

so essential to the best results. Of course, judicious inbreeding is one of the chief secrets of success in advancing type, but it is a pitfall to the inexperienced, and even to the keen enthusiast is fraught with danger in the absence of the exact knowledge necessary to its successful application.

SOME DIFFICULTIES.

In asking for information in regard to several details of management, a subscriber raises some points of such general interest that it may prove instructive if I deal with them in this column.

Is it better to keep fowls in small flocks shut up in small runs, or large flocks on free range? is an old problem. Confinement too restricted is not good for any bird, and having a free range a small flock will do much better than in confinement, provided, of course, that where winter eggs are desired the birds have comfortable quarters and good scratching-accommodation in which they can shelter in cold and unfavourable weather. Of course, a small flock will always give a relatively better profit than a large one—indeed, it will generally be found that the greater the number of birds run together the lower will be the average return.

The use of a male bird is unnecessary unless the eggs are required for hatching purposes.

As to the desirability of providing grit as well as oyster-shells, some breeds will certainly do well on sea-shells alone. As a preventive of liver-troubles, however, sharp gravel grit is always advisable, and in the case of some of the heavier breeds it is essential.

There is no best-balanced ration. The most satisfactory results are obtained where a hen is allowed to balance its own ration, especially where the birds are of varying laying-capacity. Green stuff cannot be oversupplied, providing, of course, the birds are fed a sufficiency of other materials—a good warm mash in the morning (two parts pollard to one of bran) mixed with skim-milk or meat soup, boiled meat at midday (as much as the birds will readily eat up), and grain at night.

Providing the birds are of a heavy-laying strain, give them as much food as they can consume at each meal. No definite amount can be stipulated as to the daily supply for a flock of birds, as their appetities vary much according to the season, the weather, and the laying-condition of the birds.

To secure winter eggs the object should be to breed birds at such a time and manage them in such a way that they will not go into a moult during the pullet stage. To get winter layers to commence in the month of April, light birds should be hatched at the end of September, and the heavier birds a month earlier. Of course, some strains mature earlier than others, and this should be allowed for.