally mash consumption decreases. The mash usually contains the usual protein and it is the protein which stimulates production. The amount of mash consumed is largely determined by the grain feeding. Don't try to get more than a 50 per cent production during the fall. Don't let the birds get thin at any time.

Experiments indicate that one pint of cod liver oil in each 100 pounds of mash fed to pullets and hens during the fall and winter months helps to keep the birds in good health and may result in more eggs.

There is money in chickens when a competent manager cares for a flock of good producers. Any folks, who talk "no money in chickens," should read what the Ohio poultry farmers are doing.

Hens in the flocks of the 543 Ohio farmers, who last year kept cost records in cooperation with the agricultural extension service of the Ohio State University, earned more for their owners in 1926 than in any year since the cooperative record-keeping began, says a recent report of the State Extension Service. This report shows that the average hen in these 543 flocks paid its owner $3.23 for labor and feed in 1926. In 1925 the albor income per bird was $2.69; in 1924 it was $2.50.

Does a report like this look like there was "no money in chickens?" The neat sum of $3.23 per bird for labor income and feed makes a pretty nice income when you stop to think there are thousands and thousands of men in the cities who are earning less than $2,000 a year at other occupations.

The way to increase the labor income and to make the hens pay a higher profit, according to the Ohio Extension specialists, is in conducting the poultry flock as a business, keeping and studying production and cost records, together with wise management and feeding to reduce costs. The above report from the Ohio poultry farmers also demonstrates that high egg production per bird is necessary for maximum profit. In Leghorns, flocks that produced less than 100 eggs per hen made a labor income of 37 cents per bird, while Leghorn flocks producing 180 eggs or more per bird made a labor income of $4.23 per bird. "Poultry Success.

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"Jedge," replied the defendant, "'tain't superstition Ah's afeard on, but Ah do believe in signs. Fo' de las' three night, aftuh Ah'd gone to bed, Ah could heah dat woman honin' mah razor.

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PAUL COMEGYS

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