

RURAL TOPICS

SELECTING THE LAYERS.

It is just as impossible to tell how good a layer a hen is going to be as it is to anticipate the quantity of milk a heifer will produce before she comes in with her first calf. Trapping is the only way of telling exactly what a hen is doing in the egg-producing line, but even that is incapable of delving into the future and showing how long or how regularly she is going to lay. Besides, the trap-net requires too much time for the farmer to find it practicable.

Observation is about the only guide for the farmer to go by. With this method there is no fixed rule that can be stated to always have a certain meaning, but it is a fact that hens differ individually as well as by breeds, and a knowledge of their individual characteristics, gained by constant association with them and a careful observation of their traits, often is worth a great deal.

The hen that is always active and busy, full of life and ready to scratch and make the dust fly, is usually a good layer. This is because her active habits keep her in the proper condition for laying. Hence, we may advise, in selecting, let the busy, active hen be retained; and it will also be noticed that such hens are usually the first to be off the perches in the morning and the last to retire at night—keeping on the move for just as great a part of the day as they possibly can.

A bright red comb and wattles and a happy disposition are good signs, while bright eyes and clean feathers are also sometimes credited with denoting certain good traits. All hens have bright red combs when beginning to lay, but usually information of this kind is of most service when it can be secured in advance. This is "the rub."

Doubtless the best method is to breed for good layers. The way to do this is to select the best layers every year, mating with them a male bird from a strain of known good layers. This is the shortest road that leads towards heavy egg production, and also the surest. When the farmer finds a lot of drones in his flock, the thing to do is to get rid of them as quickly as possible and breed from only the remaining good ones. The rule that "likes begets like," holds good with poultry just as strongly as with horses or cattle, and a full realization of this fact should lead to the production of better stock. It is also important that the male bird be given the same careful consideration as the females, as it has been well-proven that the trait of heavy laying is often transmitted through the male bird; and remember that the male bird is the sire of all the chicks you shall raise, and in this respect his influence equals, approximately, that of all the females with which he is mated.—R. B. Sando, in the Epitomist.

AN ARGUMENT FOR SHEEP.

Ordinary or less than ordinary grass land is often more profitably stocked with mixed animals. A sheep bites the sweet young grass so close that no other animal can get any, but the sheep leaves the long coarse grass of other parts for the healthy and hungry cow, whose complicated digestive apparatus can deal with any coarse foods, hence the most parsimonious stock dealer has some difficulty to starve a cow or to damage her by scarcity of food or meagerness of diet.

Perhaps a sheep suffers most, the fattening flock going back rapidly in time of drought or any other unsuitable weather, and the breeding flocks suffering from abortion and other ills when hardship or scarcity of food is their unhappy portion.

During a month of bad time the wool grows weak and the buyer gives less for the fleeces, because the weak link in the chain is the true test of its strength.

In all classes of horses it is a decided disadvantage to have twins, as they are generally dwarfs, but there is no disadvantage in small sheep, as small joints are now in great request, and the quaint old saying "When you have done weighing you have done selling," does not now hold good.

The two influences which result in many twins and triplets are the breed of sheep and their condition in the autumn when they are visited by the ram.

If the ewes are then low in condition nature still demands an effort for the continuation and preservation of the tribe, but she does not inflict upon the ewe so many cruel cases of double duty.

Half fatten the ewe, however, and nature then sees energies in store and she utilizes them for the advantageous spread of the tribe.

I have known of a flock of a hundred long-wooled ewes dropping 200 lambs, but the number raised was only 161 which was the record in the district.

The owner competed with his neighbors during many successive years with the same breed of sheep, but never again came out off-top.—Richard Harding, in the Indiana Farmer.

FARM NOTES.

The chickens told me to tell you to dig up six inches of the poison

earth in their house, and carry it away beyond their range, and fill it with pure, dry earth.

To raise the earth one foot higher in their house than it is on the outside, so it would keep dry in damp weather.

To fix the roofs of their house and shed or the house would be wet and cold and thus cause them to get sick.

To put in new roosts 1x3, planed and painted on both sides, and four feet from the ground, so they would be comfortable and happy.

To take out and burn the dropping boards, so they would not be sick by breathing the impure air from the droppings so near them.

To cover the ground under the roosts with straw and burn it off every two weeks with gasoline, and then rake out the droppings and carry them off beyond their range, and put in clean straw.

To keep the droppings away from their range, or the little chicks would eat the worms from the droppings and take the gapes.

To keep plenty of crushed oyster shell before them in winter, so they would have material out of which to make their egg shells.

To go where an old house is being torn down and get a wheelbarrow of old plaster, and put it in their shed for them to eat in winter.

To provide them with a clean laying house, so that they would not have to lay in their roosting house, otherwise the delicious flavor of their eggs would be ruined by the impure air penetrating the shell and thus causing the flavor of the egg to be changed.—Southern Poultry Magazine.

POOR COW STABLES.

The subject of cow stables is one of the most important dairy studies. As cows are ordinarily stabled, their condition is anything but what it should be. Poor, miserable stables cold and damp and badly ventilated prevail. There must be a low order of intelligence amongst the poorer dairymen to permit such conditions.

It is common to see cows standing on a dilapidated old floor, without bedding enough to make a decent hen's nest, and their hind feet half an inch deep in filth. How many man can expect to produce clean, sanitary milk under such conditions is a mystery. The probabilities are that a good many so-called dairymen don't expect to do so. They don't care so long as they get their money for the product, and the trouble is we haven't inspectors with honesty enough or backbone enough to show up conditions as they actually exist. We have a few very good dairymen, men who are straight-forward and who turn out a good product, but their good work is discounted by the miserable fellows who conduct their business in such a slovenly manner as to bring a discredit upon the whole dairy fraternity.

It may be a little easier to use some old contraption of a stable that some ignorant farmer built twenty or thirty years ago than it is to get at it and tear the bottom out and build something right and decent, but a dairyman worthy of the name will manage in some way to keep his cows in a clean, sanitary condition.—Epitomist.

CAUSE OF SCALY LEG.

Scaly leg is caused by a parasite that lives among the scales on the shanks of fowls. At first they may cause a thickening of the scales, but later the scales become so encrusted with the scales that they are double their original size. These, together with dirt and filth, present a disgusting sight. This is a trouble that is easily cured. One ounce of sulphur rubbed into ten ounces of vaseline will make a good ointment that will cure it. This should be applied every other evening for a week. Some make a stocking for the chicken's shank by sewing on a piece of cloth, which is kept greased with some kind of grease which has been mixed with a little kerosene. Kerosene is a simple and easily applied cure for this trouble.—Farmers' Home Journal.

POST FOR HOG LOT.

Set a post in your hog lot and every hog will rub against it. This gave the cue for a cheap and effective louse killer. Wrap the post tightly from the ground up with quarter-inch rope, and saturate the rope with kerosene every few days. Kerosene will kill lice, and the hogs will keep on scratching against this post.—Farmers' Home Journal.

DUE TO DRINKING WATER.

The bowel trouble, which kills many chicks when they are from one to two weeks of age, may often be corrected by taking away the chicks' drinking water and giving instead, scalded milk to which a little cinnamon has been added.—Farmers' Home Journal.

London now has its Lambs' Club, which has just been opened in Jermyn street. It is not on quite the same plan as the similar society in New York.

Building blocks of glass are in common use in Silesia.

SUGAR TRUST CAUGHT AGAIN!



—Cartoon by C. R. M. Cawley, in the New York World.

PRESIDENT WAS WARNED IN 1906 OF SUGAR FRAUDS

Receiver Earle Admits He Pleaded With Administration to Prosecute and That He Divulged Both the Weighing Frauds in New York and the Rebate Practices—Nothing in Fiction to Equal It, Says Earle—"Most Dramatic, Intense, Intricate Crime in Cunning Ever Brought Before Any Court in My Time"—I Have Details; I Imperatively Need Your Aid," He Wrote the President.

Philadelphia.—"In common with every other good citizen, I am at the service of my country," said George H. Earle, Jr., receiver of the Pennsylvania Sugar Refining Company, when asked whether he would aid the Government in a criminal prosecution directed against the heads of the sugar trust.

Those who knew Mr. Earle keenly appreciated the irony of his remark when they recalled that he had pleaded with and petitioned President Roosevelt and Attorney-General Bonaparte in vain to institute or to permit him to institute just such a criminal proceeding as are now threatened by the present Department of Justice. As long ago as November, 1906, Mr. Earle now admits, he warned President Roosevelt and his Attorney-General of the weighing frauds in New York and rebating practiced by the sugar trust, but no action was taken.

Earle's Personality.

Mr. Earle is the son of the late George H. Earle, Sr., one of the foremost lawyers of the Philadelphia bar. The son, himself a lawyer, is the executive head of five of the largest banks in the city. He has rescued many concerns from the graveyard of high finance, was too busy to be Mayor of Philadelphia, is not "against" trusts, is worth \$5,000,000, but lives on one of his many salaries, and his hobbies are coins, first prints and a model farm. He was offered \$100,000 for reviving the Real Estate Trust Company, and went into court and told the judge that his services were worth only \$50,000, and he has not yet collected the \$50,000 because "the company needs the money more than I do."

While a financial genius Mr. Earle has absolutely no ambition for great wealth or political preferment and no desire for social glories. Upon his unassisted word the \$5,500,000 depositors of the defunct Real Estate Trust Company turned over to him all that was left of \$7,500,000 deposits at the time of the crash, August 28, 1906, and every stockholder in the company assigned his property to Mr. Earle without "recourse or recovery," without a scratch of a pen to safeguard his equity.

"It would be manifestly improper for me to discuss any phase of the sugar trust case at this time," said Mr. Earle, "because I am still an officer of the court in my capacity as receiver of the Pennsylvania Sugar Refining Company."

"Does the same apply to the Government and its agents?" he was asked.

"Oh, yes, I suppose so. They did not care to discuss the case at all or three years ago, and I presume not to talk about it now, for the more particular reason that we have agreed upon a settlement and I consider it hardly fair to agree to a settlement and then participate in an expose of the other party to the bargain. Then, too, I must keep in mind the fact that the court has yet to review the terms and conditions of our settlement, and I might be subjected to some criticism for commenting upon the case at this time."

Gave Warning in 1906.

"Is it true that you directed the attention of the Government to the scale frauds and rebating more than two years ago?"

"Mr. Frank L. Neall, of Peter Wright's Sons, told me about these frauds so long ago that I cannot now fix the date, but I certainly wrote to the Attorney-General about them on November 8, 1906, as the papers in the Pennsylvania Refinery case will show.

"I am not fixing responsibilities. I am not naming men who performed their duties, nor am I pointing out any one who failed to measure up to their responsibilities.

"I must not be placed in the posi-

Skimmed Milk Sale Illegal in New York City.

Albany, N. Y.—According to a decision of the Court of Appeals the sale of skimmed milk in New York City can be stopped.

The court sustained the lower courts in overruling a demurrer of a dairy company to an action brought by the State to recover a \$5000 penalty for selling skimmed milk. The company demurred on the ground that the statute under which the action was commenced was unconstitutional.

Household Notes

TO WASH WINDOWS.

The easiest way to wash windows and have them clear and shiny—first take a dry cloth and wipe all the dust from the inside, then take a clean cloth, dip it in vinegar and wash the window thoroughly; then take another dry cloth and wipe dry. After it is dry polish with tissue paper.—Boston Post.

A SMALL IRONING BOARD.

Anyone who has experienced the nuisance of getting out a long ironing board to do a small piece of ironing should provide herself with a small board for just such emergencies.

Cover an ordinary bread board that has become too shabby for baking, with an old flannel blanket, folded in several thicknesses. The blanket is then sewed into a strong piece of muslin sheeting, put on smoothly.—New York Press.

THE ICE BOX.

It is not advisable to pile the food in it promiscuously. The slice of breakfast ham is often carelessly left in juxtaposition with the dinner roast, which spoils the flavor of the latter. A dish of cold boiled onions is thoughtlessly set near the butter, which at once absorbs its distinctive odor without advantage to itself. Celery is laid near the cream pitcher and turnips or boiled cabbage set by the cooling custard for supper. Through such carelessness and ignorance, the loss is sometimes great. Milk, cream and butter should be kept as much as possible from all food, as they very readily absorb any flavor at hand. Meat and poultry should not rest against each other, but be arranged so that the air can circulate about them. If meat and poultry are to hang, they should be suspended with the choicest, part down, that they may settle there.—New Haven Register.

PLANTS AS DECORATION.

Potted plants of flowers are much used in decorating a house for social functions. Tulips, primroses, hyacinths, narcissi when massed together or scattered through a room give a charming effect at comparatively small cost.

This cost can be further reduced if one understands the art of massing. Three plants can be made to do the work of half a dozen if, instead of standing each pot upright, two are turned on their sides and the central one is tilted slightly forward. This brings the blossoms in a solid mass and makes a fine showing.

For mantelpieces, tops of book-cases, or shelves, tilted plants are best; on tables, piano, or parlour, do not attempt massing, but select fine individual plants, taking care to place them with regard to the background and color effect.

One large, full-flowered plant on a table looks better than a cluster of several smaller ones. Do not mix colors in decorating. This is hard to avoid in spring plants, but if one has a collection of pink hyacinths, yellow narcissi, and red tulips, at least see that they are not grouped together, and as far apart in the room as possible.

A few yards of smilax to drape, with massed pots, stood singly, add greatly to the general effect. After use on special occasions the plants can be made to last a long while if they are all stood upright in a sunny window or where they get a good light.

If the living part of the house is overheated, plants will bloom longer if they are taken at night into a temperature of not more than 60 degrees. Never let pots go dry, but do not keep soil water-soaked. Cut off blossoms as soon as they fade.—Buffalo Courier.

RECIPES.

Rice and Cheese With Gravy.—Stir grated cheese into hot boiled rice; season, and moisten with brown gravy.

Baked Bean Soup.—Put three cups of cold, baked beans in a saucepan with three pints of water, two tablespoonfuls of drippings and two sliced onions. Simmer for half an hour and then strain. Add two cups of strained tomatoes. Season this with salt and pepper and thicken with flour.

Creamed Codfish.—Pick up codfish, freshen it by pouring upon it boiling water, but do not soak it. When the fish is freshened to taste place it in a pan, sprinkle it with flour, cover it with cold milk and add a small bit of butter. Cook, stirring constantly, until soft and thick. Then season.

Boston Baked Beans.—Soak in cold water twelve hours, drain, cover with fresh water, cook slowly until tender. For one quart of beans scald the rind of three-quarters of a pound of salt pork, make cuts in the rind one-half inch apart; put beans in the pot, bury the pork in beans. Mix one tablespoon salt, one tablespoon molasses, three of sugar and one cup of boiling water. Pour this mixture over the beans, then add enough more water to cover and bake until brown on top. Bake slowly for at least three hours.

Cambric Tea.—This is good for children. It is made of equal parts of hot milk and water, sweetened to taste.

POULTRY FOR PROFIT

How Old is Biddy?

English authorities hold that there is no certain test of age in fowls. But they admit that, in general, the spurs both of hens and cocks will distinguish a two-year-old bird.

There are exceptions, however, in which really young birds develop old-looking spurs, while really second-year birds preserve the short, rounded spurs of a cockerel.

The texture of the legs is a guide, to some extent, and so are the delicacy and freshness of the skin of the face and comb, but still an occasional hen will preserve her youthful appearance to a startling degree.

The skin of the body is a better test, as it becomes coarser and dryer-looking with age.

Formerly the wing feathers were considered an absolute test as between a pullet and a hen, even after the long practice of early breeding had made the moulting of early pullets quite common.

An Austrian authority says that a pullet will show rose-colored veins on the surface of the skin, under the wings.

There will also be long silky hairs growing there. After a year old these hairs disappear, as also do the veins, and the skin grows white and veinless.

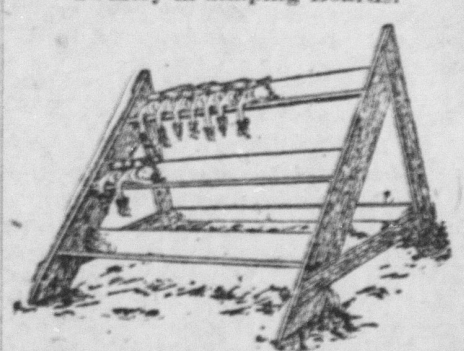
It is more difficult to judge the age of water fowls than of other poultry, partly from the absence of spurs, partly from greater longevity, and partly because the water keeps their legs soft and fresh.

Ducks waddle more heavily as they grow older, and after two or three years they acquire a depression down the breast.

An abdominal pouch of considerable size indicates great age in geese. Turkeys up to a year old are said to have black feet, which grow pink up to three years of age, when they gradually turn gray and dull.

Age in pigeons is often told by the color of the breast. In squabs, the flesh looks whitish as seen through the skin, but becomes more and more purplish as the bird grows older.

Poultry in Shaping Boards.



The weight placed on the top of the chicken is used to give a compact appearance. This may be an iron or brick. If chickens are hung by legs after being plucked it spoils their appearance. Plan used by Ontario Experiment Station.

It Pays to Caponize.

A capon bears the same relation to a rooster as a steer to a bull, and as bull meat is not equal to steer meat, so are roosters not equal to capons.

When cockerels become capons they cease to grow combs and wattles, do not crow and fight, grow much faster and finer flesh and bring more money than ordinary chickens.

If a cock weighs ten pounds, a capon will weigh fifteen, and bring three to four times the price, one hundred and twenty-five dollars often being paid for 100 capons.

It certainly pays to caponize surplus cockerels. A set of tools, with full instructions for using, costs \$2.50, and only ordinary skill is required.

For caponizing, cockerels must be less than six weeks old and weigh a pound or more.

Favorite Geese.



A flock of well-bred Toulouse geese. These are about the best geese for average farm conditions.

Incubator Chicks.

Chicks must be kept clean either with hens or in a brooder. To clean them every day is not too often. The heat from the brooder makes droppings produce foul air, as do hens when brooding chicks. Give no feed until the clutch is at least thirty-six hours old. They do not need it for the yolk absorbed just before hatching provides them until that age. Leave them in the incubator or under hens until ready to give the first feed, which should be fine gravel or sand on the bottom of the coop or brooder. They will eat quite a lot of it, and it provides the gizzard with grit to grind food.

Points About Poultry.

The yolk of the egg spoils much quicker than the white.

It must not be forgotten that food favors the flesh as well as the egg.

If not on free range, have good yard for exercise and have this yard limed and plowed at least once a year.

A French naturalist asserts that the use of pounded garlic with the usual food has been made to completely eradicate the gapes among pheasants in Europe.