Queen Anne's Moves Forward Rapidly In Poultry Industry

Famous Kent Island Geese Have Qualities Impossible To Copy

Man's principal farmyard fowl, the chicken, is believed to have descended from the jungle fowl in northern India. In its wild state it had the power of flight from tree to tree, but ages of slight change of its wings and the increase in the weight of its body have robbed the chicken of today of most of its ability to fly.

As poultry is one of Queen Anne's major interests I think it is well to know a little of the history of this bird.

According to recent figures with regards to poultry population it is well to mention that Queen Anne's has approximately 71,400 chickens and 13,800 turkeys, aside from our famous Kent Island geese which are produced in large quantities on Kent Island. There is a peculiarity with Kent Island geese that makes them an outstanding bird on our larger markets. They are famous for their name in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. I have had related to me cases where geese that were produced in other sections and were shipped to the larger city markets as Kent Island geese were easily detected that they were not Kent Island geese, so whatever it seems to be that gives them this distinction and is unknown to the writer is certainly a wonderful asset to this particular area. Geese produced on Kent Island are usually raised on pasture with an abundance of grain and water. They are relatively resistant to disease which takes away the hazard often experienced in poultry raising.

There is a well-known fact that Queen Anne's County is the largest turkey producing county in Maryland. It is estimated that about 103 tons of turkey meat was produced in Queen Anne's County during 1938. The quality of these birds is of the best and a marketing program is well under way by the Maryland Turkey Producers' Association of marketing birds as genuine Maryland produced turkeys. These birds will be recognized on the market as such and it is hoped to bring a premium price to every Maryland producer. With approximately 71,400 chickens in the county one cannot help but realize the tremendous aconomic value of this industry. There is a general increase in the number of chicks produced from Maryland flocks not only in Queen Anne's County but from other hatcheries located nearby.

In the past, hatcheries were more or less confining their stock locally but I believe the present trend is definitely towards expansion. With this particular part of the poultry program in relation to hatching one cannot help but realize that feeding is one of the major interests of the flock owner as well as the hatcheryman.

Having this in mind poultry has a definite relationship to the production of grain which in turn is handled through the feed manufacturer. The value of poultry from this angle might be considered as a dual purpose liability. The value of poultry from this phase is not restricted to feed alone. There is definitely a benefit to the lumberman, the hardware dealer, and a host of other industries. From this one can readily see that poultry is not an independent industry. This is a matter of considerable importance to the producers of grain. The protein supplements used in poultry rations such as milk and meat scraps mean much to the livestock and dairy industries. The seed companies owe much of their business success to the poultry industry. Lumber is used in considerable quantities in building laying and brooder houses. Large sums of money are invested in incubators, brooders, and equipment of various kinds. Electrical companies are much interested in the increasing quantities of electricity used in incubation, brooding, and lighting laying houses. The poultry industry does definitely benefit shipping firms. Merchants, wholesalers, and retailers who buy and sell eggs and poultry have a great deal of interest in the future of the poultry industry. Banks will realize a great deal from the deposits of poultry money. Then there are the consumers who want poultry produced of good quality.

Egg consumption amounts to about 25 dozen eggs per capita and poultry meat consumption about 20 pounds per capita. Both eggs and poultry meat serve very important places in the diet. Poultry meat provides a change for the red meats and eggs, besides being served separately in many different ways, serve as the very basis for the cooking and baking industries.

The average poultry producer attaches considerable importance to the weekly cash receipts obtained from the poultry enterprise in paying the grocer and the doctor's bills, buying school books and clothing and paying taxes. From this. one can very readily see that poultry in relation to farm life is one that should be very definitely included in the program.

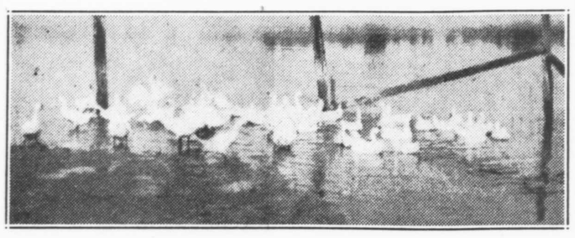
There are special advantages to this important type of business: the money value of poultry and eggs as human food, the efficiency of poultry in multiplying and producing human food, the maintainence of soil fertility, attractiveness as a business and homemaking occupation, adaptability to many types of farming, and available knowledge as a basis for successful methods. It goes without saying that all these advantages are available to Queen Anne's County because it is ideally located for such an enterprise. There are superior marketing advantages due to the fact that this particular area is ideally located from the larger cities.

Commercial broiler production in Queen Anne's County has been an important enterprise for some time and during the past few years has expanded considerably. Feed costs will be about one-half of the total cost of producing broilers, the cost of the chickens representing about 25 percent. It is obvious, therefore, that efficiency in the use of feed is one of the most important factors affecting profits in broiler production. Chicks of superior quality from good breeding stock are what the broiler operator needs in order to make the greatest profits. Some strains of chicks require 10 pounds of feed to producing 3 pound broilers while other strains of chicks require as much as 13 pounds of feed to producing broilers of the same weight. When several thousand broilers are involved the difference in efficiency of feed utilization is of tremendous importance. Not only are rapid growth and good fleshing necessary but the broilers must be well feathered at marketing time. One of the greatest obstacles in the successful operation of a broiler plant is losses due to mortality. For this reason broiler operators prefer chicks obtained from Pullorum tested breeding flocks. Otherwise mortality among the chicks dying from this disease is ape to be excessive. Mortality from other causes is also sometimes excessive. Usually if the mortality during the first 12 weeks amount to 15 percent, the possibility of making a profit is materially diminished.

The broiler operator wants the hatchery operator to develop a sound breeding program among their flock owners that will lead to the production of fast growing, well-feathered, disease-resistant strains of broiler chicks.

The hatcherymen have a golden opportunity to increase their profits materially for the simple reason that each year several million chicks and hatching eggs are being brought into the state from outside sources.

KENT ISLAND GEESE



It is perfectly certain that if more of the hatchery operators in Maryland years ago had assumed the responsibility of encouraging the development of superior quality breeding stock by flock owners supplying eggs to their hatcheries, they would not be in a position to supply the large demand for chicks for broiler production. As I see it they still have the opportunity to increase their chick sales considerably if they see to it that they will produce high quality chicks noted for good livability, rapid growth, and good feathering. All flocks supplying eggs to hatcheries should be officially tested for Pullorum disease in order to reduce mortality among the chicks that are hatched.

Flocks having 3 percent or 4 percent or more reactors should be retested the same season until the percentage of reactors is below one. The breeding flocks should be carefully selected prior to the breeding season; undersized and unhealthy birds being removed. Birds that lay small eggs should be eliminated. Particular care should be exercised in the selection of male birds because each sire has about 10 times as many chicks as each dam. Hatchery operators should encourage their flock owners to develop, by proper breeding methods, strains of birds noted for early sexual maturity, good rate of egg production, freedom from broodiness, and persistency of production. These are the factors of outstanding importance in determining the number of eggs laid and are important in flocks used for the production of hatching eggs for broiler chicks because the average number of eggs laid per bird is one of the most important factors determining the profits made by the hatchery flock. A premium should be paid for the hatching eggs and better still a higher premium based on hatchibility.

The management of the hatchery should be such that nothing but chicks of the highest possible quality should be made available for the purchasers of chicks. Queen Anne's County to a certain extent has practiced such a program whereby quality chicks are now available. However, the program still needs to be further developed.

In connection with controlling Pullorum and other diseases I might note that Pullorum disease has long been recognized as a major cause of loss in Queen Anne's poultry. From a state-wide viewpoint in 1927 three flocks were officially blood-tested and the work steadily increased until 1934 when 326 flocks containing nearly 90,000 birds were under supervision. In 1935 the Pullorum testing program was revised, the costs were greatly reduced, and increased laboratory facilities made available. Queen Anne's has this opportunity now for an extensive testing program because of the new Regional Livestock Sanitary Laboratory now located in Centreville. Last year approximately 300,000 tests were run and the infection rate of many flocks was reduced. Annual tests however usually reduce the lead only to 4 to 6 percent but by retests the infection can be eliminated. Poultrymen have profited through reducing percentageable losses from Pullorum diseases. Although considerable progress has been made, more testing and retesting is necessary to meet the demands of the hatchery and chick buyers.

Congestion in poultry yards as on highways is often the basic cause of serious injury and loss. Under either condition good judgment and extreme carefulness are needed to avoid the ever-present dangers. Yet poultry is customarily more closely confined than any other domestic stock and is more experienced to group contamination. Because of their eating habits and close contact disease often spreads rapidly when once introduced, and may establish itself in chronically infected birds in the soil and about the house. More than 50 different diseases and ailments of poultry were found in birds autopsied in various laboratories of the Livestock Sanitary Service. Many of these profit destroying infections and conditions could and should be prevented. Whatever the cause of loss may be a permanent accurate diagnosis must be made before corrective measures can be started intelligently. To assist in reducing the tremendous poultry losses a well-equipped diagnostic laboratory is now maintained for the convenience of poultry producers located in this particular area. This laboratory is located in Centreville under the high efficient supervision of Dr. Charles Cunningham. Although these helpful facilities have been increased in the last few years the demands at present point towards the direction for assistance that now tax them to capacity. Their worth to the industry must be judged by their use and from what I have observed and from what Dr. Cunningham has related to me the particular laboratory here in Centreville is highly appreciated by all poultry producers.

With regards to poultry work being done by youth in the county I might say that boys belonging to Future Farmers of America in Queen Anne's high schools and 4-H club members have realized that poultry has a 2-way value which cannot be extended in tangible terms. The total number of birds owned by these boys and the products produced by them represent a substantial sum in dollars and cents. The fundamental purpose of the work, however, and by far the greater value to those engaged in it consist of the education and training they receive in the many phases of profitable poultry raising and marketing. While its purpose to mention first any benefit derived by these boys it must be recognized also that these high school boys of today will be the owners and operators of farms in coming years. Therein lies the value of the work of the poultry industry of the state. This large group of boys who are well grounded in the science and trained in the practice of poultry products and marketing is an asset to the poultry industry on which a value cannot be placed and they give assurance to the future of the industry. Much of the poultry work comprises only a part of the pupil's total farming program in agriculture. In addition to his poultry project he may have a project in other lines such as corn, and a production of livestock. F. F. A. and 4-H club boys are taking an increasingly permanent part in poultry exhibits and other activities such as judging contests, etc. Most of the boys begin their poultry. projects by purchasing baby chicks and brooding them in mechanical brooders. Many who sell baby chicks have received orders from F. F. A. and 4-H club boys. High school boys are surprisingly successful in operating such brooders and the percentage of mortality among their chicks is very low. The encouragement and support given to these boys interested in poultry by the Maryland State Poultry Council, the County Poultry Association, and by successful poultrymen is exceedingly important in the development of the work by providing awards in contests, by helping to finance judging teams on trips to regional contests, by practical advice and information and in many other ways they have stimulated interest and helped to give the boys a competition of the magnitude, the importance and the possibilities of the poultry industry. This e xperience ranks among the important values derived from their work.

The organization behind a majority of the poultrymen in Queen Anne's County, which is known as the Queen Anne's County Poultry Association, had its actual beginning with the permanent organization in January 1931. Mrs. M. Grace Rambo, of Sudlersville, was the first President and continued to serve as head of the organization until 1934. In 1934 John H. Moffett, poultryman at Pioneer Point farms owned by Mrs. John J. Raskob near Centreville was elected President. Mr. Moffett had recently come to the county from Kent and has the record of having been the first man in the state of Maryland to have his birds blood-tested. In 1927 he had 125 birds tested with 33 percent reactors. He now has approximately 1500 birds under his supervision with less than one-half of 1 percent reactors. E. W. Grubb, the County Agent at the time of the organization of the County Association is largely responsible for organizing it on a solid and permanent foundation.,In 1933 Kenneth W. Baker became County Agent and likewise has given whole-hearted support to the cause of the poultry grower. For two years he was Secretary of the Association and was the general manager of poultry shows.

Outstanding in accomplishment has been the Annual Poultry Show staged by the Association. The first show held in Centreville in 1931 was small and scheduled for one day only. At the suggestion of John P. Corcoran of Pioneer Point farms the name was changed to Queen Anne's County Poultry and Game Show and since 1932 three days have been devoted to the Show and game has also

(Continued on Page 5, 6th Section)

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