

How to Cure Hens of the Egg Eating Habit.

We have several times published a recommendation to cut off the end of the hens' bill to cure them of eating eggs.

Prevention is better than cure. A hen that has a good range and gets plenty to eat, seldom eats eggs. When closely confined there is more danger but even then there is little danger unless an egg gets broken. Keep plenty of oyster shells, ground bone before them all the time and the egg shells will soon be so hard that there will be but little danger of eggs being accidentally broken. Still, it will occasionally happen that a hen does form the habit.

If there is but one, unless she is very valuable, the best cure is that recommended for a sheep-killing dog, that is to cut its tail off, close behind the ears.

Last winter we ran out of shell and bone and did not get a fresh supply at once. Before long we found that we were not getting as many eggs as usual, but we merely thought that the hens had stopped laying.

After a while we found that the hens were eating their eggs. We then tried cutting off the bill of each one. It worked all right, but in a few weeks we found that the bills had grown out again as long and perfect as before they were cut at all. We went over them all and cut the bills a second time. Since then we have had no more trouble.

In cutting use a very sharp knife and cut carefully and as soon as a little blood shows stop at once. If any one has tried this plan and it has not been successful it must be because the bills grew out before the hens were cured.

How Do You Account for It?

Editor Poultry Department:

For years I have kept hens, mostly a mongrel lot of mixed blood, Plymouth Rocks, Wyandots and common mixed stock. Two years ago I got some eggs of White Wyandots and Rhode Island Reds, and said to be from pure bred stock. From these eggs I only got a very few chickens, and raised one cock and two hens of each breed. The next season, having only one yard, they all ran together and at the end of the season I had a lot of mixed chickens. Before the next breeding time I had three more yards. Selecting some of the hens most like the Wyandots, I put them with what full bloods I had into a yard by themselves.

In another yard I put the pure bred Rhode Island Reds and a few of the best pullets as near like them as I could. The rest of my poultry were in two yards containing the full blooded males. From these eggs I have raised some beautiful chickens that have every appearance of being pure bred. But I also have some chickens that do not resemble any of the hens that laid the eggs.

There are some black, some speckled black and white resembling hens in the yards of mixed fowls, but not at all like any of the hens that laid the eggs.

How do you account for it? INQUIRER. (We can not answer this question and pass it on to our readers.—Ed.)

Crate Fattening the Chickens.

Brief description of the simple apparatus necessary and the kind of feed used. (Bulletin 91, Minnesota Experiment Station.)

Last week we gave an article from the Petaluma Poultry Journal, on crate fattening cockerels.

The next number of the same paper contained an article on the same subject which is as follows:

There are two methods of finishing chickens for market that are practiced in both Canada and the United States. One is to place the chicks in crates and let them feed from a trough in front. The other is to remove the chicks from the crate and feed with a crumming machine. Both are very successful in the hands of experts. It seems to be easier to learn the crumming system although better results are claimed for crumming. We made one test of crate fattening last year. Twenty-four well bred Plymouth Rocks were selected and placed in two crates. These crates were each six feet long, twenty inches high and twenty inches wide with doors at the top and divided into three pens, each containing four cockerels.

The crates are made of 1x1 inch strips running lengthwise of the crate and 1-1/2 inches apart except the front where the strips are placed perpendicularly and two inches apart to enable the chicks to put their heads out between them to eat. They are fed from a shallow trough set two inches from the front of the crate. The crates are set on saw horses twenty inches from the floor so the droppings can drop through the slatted floor onto sand underneath where they can easily be removed. The crates were placed in an open front shed so the chicks had plenty of fresh air without draught. In cold weather, of course, they should be kept in a fairly warm house.

would eat. They were fed grit and charcoal occasionally and watered twice a day from the trough. It required 5-2-3 pounds of clear ground oats or four pounds of the sifted oats for each pound of gain. With oats at 30 cents a bushel the cost of gain would be 5-1-2 cents a pound. With chickens worth from 10 cents to 15 cents a pound a good profit can be realized. The quality of the meat is improved very much so an extra price can be secured as soon as people learn what crate fattened chickens are. We would recommend that farmers try this method of fattening so they can realize the highest price and be able to market the extra birds in autumn.

The Arkansas Hen.

The following doggerel contains more truth than poetry. It is certainly amusing, if not instructive:

I have read of Maud on a Summer day, Who raked the meadow sweet with hay. I have read of the maid in the morn, Who milked the cow with the crumpled horn. I have read the lays the poets sing, Of the rustling corn and the flowers of spring; But of all the lays of tongue or pen, The Arkansas hen like the lay of the Arkansas hen. Long before Maud had raked the hay, The Arkansas hen commenced to lay; And before the milkmaid had stirred a peg, The Arkansas hen had laid an egg. The corn must rustle, The flowers must spring, If they hold their own With the barn yard ring. If Maud is in need of a Sunday gown She doesn't hustle the hay to town; But she goes to the store and buys a suit, With a basketful of fresh hen fruit. If the milkmaid's bean makes a Sunday call, She doesn't feed him on milk at all, But works up eggs in a custard pie, And stuffs him full of chickeny. And when the old man wants a horn, Does he take the druggist a load of corn? Oh, no! He simply robs a nest, Takes the eggs to town—You know the rest. He hangs around the court house ring, Talks politics and other things, While his wife stays at home and sews; But is saved from want by the self same fowls. For while her husband lingers there, She watches the cackling hen with care; And gathers eggs, and eggs she'll hide, Till she saves enough to stem the tide. Then hail all! To the Arkansas hen, Throw up your hats and shout a howl, For the busy, persevering, useful, toad.

Cotton may be king, But it's plainly seen That the cackling hen Is the Arkansas Queen. —Paragould (Ark.) Democrat.

Dry Feeding and Fertility.

We have expressed our favorable opinion of dry feeding.

The following from the American Poultry Advocate indicates that dry feeding also increases the fertility of the eggs:

We are sometimes asked as to the advantages there may be in fertility of the eggs laid by hens that are fed by the dry feeding method, and a letter recently sent us by Dr. Nottage gives valuable light upon that point. A Mr. Boulton, living in Connecticut, was advised by a neighbor to send to Dr. Nottage for some eggs from which to hatch early chicks, and sent him an order for a hundred eggs, in February; following is his verbatim report upon them:

"We put yours in one tray (100 eggs) and marked them, and in the other tray put a hundred eggs from a man of a great deal of reputation who feeds mash. I wanted to test the difference, thinking it might show in the fertility. Of yours hundred, 13 were infertile, and of his, 64! I paid the same price for both, and I think the result shows well for your method of dry feeding."

Experienced incubator operators well know that the measure of fertility is (approximately) the measure of weak germs left in the machine at first test, and expect that about the same proportion of the eggs will fail to hatch that there are infertile. As 64 per cent of the eggs from the mash-fed hens were infertile, it is fair to suppose that 64 per cent of the 36 eggs remaining would be weak germs and fail to hatch. That would give 23 (plus) of weak germs, and a "fair expectation" of 13 chicks to hatch. Of the dry fed hens' eggs there were but 16 per cent infertile, which would indicate but 13 (plus) weak germs, and a "fair expectation" of 80 or 81 chicks to hatch. Quite a difference there!

Orchard and Poultry.

The idea at the bottom of an article in the Rural Californian, is excellent, but it would take a large flock of chickens to keep the weeds down, in a Florida orange grove. If you keep chickens in an orange grove, do not let them roost in the trees, nor is it wise to coop them long at a time under any one tree, it puts too much ammonia in one place and is likely to cause disease. Plum trees planted in a chicken yard are not apt to be troubled by curculio. The chickens destroy insect enemies of the fruit. With all your trapping the insects do get past you. The hens may not get all that remains, but they and the little chicks will get many of them. Poultry like fruit and chickens in an orchard will eat the immature fruit as it falls, and in doing so kill off the worms that caused the

fruit to fall prematurely. Just watch a flock of little chicks in an orchard. They seem to be constantly chasing insects, many of them so small we can scarcely see them; but we know when a chick catches one of them by the chick's self-satisfied manner. That chick has probably saved several apples, and it is good for the chick. The poultry destroy the root enemies of the trees. Most enemies of fruit trees pass through three stages of life, and one of these is generally a worm, and many of these worms burrow in the ground under the trees. Just dig up the old sods a little under a fruit tree, scatter a little grain there to get the chickens started, and see how thoroughly and earnestly the hens will dig. And they do this, too, without damaging the rootlets, as you often do by a thorough cultivation. Many a fruit grower fails to cultivate his orchard as he should, lest he peels the trunks of the trees or unduly cuts the roots. Just a few strokes here and there with a pick or a strong fork followed by scattering small seeds, and the hens will do his cultivation just right.

The poultry enrich the ground. The properly cared-for hen is a busy creature. She seems happiest when working hardest for something in the ground. During these working hours her droppings, so rich in the needed nitrogen, are scattered where they will do the most good. An exchange on this subject says: "The fertilizing value of the droppings of a well-fed hen (and when we come to speak of feeding, we shall advocate liberal feeding) are worth much to the truck gardener or orchardist. For good hen droppings we much prefer to pay \$1 per barrel than to buy commercial fertilizers at the market prices."

If two trees of the same size are planted, one in the poultry run and the other elsewhere, the difference in the growth and vigor can readily be noted at the end of the first season.

An Improbable Story.

The item, quoted below, probably originated in some reporter's brain. It is a very improbable, in fact an impossible, story. At 15 cents per dozen, \$450 would pay for 3,000 dozen. That would be 10 dozen to be laid by each of the 300 chickens in 8 days. But suppose it was 30,000 instead of 300, then each one must lay 6 eggs within the 8 days. This is an impossibility, a few would lay one or two eggs per hen crowded up that way and traveling on the cars would very seldom lay at all after the first day.

"Freight that pays its own way is a novelty; yet that is what is done of some of the freight that comes to California, says a Kansas paper. In shipping a carload of chickens to California at this time of the year the eggs during the eight days of transit about pay the freight. The car holds about 300 chickens and each day the eggs are gathered, and at the end of the journey 100 cases will have been filled, which, when sold at 15 cents a dozen, will realize \$450 which will about pay the charges on the car. Cases are taken along and all calculation made on the daily supply of eggs."

The 300-Egg Hen.

A writer in the Pacific Fancier, believes that the 300 egg hen is not only possible but probable. He says: "I believe we will soon have a 300-egg-hen-per-year. Way up in Maine at the experiment station experts are trying to see what they can accomplish by breeding under scientific conditions along these lines. As yet the work has not gone far enough to make it possible to announce definite results beyond the fact that the experiments are proving successful."

We all know that hens do not lay at the same rate all through the year. The original hen of the forest laid only for a few weeks in a year, and we have to-day very much improved on the forest hen. Some hens now-a-days lay nearly all the year round, and it should be the one aim of every breeder to eventually raise a race of chickens that will lay as well in winter as in summer. It is the one aim of the scientists in Maine to bring this to pass, and particularly to induce the hen to distribute her output evenly through the months from January to December. The fact that some hens do this better than others goes to show that much may be accomplished along these lines by careful attention to breeding. By the way, did you ever give an egg careful attention? When we speak about the meat of the egg we are nearer the truth than some of us think we are, for the yolk of the egg is the meat, and you as beginners in the poultry business may come across what is commonly called jellied eggs; when broken it stands a plump all right but there is very little starch about it; simply jelly. I do not know what causes it, I have been in the poultry business for many years, and I have studied the outside and the inside of the egg, have experimented for years to find out what causes the jellied egg, and I have not discovered it yet, but I do not think it is good to eat, and again you may get some eggs with clots of blood in them about the size of a bean. Some hens are nervous; they are easily frightened from the nest and fly off with a loud noise. The first egg it lays will not be affected, but the second one will have the clot of blood in the yolk. When the wife sees it she says it is a chicken and throws it away, but this is a good egg. In fact, the meat or yolk of the egg is full of blood, and very fine veins, but it is only in such cases as this that it becomes visible. Most people think there is nothing much to learn about the inside of the egg, but you might give your life to the study of the egg and acquire valuable information all the time. Say you start with a half dozen good hens, have trap nests for them, and proceed to test them for laying eggs. Keep a careful record of the number of eggs each hen lays, and the most accomplished performers you keep for breeding. Incidentally you select the largest eggs for hatching, and no telling what but you will be one who will give to the world the 300-egg hen. Go to it. You have my best wishes for success.

Crate Fattening Poultry.

Here is another description of the crate-fattening method of preparing chickens for market. It was written for Poultry Life in America.

Crate-fattening is the greatest discovery that has ever been made in poultry culture. While the writer was in Texas last fall, I had the pleasure of visiting the Lyon poultry farm at Sherman and there I saw the first crate-fattening establishment that I had ever happened to run across.

Said Mr. Purdy, the manager, "We buy all of the chickens that we can get, fatten them up and send them to St. Louis. It is perfectly surprising how cheap we can buy them. We can double the weight of a three pound bird in three weeks, and we easily more than double our money on the venture, but of course, we take the risk, and it is worth something."

The fact of the matter is since the packing companies are putting in crate fattening plants, the producer who expects to be able to sell his birds to first hands, must do the same thing, or else get left in the race. Nor is the undertaking so vast as one might suppose. Swift & Co., have their crates arranged one on top of the others, five tiers high, with pans underneath to catch the droppings, but when a person does not care to fatten more than two thousand at a time, they may all be put on one level, with slats on the bottom, to let the dropping through to the floor, so that the coops are always clean. The fronts should be slatted also, but between the coops the partitions should be of thin boards so that the birds will not fight. Not more than four birds should be put in each compartment.

The crates may be raised to about the height that is handy to reach and the front should be furnished with a trough for the feeding. At the Orpington ranch, in Los Angeles, the birds are fed oat meal and milk; Swift's feed oatmeal, white cornmeal and milk, while on the Lyon farm the feed consists of shorts, cornmeal, mixed up with water, with a feed of meat meal, three times a week.

Some people take equal parts of fine corn meal, oat meal, shorts and barley meal. This sort of feed does not make the yellow flesh that our trade used to demand, but they are getting educated to the fact that the white flesh is better, moreover it is said that where the birds are not fattened on corn, there is more fat distributed in streaks through the meat, where it makes the meat sweet and juicy and less fat on the intestines, where it is a sheer waste of the raw material.

The poultry raiser who only raises even two hundred chickens a year, can well afford to put in a little crate-fattening plant, for it will only cost a trifle, and there is intense satisfaction, in producing the best. The crates may be put in any old house that happens to be vacant, or it may be in a shed, in fact in "any old place." It does not need to have windows, for as soon as the birds have eaten, they must be kept quiet, so that they will not fret, so they do not need much light, in fact, the less the better. If you happen to make yours in an open shed, you can hang up a curtain and let it down when the birds have eaten.

In Canada the government has taken hold of the crate-fattening scheme, with a view to educating the farmers how the best quality can be produced, but it is not necessary that Uncle Sam follow suit, for in the United States our farmers so much patronize the poultry press, that they can get their information from that source. There is an intense satisfaction in accomplishment and he who would accomplish the most with poultry culture, must be up with the times. Not only that, but the top is the profit: see to it, that you get the top.

Selling Eggs by Weight.

This is advocated by a writer in the California Agricultural Journal. There is no doubt that selling by weight is the only fair method and we should be glad to see it made the law of every state.

An injustice to producers, as well as consumers, is the practice of selling eggs by the dozen instead of by the pound, just the same as meat and other commodities are sold.

It is a well-known fact that eggs vary greatly in size, and were the pound rate established people would get just what they paid for. Little eggs and big eggs would then be on the same footing, and neither would have an advantage over the other.

It is manifestly unfair for the producer to get for his large eggs—eggs laid by Minorcas, Wyandottes, Plymouth Rocks, Langshans, Houdans or Cochins only the same price as eggs laid by Leghorns, Polish, Hamburgs or Bantams. And yet this is the rule when eggs are sold by the dozen. And it is just as unfair for the consumer to pay the same price for small eggs as for large eggs.

Some eggs weigh 14 to 18 ounces to the dozen. Other eggs weigh 25 to 30 ounces to the dozen, yet all sell for the same price under the dozen rule. Suppose you ask your grocer to give you 30 ounces for a pound weight, or the grocer might just as well ask the same for 16 ounces as he does for 25 or 30 ounces. Yet this rule will apply to the dozen way of buying and selling eggs.

No such system of buying and selling obtains in any other branch of trade. And reform in the egg trade is necessary. Of course, it will take some little work to inaugurate the plan of buying eggs and selling them by weight; but when once commenced it will soon become the custom.

Let poultry and farm journals agitate this question, not spasmodically, but all the time. The argument is all on the side of selling eggs by the pound. Nothing of much force can be said against it. Once the custom, and people will wonder why it had not always been the custom.

The egg trade of the country is a tremendous big thing, and eggs should be sold and purchased in all fairness to seller and buyer, as will be the case when they are sold by weight instead of by the dozen.

Starting in the Poultry Business.

A correspondent of the Milwaukee Sentinel says:

How much land, stock and capital would it require for two young men to establish an egg farm? All food will be raised on the place and the cash profit must be not less than \$1,500 annually? This inquiry lies before me.

It is impossible to answer such questions satisfactorily to all parties. So much depends first upon the young men and second upon the locality and kind of fowls. Under average conditions forty acres would be needed to supply 1,500 hens with feed, and that number would be required if one is to go by the old rule—and it is a fair one—of \$1 profit to the hen if \$1,500 profit be obtained each year.

Unless these young men have had practical experience in poultry raising I would advise one of two courses, either secure a position with a poultryman who is making a success of his business, as they must needs learn a few fowls and learn to care for them successfully, growing into a large number so fast as experience warrants.

Well, there are at least four kinds of poultry raisers in this industry at the present time, and some of them certainly make poultry raising pay them.

The first class consists of persons who have the best and most convenient of modern housings it is possible to build for the purpose, and high quality fowls, and who feed their fowls according to the requirements of science. Up to date methods are used in the compound of the feed, in the care of the fowls, and in the marketing of the eggs or birds.

The second class is composed of the poultrymen who have the money to equip themselves and stock up their plant with everything needful in a first class manner and who have done so, but who lack the knowledge to make their venture a practical success. They have fine buildings and fine fowls, but they give just any kind of feed that is the most handy to get, and then pay but little more attention to their fowls either in their house or yards. The buildings soon become haunts of poultry vermin and the yards devoid of green food, and reeking with filth. Their pretty high priced biddies deserve better treatment.

The third class comprises poultry raisers that have good fowls but have never provided them with good houses and proper care. Their only wish is to get the most out of them at the smallest outlay of feed or care. They have purchased their fowls from a breeder who by feed and selection has built up an enviable egg record flock, and for a time these well nourished, well-bred biddies do fill the egg baskets and they do make money for their new owners, but indifferent care, poor shelter, and improper feed do not conduce to large profits, so, after a time, these fowls are sent to market and some other breed is purchased, only to be subjected to the same unwise management and ultimately sending to the shop.

The fourth class is composed of persons that have poor hen houses and poor fowls, and, to all appearances, have no ambition for anything better. They give their hens just any old kind of feed; they don't pay any attention to the pesky things anyhow; they are amazed that any one should suggest that a hen house needs a tri-weekly cleaning. They get scarcely any eggs and they have always found that the sons that have poor hen houses and worth. Which class are you in, friend?

How to Keep Food Cool in Summer Without Ice.

There are many families, in this State, that will find a valuable hint in the article written for the Practical Farmer, by Mr. T. B. Terry, which we copy below:

Dr. G. G. Goff, Lewisburg, Pa., has kindly sent us a description of a model kitchen belonging to a neighbor. One contrivance that seems to me especially valuable is an elevator, or dumb waiter, which runs from the kitchen to the cellar below, and then on down into a well. The well is a dry one; that is, it does not go down to water. The object of the well is to keep things cool without ice. Food of all kinds can be placed in the elevator on shelves and then the whole frame lowered to the bottom of the well. You have, many of you, put things into a pail, or into the water bucket, and lowered them into the well in hot weather; we have, and it does nicely, only it is unhandy. The plan of an elevator to carry things down into a well that is only used for this purpose is entirely practical. In fact, many years ago a friend of ours in this town dug a well and failed to find water. Determined to not lose his work, he stoned up the hole and used it for food and milk in

hot weather successfully. So well have I thought of the scheme for years that I have been sorry we did not incorporate it in our house when it was built. We cannot put it in now, as the only place where the elevator could possibly be put in would take it through our furnace coal bin, which cannot be moved. We could have the well dug in the cellar and an elevator from the cellar down into it. But this would require going down stairs to it. Under a house about 15 feet below the surface of the ground would do very well for the bottom of this cooling pit. Our well outdoors is but little deeper than this, and the temperature of water keeps quite cool all summer. When we used to use it things kept nicely that were lowered to the water. Our cellar bottom is 6 feet below surface of ground, so we would hardly need to make a well more than 9 feet deep. I should case it with 20 or 24-inch sewer pipe, cemented together; then the well would always be tight and clean. The movement of the elevator up and down would, I think, keep the air pure. At 15 feet down in the earth, under a house, summer heat or winter cold would scarcely affect the temperature any. A dumb waiter going only down into the cellar will save many steps and prove a nice thing. Quite a few have them. But running it down into a well will be a decided addition to its value. Any ingenious man who is handy with tools can make one and rig it up. There should be pulleys above and a rope and weight to balance the weight of loaded elevator. The pulleys can be arranged so the weight can go up and down in an out-of-the-way corner. When the elevator goes down into a well the weight will probably need to move from top of kitchen through the floor to bottom of cellar. Or perhaps the rope can go through a partition and have weight in a woodshed, or even in a nearby out-building, or outdoors. I put the weight in a shop 12 feet away when fixing something of the kind for a friend once, nailing two boards together V-shaped, and fastening them over to the rope. It is still working all right. The boards over the rope were to keep it dry, of course. Food will not keep as well in a pit of this kind as in a good refrigerator, with plenty of ice, but it will do quite as well and will be cheaper in the end than buying ice or going to the expense of putting it up. And then there are many so situated that they cannot have ice anyway. It will cost them but little to rig up so they can keep things fairly cool. In some soils the well may only need to be plastered up with cement, not using sewer pipe, or even stones. Where water is likely to come near the surface at times, so as to make trouble, perhaps the well can be dug in a dry time and cemented so as to keep water out. There is always a way. If you cannot do any of these things now, you can be thinking about them and getting ready. There is much pleasure in anticipation, in looking ahead. It makes life brighter. And meanwhile, if you can put things in the cellar bottom, at a point where water from roof runs down so it is always wet under the floor, with a tight box over them, made of thick boards, they will keep much cooler than on a shelf. Hang the box by hinges to a heavy plank, and have rope and pulley and weight to balance so it will lift easily. You can get these screw pulleys for 3 cents each and use sash cord for rope.

One Acre Enough.

Many years ago a book was published entitled "Ten Acres Enough." It had a great run and probably was the means of inducing hundreds of men to try trucking or gardening. Soon afterwards another man wrote a book, "Five Acres Too Much." This recorded one failure. There have been many great successes. One of these is reported by the American Farmer as follows:

Samuel Cleeks of Glenn county, Cal., is heralded as the man who has lived on a single acre of land for thirty years and not only made a comfortable support for himself and wife, but was able to save an average of \$400 a year beside. It was done by irrigation and intensive farming. A Pennsylvanian is about to follow this example on an acre of land in Colorado and is confident of success, by utilizing every foot of space as is done by professional gardeners. The Spokesman-Review insists that the same can be done in many fine all the land they want is ton, with favorable location and climate. If this becomes general and many find all the land they want is one acre, the awful spectre of an overcrowded world that can't feed its population, will disappear. There would be more than enough land for all, if one acre only satisfied many. Even "the little farm well tilled" was supposed to require a number of acres and will have to yield its fame to the tiny tracts above described.

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