

OUR POULTRY DEPARTMENT.

Fowls No. 3.

We now want to cross that foundation stock with some blood that will give vigor and increase the egg yield. We have the size. All practical market poultry growers concede that Plymouth Rock and Leghorn cross give the quickest growing cockerels and the best laying of pullets. Our market (outside of spring chicken) requires fowls of 5 to 7 months old weighing 3 to 5 pounds dressed. There are other breeds that can be crossed with good results, but not as profitably. Our market demands that all poultry dressed shall be minus head and legs, hence they must be raised with the smallest amount of offal possible, and the cross I recommend will give you that. Those pullets if fed right will be prolific layers and good sized birds—birds to sell in almost 13 months from the time they are hatched. This is the routine for profit: Hatch your chicks out in April; market your cockerels in June, July and August; have your pullets laying in November, December, January, February, March and April; fatten your pullets for May and early June; keep none of them over after the first year as they will at no time lay like they will the first year of their lives. When you wish to fatten feed a little heavier, by adding more shorts or corn meal, which will stop egg-production (when twelve and a half cents per dozen,) and you will have fine fat and young fowls for sale when the market is practically bare, which will mean increase in price. This can all be done by intelligent feeding and care. In this business, as in all others, if you do nothing, nothing will be the result.

You see by this cross that you will have to procure a thoroughbred Brown Leghorn rooster to put with that Plymouth Rock stock; and try and procure one from an egg-laying strain. While I recommend this cross, don't you make the Leghorn your foundation; if you do you will have small hens and when you put in a Plymouth cockerel he will be too heavy for them and will break down the wings and you will have crippled fowls, and instead of their laying eggs, nature will be trying to replace short wings.

If you will read close you will see that in case your stock was light colored and you wished to improve them, to put a Wyandotte male with them. I have noticed that where the fowls are of light color they run to Leghorn, but the selected would be of course the larger ones, and the Wyandotte, being a larger bird than the Plymouth Rock, would bring your birds up to the standard size the first year.

Now, this fall buy or raise your leg-horn rooster—brown or white which ever way your color runs. Don't put white with your colored, or brown with your white stock. If you do your colors will not be uniform. Keep that young rooster from the other sex till February 1st. Look well after those pullets; and if you have fed for eggs, by February they will have thrown off their chickenhood and assumed the ways of good-built hens and by this time you will have become acquainted with them and will know about twelve to fifteen that are prolific layers. They are the birds to

breed from. Put them into their breeding quarters with that vigorous young rooster and you will have young chicks that will make you jump around to keep them fed, they will grow so fast and will always be hungry. It is a good sign of thrift when every time the attendant comes in sight to see the chickens run to see if there is anything around to eat. Force and crowd them along for growth. It will be argued by some—yes, but in this cross you increase the size of the comb and that is a drawback in hardiness. I want to say right here, you had no business to put fowls into quarters where their large combs would be a detriment to them by being frozen. My mind reverts to a pen of seven single comb brown Leghorns that were hatched out in May last and began to lay in November; they had exceedingly large combs that fell over before they began to lay, and their combs were not touched by the frost; but they paid the owners for the good care, for they laid over an average of 80 per cent of the total number each day. This was done by work, work! But you must breed those combs down, and the third year of your cross in selecting your breeding birds, other things being equal, select those with lowest combs, not from a hardy standpoint particularly, but from an offal one—you cannot sell combs. But keep the egg yield in view, as the eggs from such a grown fowl, laying good for six months, should be worth at the least \$2, but it would be more; and her dressed carcass 50 cents; it would cost (to buy food) to keep, not to exceed 75 cents for those cockerels—would pay all expenses up to laying maturity; but it would not cost the farmer that much; he would not have to use such heavy teams to carry his eggs and poultry to market as he would to haul his grain, and the manure from his fowls would be worth as much as guano if kept dry and pulverized.

I often hear the remark, "We have some fowls in our flock as good as any thoroughbreds I have seen;" and they should have, for oftentimes they have one to two hundred but only a very few laying. If these few are selected each year and bred as I have laid down, it will be only a few years before very near all of them will be good layers; but you must select and that close. The fact that parties have blooded fowls does not give them layers. I have seen thoroughbreds that were the vardest scrubs and the barnyard hen was worth 100 per cent more for practical purposes.

The third year do the same as before—sell the cockerels and that Leghorn rooster and in the month of February put in a Plymouth Rock rooster and so alternate each year; but you will not notice such good results as the first cross and hence if you can, it will be better to start a new foundation every third year.

While I have talked about crosses, don't for one moment think that I would speak disparagingly of thorough bred fowls, for I just love to see them, and especially well bred and taken good care of.

I said, don't feed corn; but there are times when I would feed corn in the winter if I found the thermometer (I keep them in my coops) was running

down to zero; I should feed my hens last feed at night corn made warm by placing in an oven.

If by some chance I should over-feed, and the fowls became too fat, I should put them upon water alone for a few days or just give them their morning mash and withhold their grain and make them do extra work scratching. For scratching material there is nothing better than leaves, and there are thousands of loads going to waste every year; give your fowls four inches of sand and six inches of leaves and bury the grain in it, and see how they will enjoy it, the fowls will think it is summer and they will sing and lay eggs to order. If you have an old cow and she don't pay to fatten, kill her and feed her flesh and bones to the hens, and likewise feed the hay you would have fed to your old cow to the hens and you will find it will give you a great deal more profit.

This summer see that you provide plenty of vegetables for your flocks—cabbage especially. If you want to see some fun, with money in it, hang a cabbage in your coop just high enough for your fowls to reach and see how they will enjoy it, when everything is frozen up. Procure for them carrots, beets, potatoes, celery, watercress, onions—in fact there is nothing that comes amiss or need be wasted. I even take the cabbage stalks and grind them up. My hens tumble over one another to procure some when put into their morning mash. In the spring and summer time you can take the weeds and green lucern and put it through a chaff cutting machine and mix with your morning feed, and they will devour enormous quantities—saving your grain—and your chicks will be healthier for it. In fact, as one writer tersely puts it, "We must feed more grass and less grain to procure eggs and healthy fowls."

Don't forget that in winter you must supply those bugs and worms that Biddy picks up in the summer time. Now, you can't catch these and preserve them for winter; so give them that old cow or old sheep; do away with so many dogs and feed the bones and scraps you give them to your hens. Give the hen her teeth (grit) or else her digestive organs will soon cease to operate and she will die in the midst of plenty. G. H. C.

I enclose you a clipping from *Farm Poultry*—written by Editor Hunter, who is not only an editor but one of the best poultry men in the United States—entitled, "4,000 eggs in December," also "The Captain Beats Our Record." I do this to show that I have not been telling your readers any Arabian Nights tales, but that I have kept a long way inside of the line of the money there is to be made in poultry. But it must be worked for. G. H. C.

FOUR THOUSAND EGGS IN DECEMBER.

We didn't quite do it—the exact figures being 3,957—but we expected to pass the 4,000 mark, and up to Christmas day there was every indication that we would do so; but, our young man went home for a week's vacation, and the eggs dropped off a little—one here, another there, possibly owing to slight difference in quantity of food, and we were 43 eggs short of our ambition.

The record is perfectly satisfactory as