

## MARKETING POULTRY FOR THE TABLE.

### A STRIKING TEST OF THE PRIMING PROCESS.

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THE marketing of poultry, especially cockerels, in a proper table condition is an adjunct to egg-production the value of which is not appreciated in New Zealand as it should be. The great bulk of our poultry is marketed in merely store condition, and thus sold at merely store prices. Yet were cockerels marketed at a right age—four to five months old—and properly primed, they would bring highly profitable prices, and the table-poultry trade would be a valuable source of income to the producer.

In order to give some idea of the money now being lost to the industry by the marketing of poultry for table purposes in poor and practically unsaleable condition, and incidentally to demonstrate the cost entailed by feeding birds from month to month (vast numbers of cockerels are fed up to eight to twelve months, when they should have been sold at half that age), the Department recently conducted a feeding-test for determining the actual cost of converting the ordinary store birds seen at city auction-rooms into a prime table condition.

A number of cockerels were purchased under competition at one of the weekly auctions at Christchurch. They were taken to the Department's reserve at Quail Island, and there fed on ordinary well-balanced fattening-diet. After twenty-four to thirty-one days' treatment the birds were again offered for sale at the same auction-mart, and returned, after deducting cost of feeding, a profit of 92 per cent. The result affords a striking illustration of the value of priming poultry before marketing, and also of the money lost to the poultry-keepers of this country by failure to treat their birds for market in an intelligent manner.

Thirty-one cockerels took part in the test, divided into two pens, No. 1 containing fifteen birds and No. 2 having sixteen.