POULTRY NOTES

ITEMS OF INTEREST THAT WILL HELP OUR POULTRYMEN WITH THEIR MANY PROBLEMS

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The past week has furnished some real poultry weather, that is weather when our people begin to give real consideration to the raising of chicks. This is evidenced by the large number of eggs that have gone into the local hatcheries, as well as the large number of orders for baby chicks which the local hatcheries have received. These orders will increase for the next two or three months, when the peak of the hatching business will be reached.

A chill is as deadly for a young chick as the bite of a rat or as the grip of a hawk's claws. A killing high temperature for one night may be just as fatal to your chicks as a dose of poison in their feed. Nothing knocks the health of chicks out more certainly than sudden and extreme changes of temperature. Use the thermometer faithfully. Visit them before you go to your comfortable bed at night and see whether they are going to be as comfortable as you are. An even temperature has much to do with the health of young chicks. After they get their great coat of feathers, and with it the powerful stamina that should come to every worth while chicken when it arrives at maturity, they can stand a great amount of heat or cold. But while they are young they must be guarded or they will be blighted for life. They may not die at once but the seeds of death are planted deeply in their systems, and that is worse than death at once.

If all mothers would feed their babies as carelessly as some of us feed our chicks the race of man would soon become extinct. There is still a popular notion that a chicken will eat anything and that the dirtiest stuff in the world can't hurt it. Most of us are getting over this notion. My friend told me when I had a skidding experience with my car last winter, $15 out, that every fellow has to get his lesson. Then he remembers. Well, I got mine. I suppose every chicken man has to get his lesson in careless feeding. One lesson should be eonugh. And the lesson of one ought to serve many of us. This paragraph is your warning. You can't be too clean, too 'sanitary" in the feeding of young chicks. Study this up in your poultry books. How many have you? The fewer poultry books a man has and reads the more mortality he is likely to have in his chicken yards.

The past decade has witnessed a tremendous development of the poultry industry. Every phase of the industry has advanced. Hatcheries have multiplied and existing hatcheries have gone ahead increasing their capacities year after year. Manufacturers of poultry feeds and poultry supplies have increased in numbers. in individual size, and have prospered. State and nationar Governments have shown an increasing interest in the problems of the poultry producer. Increased appropriations for experimental, educational and demonstration work in Poultry Husbandry have been followed by increased production per fowl, increased numbers of fowls kept per farm and a great inincrease number of fowls kept per farm and a great increase in the numbers of farms keeping poultry.

The color of Rhode Island Red plumage has been, and still is, a debatable question. Standard definitions of color in fowls is one thing; interpretations of such by breeders, exhibitors and judges is another. There is no color more difficult to correctly define in words than red as found in domesticated races of poultry. In reality, there is no such a thing as pure bred in the feathers of a Rhode Island Red. The "brilliant red" attributed to the Reds in the Standard reads well, but does not work out so wel lwhen applied to modern Rhode Island Reds. This, experienced and observing breeders, exhibitors and judges admit; and seek to remedy if possible.

We hear a great deal these days about the American farmer becoming a peasant but so long as seven thousand farmers and their wives and families ahve the initiative to come and spend a week at the Ohio State University listening to national authorities on various subjects then this condition is a long way off. The fact that they have the money to come and are so situated that they can leave their farms is more evidence that they are heading in the right way.

I have read where some authority made the statement that the first three weeks of a chicken's life were the most important. Maybe this is true but if we take it too literally I'm afraid a lot of us will go on the rocks in the second most important period of a chick's life, which is during the growing period. Most of us put in long hard hours washing fountains, cleaning the brooders, feeding carefully, and tending the heat during the first three weeks. Its just natural to do so. Little helpless, appealing balls of fluff—who could neglect them? The only trouble I find in my contacts is that too often folks are inclined to be too good to them; in other words, thousands are killed by kindness. That stage of the chick's development soon passes and they become exacting tyrants, sometimes seemingly possessed of a thousand devils to get into trouble. Appetite is their vocation and messing everything up, their avocation. With the baby chck we are very careful what is placed within their reach, but by the time they are four weeks old we sometimes think we can let them go. The result is often that we lose them.

No data from surveys on chick mortality in Maryland are available. However, demonstration records and the records and estimates of farmers, hatcherymen and poultrymen indicate an annual loss of 25 to 30 per cent. to Maryland poultry raisers. This loss is higher than it should be and careful study and concerted action can reduce this figure considerably.

Many farmers and poultrymen make rush calls every year for services of extension agents when disease or parasites are taking a heavy toll of their chicks, or after heavy losses roup hopefully for panacea medicines which they hope will cure the troubles.

Most farmers and poultrymen do not realize the importance of careful thought and preparation before the brooding work actually starts. Money invested in chicks produces either profit or loss within comparatively few weeks, and one cannot afford to neglect essenstial preparations in advance if the brood is to pay the maxium profit. Failure to do these things is often responsible for disastrous results. Trying to raise chicks from inferior or disease stock, under poor housing conditions and on contaminated ground, the use of improper rations, filthy feeding and watering practices, and failure to separate the sexes are all too common in Maryland, and are no doubt responsible for the greater portion of loss.

The following program of management practices is designed to combat these conditions and to help reduce chick mortality in Maryland and to produce better and more profitable stock. These practices form the program of the 1928 "Grow Healthy Chicks," or Brooding demonstrations, to be conducted by the University of Maryland Extension Service.

Solution:

Recommended Essential Practices.

1. Hatch early and only from disease-free stock of good production.
2. Clean brooder house on clean ground, not used by any poultry in recent years. Prevent disease and parasites.
3. Brood each hatch separately.
4. Feed balances ration clean grain, good growing mash, bone, green food, water, milk, in clean hoppers and vessels.
5. Separate pullets and cockerels by ten weeks of age.
6. Record mortality and feed used.

Truth is a stranger to superstition, and never employs the weapons of tyranny; for truth is God's medium of setting all men free.

If some one could invent an X-ray for religion, it would make hypocrites tremble in their boots.

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