TO GET GOOD CHICKS USE ONLY BEST EGGS

Incubator Should Have Choice and Culls May Go to Market.

CARE NEEDED IN HANDLING

Attention to Condition of the Flock Will Increase Production.

By PROF. F. W. STONEBURN.

No part of the work of the poultryman is more interesting to the average man or woman than that which has to do with the hatching of the chicks. There is a mystery, a wonderful fascination, which never passes away, about the converting of eggs into beautiful little creatures which inherit certain characteristics that will later become apparent.

Much of the success of the process of incubation depends upon the eggs used. It is true that all eggs produced by our domestic fowls are much alike, similar in chemical composition and construction. But they are not alike, not of equal value, when considered from the standpoint of their hatchability. Apparently this fact is not thoroughly understood. Too many poultry raisers, especially beginners, are content to fill their incubators or nests with any old eggs. That this is poor judgment may quickly be demonstrated by comparing the results secured in this way with others obtained where none but selected eggs are used.

The following little anecdote may serve to illustrate the mental attitude of a large class of unobservant people. A gentleman once gave a basket of "doubtful" eggs to a workman, at the same time explaining that he feared some of them were bad. But they were gratefully accepted by Uncle Ben, who replied: "Oh dat don't make no difference, boss. I ain't gwine to eat 'em—dey's for settin'."

Consider for a moment the following: Eggs are worth money. One may choose between selling them or placing them in the incubator. Every egg incubated must be charged against the cost of the resulting brood of chicks. Good business judgment, then, dictates that none but suitable eggs should be used for incubating, otherwise the cost of each chick is unreasonably high. It is doubtful economy to put a lot of poor eggs into the incubator merely to fill it to its capacity. Far better to operate a half filled machine, using only the suitable eggs and marketing the others.

In order to make a success in the poultry business one must consistently raise a goodly flock of chicks each year. Good chicks are required, and such are secured only from eggs of the right sort. Cull out the unfit at the start and devote your attention solely to those which are right in every respect.

To a very large degree the quality of the eggs—considered soely with reference to their value for incubating—is determined by the stock which produces them. The characteristics of ideal breeding birds were discussed in the preceding article in this series. Physical perfection, health, vigor, activity, full maturity, are all essentials. It is also necessary to use as breeders birds possessing those qualities we wish to intensify in the progeny.

But there are other important factors which have to do with the production of the best hatching egg. The method of management exerts a great influence. The breeding flock should be kept active, induced to take plenty of exercise. Free range solves this question. Where it is necessary to keep the birds confined they should be fed in deep litter in order that they will be induced to spend much of their time scratching for the concealed grain.

Heavy feeding of mash seems to injure the hatching qualities of eggs, and the breders should feed less mash than the layers and have their scratch feed correspondingly increased. This statement may be questioned by some, but the experience of the writer clearly indicates that it is true.

It is not wise to use for breeding purposes hens which have been laying heavily for a considerable period of time. Such hens are very likely to be in a rather low state of vitality owing to the strain they have been under and their chicks will seldom be up to the necessary standard of vigor. Anything which adversely affects the vigor of the mother has a decidedly bad effect on her young. This explains why many careful poultrymen select their breeding hens in the fall and keep them on limited rations during the winter in order that they shall not begin egg production before the eggs are needed for hatching.

The male birds should have special attention. The gallant males often fail to eat enough to keep themselves in good flesh and vigorous condition, permitting the hens to have most of the food. One often observes that such males call their mates whenever they find anything to eat. Under such conditions these gentlemanly fellows should daily be placed in small coops, separated from the flock, and given a full meal.

Even under ideal conditions a certain proportion of the eggs produced should be marketed. Extra large and small eggs should be disposed of. Also those which are not normal in every way. Eggs with mottled shells, clear in certain spots and thick in others, are usually infertile or will fail to hatch satisfactorily. Sometimes eggs will become coated with mud or filth to such an extent that the pores in the shells are clogged, and these too should be discarded. This does not refer to ordinary soiling, as the latter may be wiped off with a damp cloth and such eggs prove satisfactory.

Select for incubating the eggs which are large without being oversized. As a rule the heaviest and best chicks come from eggs of this kind, and heavy chicks usually make the best and most rapid development. It will be observed that eggs produced in February and March average more in weight than later in the season and this may explain why early hatched chicks are usually superior physically to those which come later.

Set the eggs while they are fresh; the fresher the better. The germ is a delicate thing after all, and in the course of time it dies unless subjected to the necessary degree of heat to cause it to develop. This process of deterioration is continuous in stored eggs and the quicker the life giving heat is applied the better the results are likely to be.

Of course, it is not possible under average conditions to use nothing but absolutely fresh eggs for incubating. The limitations of incubator equipment and the number of eggs produced daily prevent this. Therefore it is usually necessary to hold a certain proportion of the eggs for longer or shorter periods. Just how long it is safe to hold them is hard to say. But they may be stored in such a manner as to prevent to a considerable degree the rapid weakening of the germs.

The best storage room is one having a fairly constant temperature of approximately 50 degrees. Rather lower than higher. It should be clean and reasonably dry. The eggs may be left upon their sides or packed with large end up. Most poultrymen believe it is advisable to move them or "turn them" occasionally, as is the habit of the hen when filling a stolen nest.

At the Pennsylvania experiment station they took another hint from the hen and made a series of unique experiments. It has often been noted that many hens bring off large broods of husky chicks from stolen nests. Frequently such nests contain from fourteen to eighteen eggs, and as these are usually laid by one hen it is conclusive evidence that certain of them are two or more weeks of age when the actual process of incubation is started. In many cases these stolen nests are so located that the eggs are subjected to unfavorable conditions and still they hatch well.

This suggested the idea that possibly the hen revived the germs each day by warming the eggs slightly when visiting the nest to deposit additional eggs. That this warming up process tended to keep the germs in vigorous condition and prevented, to a certain degree at least, the rapid deterioration which might otherwise take place.

In order to test this theory certain lots of eggs intended for incubation were divided into equal lots and stored under identical conditions. One lot was warmed for a short period daily and the other lot did not receive such treatment. Finally all the eggs were incubated. Those which had been warmed daily gave better results—produced more chicks than those which had not been subjected to this process.

As these experiments were not conducted on a large scale, covering a considerable period of time, one is not justified in drawing any final conclusions from them. Therefore it is not possible to state just to what extent this plan can be profitably adopted by those operating on a large scale. However, the results secured are both interesting and promising and the scheme is worthy of testing, especially in cases where comparatively few eggs are used. The writer would appreciate reports from any poultrymen who make comparative tests this spring.

Eggs intended for hatching as well as those actually in process of incubation should never come in contact with oil of any kind, especially kerosene. This frequently happens on plants where lamp heated incubators are used. In filling the lamps one often gets oil on the hands and this is transferred to the shells of the eggs when the latter are being turned. This indicates the wisdom of attending to the eggs before looking after the lamps.

It might well be stated in this connection that oil fumes in the incubator cellar seem to have a bad effect on the eggs in the machines; that larger hatches may be secured where the oil supply is stored in a separate apartment and the filling of the lamps attended to there. It is quite possible that the penetrating fumes may also adversely affect the eggs before these are placed in the machines and the storage room should be kept free from this possible danger.

Finally just before the eggs are placed in the incubator or under the sitting hens they should be tested for checks or cracks. This is easily and quickly done by gently tapping them together. Eggs with perfect shells give off a clear, sharp sound; those which are cracked a dull, dead sound which is entirely different. A little experience will enable one to instantly detect in this way cracks which are not visible to the eye.

We still have much to learn about incubation and the best methods of producing and handling eggs for hatching. The above suggestions epitomize the principal points thus far worked out. We know that the quality of the eggs used has a direct bearing upon the quantity and quality of the resulting chicks and that it pays well to select the hatching eggs with greatest care.

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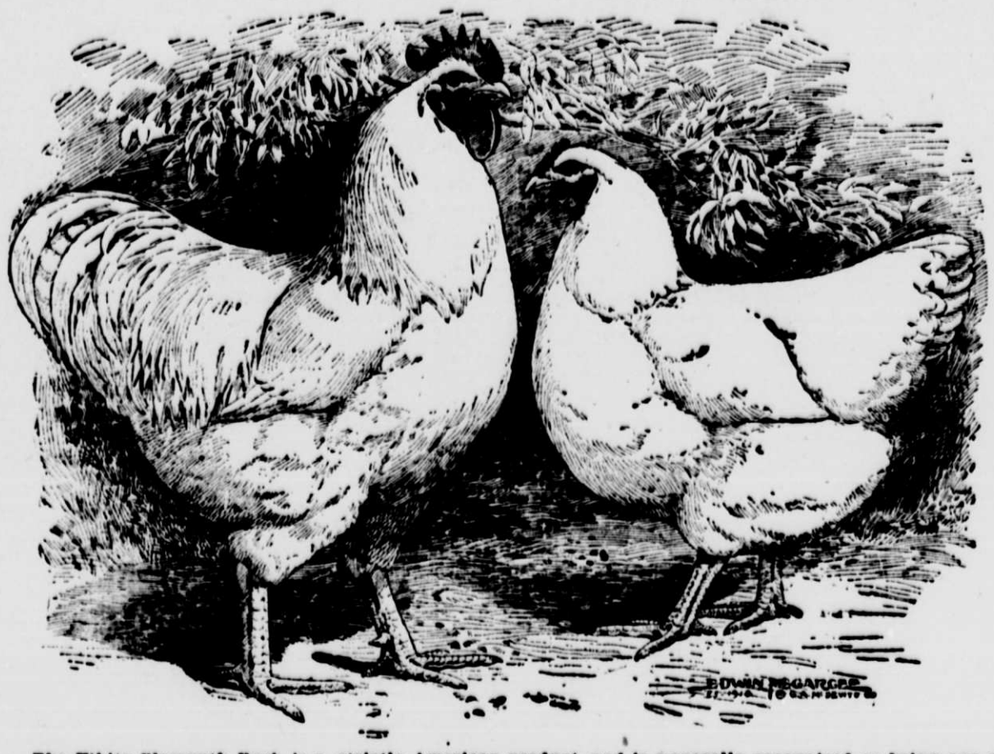
AMERICAN FOWLS OF UNUSUAL MERIT



The White Plymouth Rock is a strictly American product, and is generally recognized as being one of the very best general purpose fowls.

SPORT OF ROCK FAMILY NOW PATTERN IN TYPE

Developed From Barred Variety, White Plymouths Set the Style.

By EDWIN MEGARGEE.

All domesticated races of poultry, especially the darker colored varieties, produce on occasions specimens having white or nearly white plumage. These are commonly known as "sports." This tendency is due to atavism or "throwing back" to some early progenitor having white plumage.

The White Plymouth Rock owes its origin to this phenomenon. Some twenty-five years ago there appeared here and there in the flocks of Barred Plymouth Rocks some specimens that were almost white. These were selected and bred and were the foundation of what has proved to be one of the most attractive varieties of the Plymouth Rock family.

In breed characteristics—size and shape—all varieties of the Plymouth Rocks should be identical, but in this respect the Whites have far outstripped the others and are to-day the pattern for the other varieties. It is truly amazing to note the degree of perfection to which the breeders have brought this variety. The plumage is absolutely white, the eyes are bright red and the beaks and shanks are a beautiful golden yellow. The head points have attained a perfection scarcely equalled in any other breed. In the more prominent shows one sees many specimens that fulfill every standard requirement.

It is unnecessary to go into a detailed description of the type of the White Plymouth Rock as the accompanying illustration gives an excellent idea of the latest and most fashionable shape and is far more effective than any word description could be.

In color this variety should be white in all sections, white to the skin. The eyes, face, comb and wattles should be bright red, the beak and shanks yellow.

The standard weights are: Cock, 9½ pounds; cockerel, 8 pounds; hen, 7½ pounds; pullet, 6 pounds.

The White Plymouth Rocks are ideal general purpose fowls. They are excellent winter layers of large brown shelled eggs, and as they mature rapidly they are well considered by those growing market poultry. They dress off attractively, being well shaped, yellow and free from colored pin feathers. In certain sections where winter chickens and capons are extensively grown this variety is particularly popular.

White Rock hens are most dependable sitters and mothers. They are large enough to cover a large clutch of eggs and care for a big family of chicks, while not so heavy and clumsy as to break the eggs or crush the chicks.

Everything considered, this attractive variety of a wonderful breed may rightfully claim the distinction of being among the greatest general purpose fowls thus far produced.

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DANGER FROM COLDS IN THE POULTRY YARD

Though Different From Roup, a Cold May Develop Dread Disease.

Prof. J. C. Graham writes on roup and colds as follows:

"From an economic point of view colds in themselves are not to be compared with roup. The worst objection to colds is the fact that they weaken the bird and make it an easy prey for roup or other contagious disease. The symptons of colds are as follows: Running at the nose or eyes, sneezing and coughing. If the cold is not too severe the actions of the bird may be natural, and if proper conditions are furnished and wholesome and stimulating food supplied recovery will soon follow; but in severe or lingering cases the bird becomes weakened and mopes about as in cases of catarrhal roup. In this condition it is a good subject for roup, bronchitis or pneumonia.

"Colds are caused by unfavorable conditions. Conditions favorable to colds are draughty houses, crowded quarters, damp houses, filthy and poorly ventilated houses, tender stock or stock not "hardened off," sudden changes of temperature without proper protection and low vitality of stock. Great stress should be laid on the last cause. Most people during the brooding and growing season are prone to let weak and worthless chicks live. These must be put out of the way as soon as noticed by the attendant, as they are likely to be the first ones to contract cold or roup and pass it on to the more vigorous ones.

"The treatment of colds is the same as that of roup in its incipiency or first form. On acount of the great economic importance of roup it is hoped that bacteriologists will give it further study during the next few years, so that the nature and control of the disease will be better understood. Authorities agree fairly well upon the treatment of this disease, but not as to the cause and the interrelation of the various forms or stages. Salmon calls roup 'contagious catarrh' and discusses it as such, and diphtheria or diphtherial roup he treats as a disease entirely distinct from roup. Robinson also divides the subject in this way, while others (Harrison and Streit, also Moore) consider catarrhal roup, diphtheria or diphtherial roup different stages or forms of the same disease and that they are caused by same germ. Whatever may be the facts, it is well for the practical poultryman to know that even if they are two distinct diseases, they are closely related and are very contagious.

"In the first stage of roup it cannot be distinguished from colds. The symptoms are practically the same until the disease reaches the second stage. The main difference is in the rapidity with which the disease advances. Roup is more virulent. Many poultrymen, in describing their troubles, say their birds first had colds. This may or may not be true. If roup is caused by a specific germ, colds cannot develop into roup unless this particular germ is present. On the other hand it may be true that colds weakened the birds and left them easy prey for roup germs which came later. The symptoms are running at the nose or eyes, sneezing, coughing, swelling of face or about the eye. Hard breathing and rattling in the throat are the most noticeable. In this condition the bird may be more or less active and lay. The main reason for emphasizing this form of the disease is to impress upon the readers that they must be on the lookout of these symptoms and, whether the trouble be colds or roup, to use every measure possible to down or eradicate the disease.

"Most people let it reach the second or third stage before it is discovered. It then has such a foothold that eradication is a long, tedious and expensive task. The houses must be visited after the birds have gone to roost. With a light the attendant passes from house to house, or from pen to pen, and listens for sneezing or coughing, and birds thus affected are removed to a detention house or hospital. Again, time must be taken by the attendant when feeding the birds to see if any roupy ones can be detected moping about. Whether the trouble be colds or roup in its incipiency, the birds are treated collectively. That is, the treatment of individual birds is not resorted to. Clean and disinfect coops with some good disinfectant. Place potassium of permanganate in the drinking water—enough to give it a wine color. Filling a teaspoon and scraping off all you can with a straight edge will leave enough for nine or ten gallons of water. Feed good, stimulating food. Separate all affected birds, placing them in a warm, dry, well ventilated place, and give them extra care and good food. If the poultryman discovers the disease in an advanced form early enough he can soon get it under control, mainly through feed and care. A large number of flocks improved by leaps and bounds by giving good, rich, palatable mashes and green cut bone. The extra feed seems to tone up the system and increases the power of resistance.

Takes Him Only 20 Seconds.

Edward Corton, who has demonstrated scientific poultry picking at several New England poultry shows, established a record at the Derry, N. H., show that will be hard to beat. He killed and picked four birds in 2¾ minutes and, according to the timers, picked one of them in 20 seconds. This may seem incredible to the farmer who has spent an hour in killing and picking one fowl, but it is scientific method that counts in these days.

POULTRY MEN GET TOGETHER.

Essex County Association Makes Merry in Newark.

The Essex County Poultry Association, which has its headquarters in Caldwell, N. J., held a get together dinner on Wednesday night at Achtel-Stetters in Newark and it proved a splendid success. This association is a progressive one and is doing fine work. Its motto is co-operation among its members, and the good work done is asserting itself in every direction. It is a pity other associations in the same county do not work on the same plan for the good of poultry. The latest idea of the Essex County Association is a monthly bulletin with a directory of members' names, with the variety of fowls they breed, so that a member can know at once where to obtain stock. It also gives timely news and what is to take place at the regular meetings. It keeps the members posted.

At the dinner held on Wednesday the chief speakers were Mayor Espy of Caldwell, Charles D. Cleveland, manager of the Madison Square Garden Show, and Prof. Thompson of New Brunswick, who spoke on the work of the experimental station. The toastmaster was the new president, Mr. Brandt, and he was the right man in the right place. A hit of the evening was a song entitled "Cluck, Cluck," and headed "A Crime Perpetrated on February 18, 1914, by Members and Friends of the Essex County Poultry Association, Inc."

Colorado Increases Facilities.

The State of Colorado imports $4,000,000 worth of poultry and eggs annually, but if the increase in the production of these commodities continues as during the past two years, the time is not far distant when the State will be an exporter of poultry and eggs instead of an importer. According to official figures, in 1912 the production of poultry and eggs in that State increased $960,000 over the previous year, and it is conservatively estimated that the production for 1913 was at least $1,000,000 over that of 1912.

For Kennel News
See Main Section

IRELAND LEADS IN DUCKS.

Green Isle Also Has More Geese and Turkeys Than Has England.

The United States consular report for January 29 has the following items relative to poultry in England and Syria: "According to the latest British official census of poultry there were in England, Scotland and Wales 32,236,000 chickens, 2,863,000 ducks, 712,000 geese and 697,000 turkeys, while in Ireland there were 17,664,172 chickens, 3,477,004 ducks, 1,338,352 geese and 1,051,667 turkeys making a grand total of 60,639,195 fowls. This is perhaps an understatement, as no account is taken of the poultry owned by many small keepers nor of the chickens, ducks, &c., hatched after the taking of the census. Were these added it is estimated that the total would be increased by about 30 per cent.

"The poultry industry of this country is receiving increased attention, and it is believed that the number of fowls will be greatly increased during the next few years. Because of these conditions the use of incubators has naturally increased. At the same time the number of manufacturing firms also increased, with the result that competition is now keen. Incubators, brooders and foster mothers are almost invariably sold by the manufacturers direct and not through agents, although, of course, poultry supply houses obtain them upon order.

"In Syria incubators and brooders, while not unknown, are rarely used, and old time methods hold sway on the farm. The breeding of fowls flourishes in Syria. The hen is nowhere absent, and there are some regions that export great numbers of eggs or the yolks and whites obtained from them. The breeding of ducks is also highly developed. Geese are bred to a smaller extent and the turkey, which flourishes here better than in the wet summer district of the temperate zone, is reared in parts with great success. The introduction of modern scientific poultry appliances would greatly increase the importance of this industry and would provide a means of livelihood for many of the colonists in Palestine."

Looks Like Mixing the Breed.

At the poultry show in Boyertown, Pa., in January, Elliott Herbine, a Rhode Island Red breeder of Oley, Pa., had a hen on exhibition that was a true Rhode Island Red hen except that she was covered with "hair" instead of feathers, like a Silky. She was a "sport" from Mr. Herbine's flock.

POULTRY DIRECTORY

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SQUABS AS A SIDE LINE.

Good Profits Likely for Small Outlay and Little Trouble.

Side line poultry plants are to be found in vast numbers in the limited area of city and village backyards in all sections of the country. Some are primarily designed to cut down the cost of the family living by furnishing the table with a fairly constant supply of eggs and meat. Many do more than this, returning to their owners a considerable cash income in return for the time and effort expended on them. Clerks and mechanics thus add to their weekly wages; women secure a certain amount of "pin money"; schoolboys earn their spending money, making themselves independent of their parents in this respect.

In certain sections of the country, where markets are satisfactory, squab raising is a popular side line. Those who are interested in this branch of poultry keeping claim that it possesses certain advantages over the growing of chickens. That pigeons may be successfully maintained for indefinite periods in very limited quarters. That absence from home for the entire day does not prevent one from succeeding, since the hopper method of feeding may be used exclusively, and the adult birds attend to all the details of hatching and rearing their young. Further, that pigeons are less objectionable than hens to the neighbors.

The experience of a man living in a small town in southern Delaware seems to indicate that when conditions are fairly favorable a flock of selected squab breeding pigeons may be made to return handsome profits.

The man in question is a carpenter, working regularly at his trade. His home is in the centre of the village and his entire plant is compactly arranged on a building lot of ordinary size. He attends to his birds at odd times, doing virtually all of the work himself.

A beginning was made in a small way a few years ago. Expansion came as experience was gained. Of course this is the safe way to develop any branch of poultry husbandry.

The inventory taken the first of last year shows that at that time the stock consisted of 550 pairs of selected breeders, mostly Carneaux, Duchesse and Homers. The total cost of the entire outfit, buildings and stock, was approximately $725, though the actual value was much greater.

During the year these birds consumed feed valued at $225 and produced enough squabs to return a net profit of $554.72. This is a very nice net income from the use of spare time only, one which would prove most acceptable to most of us.

At the time the writer visited this backyard plant—late in January—the stock was being increased with entire confidence that the net income would be correspondingly enlarged. The owner states emphatically that he can make each pair of breeding pigeons return him an annual profit of $1. On that date he was selling selected squabs at $5.50 a dozen, finding an unlimited demand for them at this very satisfactory figure.

This may be a hint to men and women who desire to make good use of an idle city or village lot.

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Green Bone Best for Layers.

No one has yet found a better food for laying hens than fresh green bone finely ground. It contains all the necessary fat, protein and phosphates to assist the hen in producing the egg and keeping herself well and strong. It is an animal food. When fowls are allowed to forage they always look for animal food, such as bugs, worms, &c., as that is what they crave, so how can they be expected to do the proper work if placed on a so-called short or stinted ration, which is what they are subjected to when locked up in a house and fed on dry, hard cereals, with no change for months except a little water. Fresh bone is juicy and rich in undried blood. Its particles do not closely adhere, and being juicy it is not brittle but pliable; having its natural juices interspersed among its particles, the fresh bone is digestible and nourishing. But it must be fed sparingly, especially at first.

SUPPLIES.

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