



The Marketing of Eggs

From a discussion of this subject by A. G. Phillips in a bulletin of the Kansas Station the following facts are drawn:

The demand for eggs seems practically unlimited, more especially for the better grades. The growth of the storage industry has tended to equalize prices by increasing the demand in summer when fresh eggs are plentiful and supplying the deficiency in winter when fresh eggs are scarce. Since the demand is greater for the best grades, it seems obvious that a little more attention to details will result in a profit amply repaying the extra time and labor involved.

It is not the purpose here to enter into any discussion of the ways of increasing the production of eggs, but simply to point out the possibilities of profit as a result of extra care in handling and marketing the eggs now produced; the extra profit is to be made by obtaining the top retail price, and, as consumers become acquainted with the product, by obtaining a premium of from 1 to 5 cents per dozen over the regular price paid for ordinary eggs.

In order to obtain top prices for eggs, they must be uniform in size, uniform in color and uniform in quality. The uniformity in color is not always important and depends on the market; uniformity in size exclude small eggs and unusually large ones as well; while uniformity in quality calls for absolutely clean eggs that have been gathered promptly after being laid, kept under the best possible conditions, and marketed not more than three or four days after they are laid. It should also be noted that only eggs with firm strong shells should be marketed. One thin shelled egg may not only prove a total loss but may also spoil half a dozen others.

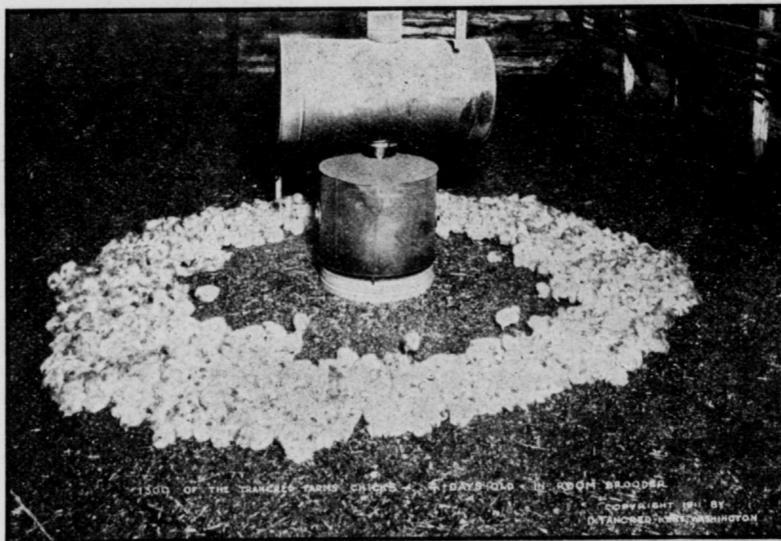
In order that eggs may be clean, it is necessary to provide clean nests for the hens to lay in. The eggs should be gathered at least once a day and oftener in warm weather. The eggs should be kept in a clean, dry, cool place. Any small or dirty eggs should be used at home; a dirty egg if used at once is as good as any, but it will not keep as well and will spoil the sale of clean eggs. Never put in an egg that is not known to be absolutely fresh.

The time of marketing will depend on local conditions, but should be as often as once a week at any time of the year and at least twice or three times a week in summer. In case where it is impossible for a farmer to take his eggs himself as often as that, he can arrange with a neighbor to take the eggs on alternate marketing days.

The methods of selling the eggs will depend on the distance from the market, the number of eggs to be dis-

posed of, and other conditions that will vary in different places. Where it can be done in connection with the sale of other produce, such as dairy products, the most profit can usually be made by selling direct to the consumer. In such case it will probably pay to put the eggs either in plain cartons or in cartons which have the name of the farm printed on them. The plain cartons can be bought for 60 cents a hundred, or perhaps for less in large quantities; when printed, of course, the cost would be greater, but it would probably not exceed one cent each.

If it is not feasible to sell the eggs direct to private customers, it may



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be possible to sell them to a grocer who has a high-class trade and will be glad to get absolutely reliable eggs for his customers. In such a case it would be worth while to put the eggs up in cartons, with the name of the farm on them, in order to educate the customers to call for eggs from that farm. When a farmer has a good many eggs and does not wish to bother with cartons, he can often do well by selling his eggs to a hotel or restaurant.

If none of the ways suggested are feasible, then the eggs can be sold to dealers, but an extra price can be obtained from them also as soon as they are convinced that the eggs furnished them are absolutely reliable.

If there are children on the farm, they can be taught to care for the eggs, and will take pride in doing it well, especially if they are given a share in the profits.

It should be remembered that it will take time to work up a demand for selected eggs, but when people are once convinced that the eggs can be depended on, they will not only call for such eggs, but will tell their friends about them.

Fertility and Hatching of Eggs.

It is well known that hens vary

widely in the number of fertile and hatchable eggs produced. The Maine Station has been studying for several years the causes of this variation and the relation between fertility and hatching quality. In a recent bulletin of that station, Raymond Pearl and Frank M. Surface state, as a result of these studies, that while "fertility and hatching quality or ability of eggs are two essentially different things," there is apparently a small but still sensible correlation between the two.

This means that in general or on the average the hen whose eggs run high in fertility will also tend to show a high hatching quality of eggs (percentage of fertile eggs hatched) and vice versa.

Conditions of housing have marked and definite influence on the mean or

the same bird in successive breeding seasons. It is adversely affected by heavy winter egg production. It is inherited. * * *

Any factor which tends to reduce or impair the general constitutional vigor of breeding birds in general tends also to reduce the hatching quality of the eggs from these birds. The relative "condition" or vigor of breeding birds may be impaired in a variety of ways. For example, improper feeding may bring about this result. * * * High winter egg production has, on the average an adverse effect on the hatching quality of the eggs produced by the same birds in the subsequent hatching season. This again can probably be regarded as the result of a reduction of constitutional vigor following heavy laying.

Similarly adverse housing conditions most probably produce the bad effect which they have been shown * * * to have upon hatching quality by lowering the general vital condition of the fowls.

To this factor of constitutional vigor as affecting hatching quality of eggs the experiments of the Maine Station add another, viz, inheritance:

Hatching quality of eggs is in some measure a "bred in the bone" character of poultry, and must be reckoned with as such. * * * But if hatching quality is inherited it means that it is a character which can be improved by selective breeding. * * *

This emphasizes the importance in practical breeding work of (a) the selection of breeding stock with reference to constitutional vigor or vitality, (b) the maintenance of the breeding birds in a vigorous condition by proper methods of housing and feeding, and (c) paying attention to the actual breeding ability (as shown by hatching performance) of the stock and the exercise of selective breeding to improve this character.

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