## FRENCH FOWLS.

**Birds That Illustrate a Splendid Type for Table Purposes.**

Among those most successful of mercantile poultry growers, the French, assiduous attention has long been devoted to the production of a great weight and excellent quality of flesh, combined with a remarkably small proportion of bones and offal. As a result the French breeds, which include the Houdans, La Fleche, Crevs Cours, etc., are pre-eminently table fowls. Probably the most popular and best known of French varieties in this

CREVE COURS.

country are the Houdans. The Crevs Cours, however, on whose an illustration is presented, represent an equally important kind as regards quantity and quality of flesh.

Wright says the full grown cock will not infrequently weigh ten pounds, but 7½ to 8 pounds is a good average. In form the Crevs Cours is very full and compact, the legs exceedingly short, especially in the hens, which appear almost as if they were creeping about on the ground. Their motions are quiet and deliberate, and they seem very contented in confinement. They do not set, or very rarely, and are tolerable layers of very large white eggs. The comb is in the form of two well developed horns, surmounted by a large black crest; wattles full, and, like the comb, of a very dark red. The plumage is mostly black, but not infrequently mixed with gold or straw on the hackle and saddle.

The merits of the Crevs fowl consists in its edible qualities, early maturity, the ease with which it can be kept and reared in confinement and its fine, large eggs.

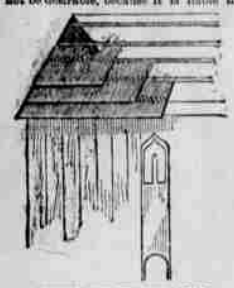
On the other hand, it is only a moderate layer, and the eggs are often sterile. It requires warm, dry quarters, and in this country is pronounced by good authorities as delicate and inclined to croup and throat diseases. But these fine, heavy birds, although perhaps not adapted to general domestic purposes in our climate, are of interest to those studying the production of a splendid table fowl, and under favorable circumstances might repay a trial.

## A GOOD HOMEMADE ROOF.

**One Farmer's Plan for Covering Icehouses, Sheds and Other Farm Buildings.**

Roofs bring a greater average annual expense to farmers all over the country than most are aware of. Shingles are not as cheap nor made of as good material as formerly; paper is short lived, and tin and slate are so expensive that many cannot afford either. These facts, coupled with what he knows about the roofs in England and Scotland, set a certain farmer to thinking. Here is the result of that meditation as told in The Rural New Yorker:

Over a large part of rural Europe the roof of straw thatch is as common and evidently as durable as the average American shingles. It is applied by the owner of tenant frequently, with no expense save from the time and material—straw and twine—usually produced on the farm. A question forces itself upon me: Why is not this by product of our grain fields utilized to some extent for roofing, at least on our smaller, obscure farm buildings? Would it not do for icehouses, woodhouses, stock sheds and smaller barns? For icehouses it might not be desirable, because it is liable to



SHUTTLE AND THATCHED ROOF.

harbor vermin, but this tendency could be controlled by saturating it from below with carbolized lime wash, using a force pump.

Even those who have never seen thatching know how surely rain runs off the roof of a well covered stack, and how little a well made cock of hay is wet by heavy storms. Reeds and rushes are also sometimes employed for roofs. Could the use of thatching be extended in this country its value might be acknowledged. To lay it is a simple art, requiring no more skill than shingling. After the first two hours of effort the work will seem more easy and rapid. The essentials are straight, hand threshed straw, binder twine and a shuttle made of oak or hickory 6 inches long, 1½ inches wide and one-eighth of an inch thick. The shape of the shuttle and also a crude sketch of a building being thatched are shown in the cut. Furring strips are nailed to the rafters as for shingles, and a cord firmly nailed to the end of each. I say "firmly nailed," because, if it should loosen, the straw it holds will soon slip down and be at the mercy of the wind; when a bad leak will appear, and thatching, like shingling, is difficult to repair.

The straw is laid and bound to its place in small bundles—the smaller the better—the twine being wound on the shuttle. A little practice will enable the thatcher to fatten and spread each bundle so that no cracks will show in the roof. After the cord is put over the straw and under the furring strip, and while it is being held very tight, the straw is forcibly crowded up against the last bundle placed, that the roof may be firm and hard. It is well to secure the binder twine at intervals of one foot on the furring strip by winding it around a shingle nail and driving it into the wood. None but clean threshed straw is suitable on account of rats and mice. If it be stiff and strong it may be exposed to the weather in 8-inch lengths, but weak, light straw will not bear the wind unless in 6 or 4-inch laps. A steep pitch is the suitable, and wide, overhanging eaves will give a pretty appearance to the smallest thatched buildings.

**Experiments in Fertilizing Soils.**

The tabulated data of experiments with fertilizers furnished by the Maine experiment station on five farms in different parts of the state is of general interest. Dissolved bone black, 500 pounds per acre; muriate of potash, 100 pounds, and nitrate of soda, 150 pounds, were applied singly, two by two and all three together on fourteen duplicate plots, two plots remaining unmanured. In three cases the crop grown was potatoes and in one case each barley and corn. In four out of five of these experiments the increase in the crop was produced at least expense with either potash or phosphoric acid or a combination of the two. In the fifth experiment (with corn) not only the largest crop, but the crop in which the increase was produced at least expense, came from fertilizing with muriate of potash and nitrate of soda.

In an experiment with spring versus fall manuring for oats at the rate of five cords of manure per acre spring manuring gave the largest yield of grain. The largest yield of straw came from the fall manure plot.

**The New York Milk Trade.**

New York and its suburbs consume an average of about 10,000 cans of forty quarts each of milk for each day in the year. To this must be added an average daily consumption of 700 cans of condensed milk and 125 cans of cream. About a dozen different railroads are engaged in the milk carrying trade, while boats and other conveyances bring in about 20,000 cans daily. The freight runs from thirty-two to twenty-eight cents per can, and is paid by the dealers or parties to whom the milk is shipped. The price of milk is fixed by the New York Milk exchange.

## WINTER CREAMERIES.

**Creameries Ought to Run Full Handed All the Year Round.**

With a good supply of cream in the fall and winter they could realize larger profits than in summer. Butter is high then, and all that they could make could be sold for a high price. But the trouble is they cannot get enough cream from their regular patrons to make it pay to keep the creamery open. It is a business question with them, and so is the only solution to it they have to close from three to six months every year.

Now this is simply another reason why more attention should be given to improved winter dairying. If all the dairymen could supply more cream for the creameries than they do now through the winter their business would never stop. The majority of the cows are simply summer animals. They yield good milk and cream during spring and summer, but shut down almost completely when winter comes. It would seem pay the dairyman to have winter cows instead of summer. Keep them dry in summer, and harvest good milk producing feed for winter. Then feed them well, give them warm quarters, and make twice the profit from the sale of the cream that is now realized.

But the right cows, properly fed and housed and managed, can be made to produce good cream summer and winter. The fact that the old fashioned dairying was practiced only during summer holds such sway over the minds of some farmers that they are averse to attempting anything else. They will not give proper heed to the feed and housing. The animals are going to be an expense anyway, and so they reason we will reduce it next to nothing.

Winter feed will not cost much more than summer if it is properly obtained and fed. Good millet, hay and corn fodder can be provided in abundance, and the silo will yield enough succulent food to keep the animals in excellent condition. Give the cows a warm house on cold days, and let them spend most of their time in it. A few hours a day in the yard will give them enough exercise. In fact, the exercise and fresh air theory for cows has been worked for more than it is worth. The animals need warmer stables more than they do more exercise. All the exercise they require is just enough to keep their organs in good condition. More than this, the cold weather dries up their milk. Give winter dairying its proper attention, and our creameries will be running the year round.—E. P. Smith in American Cultivator.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