

the flock are three or four years old, and the hatching of the young stock has been delayed owing to the inability to secure the necessary number of broody hens, it will certainly be wise to hatch out sufficient chicks to replace next autumn the old birds that have passed their profitable period of production. Where the hatching-period is to be extended the stock will never prove satisfactory unless they are given clean fresh ground to run on, and provided with ample shade and shelter. Naturally, good feeding, a regular supply of green stuff, grit, and clean water are also essential.

Where ducks are kept, these can be hatched out much later, as they come to maturity earlier than chickens, and therefore have not the cold autumn snaps to contend against before they are developed.

MANAGEMENT OF GROWING STOCK.

The common practice of putting young stock direct from the brooder into a house where no special provision is made for hardening them off by degrees is responsible for heavy losses each season. Whenever it can be managed the birds should be kept in the same brooder without heat for several days before removal. The age at which they should be transferred depends largely upon the weather conditions. As a general rule, if they have been hardened off gradually in the brooder they can be removed with safety when from six to seven weeks old. It is important that suitable sleeping-quarters be provided for them in the colony houses, or they are very liable to get a set-back. If after being accustomed during the brooder stage to nestle under the hover in darkness and seclusion (as a family) they are placed in an open house, they will huddle together at night, each pushing and scrambling for an inside position. This is not necessarily because they require more warmth, but on account of their instinctive habit of choosing a secluded sleeping-place. If this huddling is allowed, the chickens will get into a sweated condition, and trouble is sure to follow. A darkened yet airy sleeping-place where they will settle down in comfort for the night should always be provided. All that is necessary is a light wood frame covered with scrim or one thickness of sacking, which should hang down to within 2 in. of the floor and be cut into strips similar to the draping of a brooder-hover. The frame may be made to stand on legs or be suspended by wires from the roof. Whichever method be used it should be arranged for easy removal, as the more often the hover is placed in the sunshine the better for the health of the chickens. If difficulty is experienced during the first night in getting the chicks to remain under the hover, temporary boards may be placed at