



An Automatic electric clock to awaken the pullets, and lights to lengthen their working time during the short winter days is one method advocated for maintaining egg production.

## Extension Departments Give Winter Suggestions For Poultrymen

Selection and Care of West Va. Specialist Outlines Breeders in Virginia Methods For Maintaining Subject Egg Production

In regard to the selection and care of breeders, the Extension Service of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute sets forth the following suggestions:

Quite often the question arises, "Are we getting too many chickens in the country?" or, "Isn't the poultry industry being overdone?" I do not believe we need to worry over these questions, but rather over "What kind of chickens are being raised? Do we get sufficient egg production and is the mortality of our chicks high or low? These are the questions in which we should be vitally concerned, and the answer is, to a great extent, summed up in one word, *Breeding*.

Every bird selected for the breeding pen should have three fundamental characters. They should have stamina, alertness, and intelligence; in other words, they should be vigorous. They should all have large capacity for the egg and food organs. They should also possess the ability to transmit their desirable characteristics to their young.

The male should possess a masculine make-up. He should by all means be free of any defects and abnormalities, as in the case of the breeding female.

The head is the best single character to use. The head in the male should show masculinity, health and vigor. The body should be more massive throughout the front than the rear portion. The reverse should be true for the hens in full lay. Size is also a very necessary point. The standard weight for the breed should always be considered.

The male should be the most superior specimen. He should be hatched from a good-sized and good-colored egg and his mother should have been a good layer.

If these points are considered in selecting a breeder for the future, the egg yield of the entire flock will gradually increase; but, if the breeders are not so selected, the average production is very likely to decrease.

The proper management of the breeding stock is of great importance in securing the largest possible number of good chicks from the eggs set. The proper care of the male breeder is especially important, since he is the sire of every chick from each of the females in the pen. The male should get plenty to eat at all times during the breeding season.

Every farmer who is keeping poultry should make an effort to have his pullets in full production during the winter months, suggests H. M. Hyre, extension poultryman for the College of Agriculture, West Virginia University. Pullets that are to give good production during the fall and winter months must be properly housed.

They should be housed when production starts, and should be kept confined throughout the winter months, Mr. Hyre advises. The house should be kept clean, dry, and well ventilated. When cold weather sets in the openings should be on the front side of the house only, so that there are no drafts through the house.

Hens and pullets should never be housed together, warns the extension poultryman. If only one house is available, it will be advisable to separate this house into two parts with a wire partition. The pullets and hens should not receive the same treatment during the fall months as the hens will be moulting at this time.

### Feed Both Mash and Grain

For good egg production the flock will need to be properly fed. A good laying mash and grain mixture are suggested for the ration. The laying mash may be either a good commercial mixture or one that is made at home. For best results, it should contain about 20 per cent of protein with a greater part of this protein coming from animal products, such as meat scrap, fish meal, or milk.

Grain alone will not give good egg production, as it is necessary to have some animal protein in the ration. Farmers who have a supply of liquid milk, such as buttermilk or skimmilk, should give the flock milk to drink, recommends the poultry specialist.

### Ration Supplements Suggested

It will also be necessary for the birds to receive some eggshell-forming material, Mr. Hyre says and suggests that oyster shell is one of the best sources of shell-forming material. Codliver oil in the ration is essential during the months the birds are confined. One pint of cod liver oil should be fed with each 100 pounds of mash. It is also advisable to provide the laying flock with some green feed.

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