

THE VILLAGE HENNER.

How Fowls Can Be Made Profitable in Confinement.

Can hens be made profitable in confinement? is a question in which a great many people are interested, and I will try to give my experience in keeping from 100 to 500 hens in the village. As a correspondent of the "Old Farmer," as hens are often kept they do not commence laying on a paying basis until warm weather comes in the spring and nature furnishes the conditions which are necessary for egg producing. We will do well to note what some of these conditions are, and try to supply them in winter, if we want eggs when we can get a high price for them.

It is evident that nature did not intend fowls of any of the bird species to produce eggs in winter, so if we want eggs in cold weather we must supply those conditions which are favorable for producing eggs, artificially. In order to supply the summer conditions as far as possible, we must have warmth, plenty of room for exercise and the right kind of food. My poultry house was made warm by building it low and then double boarding it with building paper between the boards and under the eaves, and has doors to close over the windows in very cold weather. I try to make the house so warm that I can stay in it on the coldest day without being uncomfortable.

If eggs are wanted in the winter, it is very important that the hens have plenty of exercise. My house is divided by wire netting into rooms 12 feet square, and I get the best results by not keeping over 15 hens in a room. You must make the hens work, so their living by covering a portion of their food with litter and keep them so hungry through the day that they will scratch for it. If the farmers' hens, which have a large range, did not have to work to get their worms, grubs and insects, they would get lazy, unhealthy and out of condition for laying eggs. So it is with hens in confinement. You must compel them to work for their living.

I will give in a few words my plan of feeding, and in my experience it seems well adapted to producing winter eggs. I mix bran, middlings and corn meal in about equal proportions. I feed from one to two pounds of this mixture to a hen in a pinch of salt and pepper and a tablespoonful of bone meal or animal meal. I wet this up with hot milk when I can get it. This they will eat up at once, and it only partly satisfies them. I then scatter a few handfuls of small grain—wheat, oats or buckwheat, for a variety, on the floor, and bury it six or eight inches under leaves, straw or other loose litter. This I do two or three times a day, and so keep them scratching. In cold weather I give them water as hot as they will drink it and keep out meat, grit and shells in boxes so made that they cannot get into them to scratch them out. I hang up cabbage for them, chop up my celery trimmings, and keep them well supplied with green food. I try to give them the kind of food or its equivalent which hens naturally seek when left to themselves on a large range in summer.

When I let my hens out in the yards in the spring, I scatter some grain over the ground and plow it under and try to do this every few days all summer, when the hens will work to get it. I scatter the grain over the ground and plow it under and try to do this every few days all summer, when the hens will work to get it.

By managing as above in both house and yard I can keep my hens in good condition for laying in the confinement of houses and small yards. I keep Buff and White Leghorns and Minorcas, as my market calls for a large white egg.

I sell to a grocer in the city who pays me a fancy price for eggs guaranteed strictly fresh eggs. I try to raise early pullets for winter eggs, and in the winter, I have time to take care of them. For those who have a taste for the business and will attend closely to its various details there is some money in keeping hens in villages where they must be confined closely to houses and yards.

Value of Grit.

Indigestion is the cause of more than half a chick's troubles before he is 4 weeks old. They eat usually well, and strong, and they must have some means of digesting their food to remain healthy. The more they will eat and the better they digest it, the faster they will grow and the quicker they will mature. The particular kind of feed is not so important as the means of digesting it. The experiment is worth trying. Feed one lot with grit continually before them and another with grit and at the end of four weeks decide which are the better specimens.

Poultry Notes.

William H. Truelow of Stroudsburg, Pa., uses an incubator with a capacity for 50,000 eggs.

The Black African or Rose Comb Bantam is said to be the smallest representative of its tribe.

Glycerin 3 parts, turpentine 1 part, is recommended for roach, a drop or two to be squirted up each nostril.

A small quantity of millet seed scattered in leaves or straw is like a needle in a haystack. It takes lots of scratching to get it, and this is good for the hens.

The surplus rooster gives a scare crow—that is, its crow often scares a crow at the thought of the useless food going down its throat.—Rural New Yorker.

Remember when your fowls are shut up in cold weather that they cannot forage. Then it is that they need grit, charcoal, green stuff, etc., and will suffer if they do not get it.

The moult goose, an infertile cross between the wild and domestic geese, is one of the expensive table delicacies, the price in Boston being from 22 to 30 cents per pound.

DRESSING POULTRY.

Best Methods For Fowls, Broilers and Ducks.

The following is quoted from the book "Broilers For Profit":

The birds, prior to the picking, are caught and weighed, and those that are up to the desired weight (1½ or 2 pounds, as the case may be) are put in a cage, and those short of the weight are returned to the pens and held back for another week. The dresser takes the work on contract—5 cents each, out of which he pays the pickers (Italian women) 2 cents apiece. These women average from 15 to 50 birds in a day, their work being to take out the pin feathers, so as to have the carcasses perfectly clean. When it is known that these women must pick out the feathers, the feathers with the fingers and a small knife, and all for 2 cents a bird, their work can certainly be appreciated.

Everything being ready, the bird's legs are fastened to a stout cord suspended from the ceiling, and a large hog's head or barrel is placed underneath to catch their blood and feathers. Then the operator gets in front of the bird, placing it under his left arm, and with a knife made expressly for the purpose (sold by dealers in poultry supplies) he runs the knife back in the mouth, and then bringing it a little forward, cuts crosswise, severing an artery. The mouth during the operation is held open with the left hand.

Great care is taken not to cut too much, for fear of the bird dying before the feathers are all removed, in which case it would be difficult to pick. While the ducking is in progress, the muscle and renders the carcass tough. As a rule, ducks are not subject to disease, their ailments being slight and easily prevented. They are not troubled with vermin, and, unlike chickens, do not have gapes. The lack of coarse sand

work before.

After the women have completed their part, they hand the bird back to the dresser, who gives it a critical examination before it gets the first bath of cold water. If the skin should be torn, which occasionally happens, it is sewed up with common thread.

Having all the feathers removed, the birds are then put in cold water, to which is added a little salt. After remaining in this water for some time, the clotted blood in the mouth of the chicken is removed with the finger and the carcass is placed in another tub of clear cold water.

Then the work of the dresser, the shipping being done generally by the owner.

For the Chicago and western markets, either the dry picking or scalding method can be employed for fowls, but the latter will be to home trade. For scalding the water should be as near the boiling point as possible without boiling. Pick the legs dry before scalding. Hold the head and legs, and immerse in the water and down three times. If the head is immersed, it turns the color of the comb and gives the eyes a shrunk appearance, making buyers think the fowls have been scalded. The feathers and pinfeathers should then be removed immediately, very cleanly and without breaking the skin. Then "plump" by dipping ten seconds in water, nearly or quite boiling hot, and then immediately in cold water. Hang in a cool place until the animal heat is entirely out.

Ducks at 10 weeks of age should be shipped to market. After that time the pinfeathers will begin to grow, and the ducks will lose weight. The plan adopted on the Long Island duck farms is the same as advised above for poultry, only that more water must be used, as it is harder to penetrate and loosen the feathers on ducks than chickens. It is a mistake to wrap them in cloths after being scalded, as such a method gives them a pale, sickly appearance.

Begin picking as soon as the carcass is sufficiently cool. Start with the breast feathers. Leave the feathers on the head and about a third of the neck; also the flights in wing and the tail feathers. Remove all the rest. When finished picking, first plunge the duck in hot water and then in ice cold having some salt in it. Leave in this ice water until they are thoroughly chilled. The above will fit the average eastern and western market, with the exception of Boston, which wants the ducks with the pinfeathers shaved.

Geese are dressed the same as ducks. In turkeys, do not deprive them of their crop for long, as the crop will begin to mope, lose flesh and spoil their appearance. Kill by bleeding in the mouth or neck, but do not bleed in the mouth unless you fully understand the operation, for to fail to do it will occasion blood to follow every feather you pick. Some farmers market turkeys with their heads cut off. This can be done in a great many markets, but the necks should be left as long as possible, and where the heads are taken off, the birds should be killed by beheading.

Don't Overfeed.

More flocks are overfed than underfed. A fat hen gets lazy and will not produce till she gets broody, while one that is fed just a little less than she will eat is rustling around for the amount her appetite calls for, and is healthy and productive.

There is no medicine for poultry like pure food, good care, comfortable quarters and all the sunshine possible, in and out of doors. The beauty of all this is that it is the kind of medicine that is at the disposal of every one, without money and without price.

Partly True Only.

As is just as easy to keep 1,000 hens as it is to keep a dozen, after you know how. No man who has experience would try to keep 1,000 hogs or cattle. He would only try to do this after having tried a smaller number. It takes just as much good sense to keep a large flock of poultry as it does to keep a large herd of hogs or cattle, no more, no less.

But 1,000 hens require just ten times as much land to run on as 100 hens do.

BLACK LANGSHANS.

A Profitable Fowl For the Farmer and Market Poultryman.

The Langshan is the smallest of the Asiatic fowls. It is a prolific layer and a practical fowl in every sense. Langshans have dark legs and white flesh. The flesh of the Langshan is fine grained, tender and nicely flavored. As layers they rank among the best, averaging from 12 to 13 dozen a year, and as winter layers they are to be recommended. The chicks are hardy and mature early. Langshans are good sitters and mothers, being of gentle disposition; they are easily kept in confinement or on free range. Being excellent foragers, they are ideal fowls for the farm and for gathering during the year a considerable proportion of their food.

The Langshan is a stylish, medium sized bird, not overgrown or gawky in appearance, of active nature and lively disposition. There are two varieties, the black and the white. The black in plumage of neck, back, saddle, sickles, is a glossy metallic black, with greenish sheen; breast, primaries, secondaries, tail, fluff, shanks and toe feathers, black. The undercolor is black or dark slate. The white Langshan is pure white throughout. The standard weight of cocks for both varieties is 10 pounds; hens, 7 pounds; cockerels, 8 pounds, and pullets, 6 pounds.

In disposition, the Langshans are gentle, friendly and very sociable, like to be about people and have little fear in their composition. While not a noisy fowl, many persons have remarked that their Langshans could almost talk. Many times, they say, they think visitors are approaching and go to the door only to find a levy of Langshans chattering sociably together out on the grass.

On the farm we make pets of all our domestic animals, and Langshans take to this sort of treatment very kindly; they return, too, every attention with most generous interest. In handling them, they are not at all scared, but, preferring to lay on your back porch, if you will let them.

PAIR OF BLACK LANGSHANS.

PAIR OF WHITE INDIAN GAMES.

always be oval and full in contour; the thighs are well rounded, nicely tapering and free from fat. The end of the shanks, very stout, well scaled and deep orange in color; back toe should be almost flat on the ground; tail, close and hard, carried well out, and sickles rather short; wings, tightly folded, the ends of the secondaries rounding off abruptly and resting close against the tail or just above it; eye, yellow approaching gray; beak, yellow or striped with horn color. The Indian Game is a beautiful bird and its every movement bespeaks its high breeding.

TURKEY RAISING.

Something About Feeding and the Care of Growing Birds.

When your young turkeys become 2 months old, two meals a day are sufficient for food. A breakfast of table scraps, seasoned with hot skim milk, is admirable, and for supper a generous quantity of grain—say wheat and Indian corn, fed alternately. They can get on without extra feeding at this age, when they have learned to take a wide range and forage for themselves, but experience proves that poultis so fed make much more rapid growth, keep healthier and develop into larger and handsomer mature birds. Take care not to feed to repletion, and see that they get out to the fields and woodlands promptly after breakfast.

Doubtless a prevalent cause of mortality among poultis at this age might be traced to their being allowed to linger in the poultry yard and about the barns and stables, drinking impure, stagnant water and eating things not intended for them. Feed them out in the fields, away from other poultry, and, after filling their crops nearly to bursting with bugs and grasshoppers, seek the water and shade near midday.

After resting and dozing till the cool afternoon, they again go on a grasshopper hunt until time to turn home, where they are fed on the brood. The morning at sundown. Turkeys in grasshopper time want very little feeding at night, though it is best to offer them a handful of grain, as it tempts them to come home at evening.

Tall perches or big trees they should have for roosting places, and, except in extremely cold, snowy or sleety weather, they are best out of doors.

The white turkeys are considered hardly so liable to roam away from home as the bronze, being gentler and more docile in nature. They are smaller, however, and it is thought that white fowls generally are more delicate and difficult to rear.

Broilers For Profit.

M. R. Boyer, one of the editors of Farm Poultry, has written a little book on "Broilers" in which he says:

"To start in big, a commencement can be made with \$1,000—but you may need \$5,000 more. Our advice has always been, start small and grow up with the business. Have you \$300, and an income besides? Use \$100 to build a small brooding house; \$100 for incubators and other necessary fixtures; \$100 for working capital, and your outside income for your living. Save all the returns from the business that year, and enlarge the nest. The profits and experience from 500 broilers during the first year will fit you for raising 1,000 the second year. In a few years you will have established a sufficiently large farm to enable you to devote your time during the winters; but hold on to some other summer employment. If you have \$200, invest \$200, as we said, and \$100 in good laying fowls, and another \$100 in suitable buildings, and each year your farm will substantially grow."

In the food will give them indigestion, and damp quarters at night will cripple them with rheumatism. Bowel trouble, the scourge of the brooder chick, does not trouble the duckling. The duck industry, from a small beginning a few years ago, has now reached vast proportions, and plants which turn out 20,000 ducklings annually are becoming numerous. The demand is ever increasing, and the prices in the early spring season are very high, consequently the profits are very satisfactory.

A Few Fresh Fowls.

Turkey has produced a variety of fowl known as the Sultan, which has a head closely resembling the bearded Turk, and is really a very comical looking bird indeed. Nevertheless, its chief claim to being based on its good looks. It is, however, a very good layer, but hardly large enough to be raised for the table.

One of the most remarkable products of careful breeding is the Buff Cochins, the feathers of whose legs is a real curiosity. The Cochins is a handsome fowl and is very popular. The breeders are very careful to keep its legs covered of downy softness, no quilled feathers being desirable. Another freak is the crested black Polish fowl. These are good, practical chickens, as are the Cochins, and have heads that look like huge white chrysantheums. Some of them have beards as well as crests.

Age For Breeding.

A mistake is in breeding year after year from year old hens. The custom of selling off the old hens because they are a little heavier than the pullets of the previous season is a most reprehensible one, as young turkeys from pullets' eggs are never as hardy as those hatched from the eggs of mature hens. Turkey hens should be kept until 4 or 5 years old, as they continue to produce eggs for several years.

A Matter of Selection.

In every flock, no matter what the breed may be, there are certain hens that are better layers, better feeders and better looking than others of the same flock. It is in the selection of these that skill is shown. Any one can acquire the skill if he has the patience.

GAME FOWLS.

A Profitable and High Bred Variety For General Purposes.

The notion is erroneous that the game fowl is not a practical and profitable fowl for the farm and for general purposes. It is hardy, matures early, is a good layer and fine for table purposes. The hens are splendid sitters and mothers.

The Indian Game for many years past has been one of the most popular of fowls. In plumage the male is green black without pendling; the wings are chestnut, with bay and metallic black wing bars; the feathers of the neck hackle short and hard, green black, with delicate crimson brown shafts. The plumage of the hen is very difficult to obtain, and should be a combination of green brown and green black throughout, green predominating. Along the breast part of both male and female the feathers part and allow the skin to show just at or above the upper point of the keel bone. This is a distinctive feature of the breed and shows from the time the chicks shed the down. The breast is very wide, round and prominent, and should

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