

# Their main crop is ringneck pheasants



Posed at the edge of the brooder house door, these young pheasants can't seem to make up their minds whether they should stay in the safety of their home or venture into the great outdoors.

By **KENDACE BORRY**  
**MOUNT JOY** — Living on a farm of 13 acres, Edward Sweigart and his wife Daisy, who are located near Mount Joy in Lancaster County, decided many years ago to take up a different kind of farming. Their crop is ringneck pheasants and they raise close to 10,000 of the birds a year.

On a pheasant farm, things start to get busy around the end of April for that's when the hen birds start to lay their eggs. From then through mid-July, they

will continue to lay, and the first chicks are born May 15.

Five hundred hens and 50 cockbirds are selected each Fall for use in the egg hatching operation. Kept only one year, a new selection of young birds will take place during the Autumn months and these will be the parent stock of the next year's crop of young pheasants.

The pheasant eggs are gathered by hand from the egg laying cages which are modelled after chicken laying houses. Then they are taken to the incubator where

they are kept for 21 days. From there they move to the hatchery, where for three days they remain, until they hatch.

Because of the capacity of his egg incubator, Sweigart tries to hatch all his pheasant eggs. He stated that approximately 60 to 65 per cent of his eggs hatch live birds.

After hatching, the young birds are taken to the brooder houses where the temperature is kept at 100°F. for the first week, and then dropped five degrees each week thereafter to harden the young birds off. After four weeks, the birds receive no heat at all.

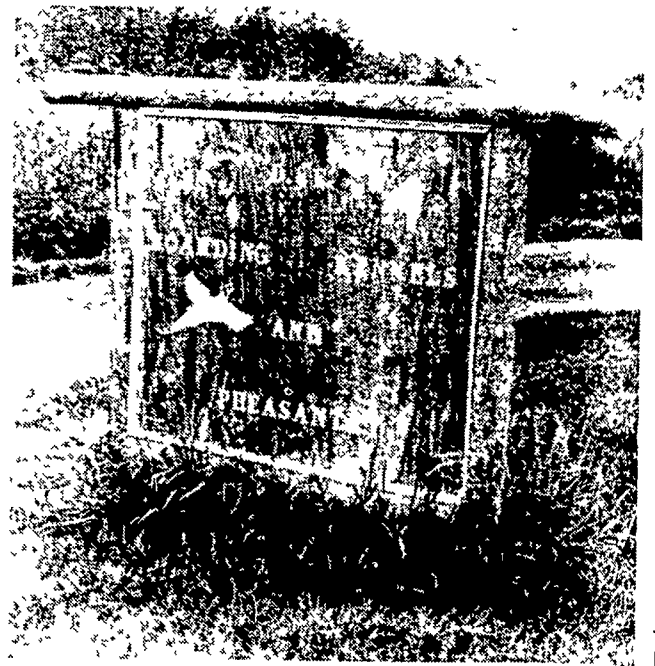
When the birds are three weeks old, Sweigart starts to leave them outside in wire enclosed pens which allow them to return to their brooder houses, giving them

the choice of either their natural environment or the safety of the shelter.

But when these young pheasants are first allowed out, they need special care. Each night and before any rainstorm they must be driven back into their shelters. The wetness and chill of the night and storms can greatly harm unprotected pheasants, wiping out the majority of the flock within a short time.

By age six weeks, the pheasants, which are now beginning to resemble the parent birds, are given free choice to roam in and out. And at eight weeks of age, they are driven out into the growing pens, where they will live until the time comes for them to be sold and delivered to their new homes.

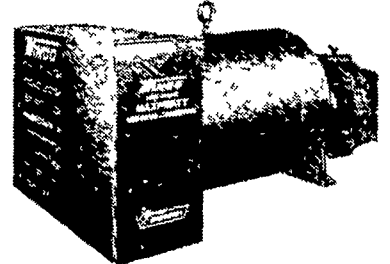
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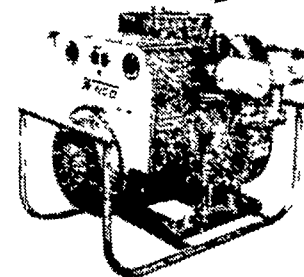
Named after its owners, the D. & E. Pheasantry sells its pheasants both live and dressed. The owners also run a boarding kennel for pets.



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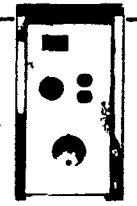


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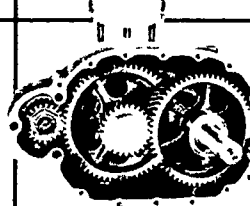


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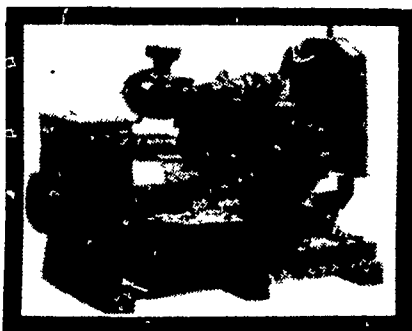


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