

THE POULTRY INDUSTRY.

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JUNE is a slack month in the poultry year. Pullets hatched at the right time should be now all at the top of their laying-form, but the second-year birds, though perhaps looking well and apparently in a laying-condition, will not in most cases commence their second laying season till July. As a natural consequence egg-values may then be expected to decline. The fact that the supply increases all over the country in the months of July and August is an indication either that the bulk of the laying-birds are old stock, or that the pullets have not been hatched at the right time or to the best advantage. The three- and four-year-old bird will never prove a profitable layer, any more than will the late-hatched pullet. Both are unsatisfactory stock, not only from the viewpoint of egg-production but from a disease-resisting standpoint. It is unnecessary to here emphasize the mistake of keeping fowls beyond their second laying season; that they will never lay sufficiently well in their third season to show a decent profit over cost of production has been emphasized times out of number. After the second season a bird will only produce her eggs during the natural season, and thus not only provide a comparatively small number of eggs, but will give these when the cheapest markets rule.

Late-hatched stock are unprofitable, because in the first place the needful robustness is seldom or never secured, and thus the percentage of birds which must be culled is unduly high. They are also more subject to adverse conditions than the bird bred at the right time. It stands to reason that, hatched in the warm weather and coming on to the colder months before maturity is reached, the highly organized egg-type of pullet is called upon to face conditions which put too severe a strain on her, especially if she is not protected in every way from extremes of weather. I have of late had many inquiries with regard to colds, roup, &c., and in practically every case have been able to trace the cause to late hatching and absence of the special care demanded to enable such birds to combat those influences of nature antagonistic to satisfactory development they have been called upon to face.

I have repeatedly emphasized the fact that there is no satisfactory cure for well-developed disease in poultry stock. Prevention is the one thing to aim at; and the first thing to see to in this connection is that the bird has the necessary constitution to ward off disease should this unfortunately appear. In hatching stock late in the season disease is therefore openly invited.