

ideal breeding-bird, but when subjected to the test of a laying season it may not only prove to be a poor layer, but to possess a weak constitution as well. In such a case this would mean that the weak offspring would be hatched and probably half-reared before discovery of the mother's weakness. No female should be placed in the breeding-pen unless it has proved its value as a layer during its first season of production, and at the same time maintained constitutional vigour. Of course, early-hatched well-matured pullets that have been bred on proper lines, when mated with a second-year cock, may produce excellent progeny. The risk, however, of having a high percentage of weak ones is always there, as compared with using well-tested hens. Never mate young pullets and cockerels together, as the progeny from such a union generally lacks constitutional vigour, while the females will usually lay undersized eggs.

One little point that may be referred to in regard to male birds of the lighter breeds and which carry a heavy or falling-over comb and long wattles is the advisability of removing both the latter. The comb is often a burden for a bird to carry, while the wattles prevent it from picking up its grain, especially when fed in grass runs or deep litter. As a result its health and general condition become impaired, and consequently a high percentage of infertile eggs and weakly chicks follow. For a male bird to do the best service in the breeding-pen it must be maintained in its best possible form.

It is always advisable to give breeding-birds a good range, this being conducive to the maintenance of good health and vigour. Where they are kept in a confined space they should be induced to exercise as much as possible by making them scratch in litter for their grain food. On no account should breeding-birds be forced for egg-production. Rich foods, such as meat, &c., should be sparingly supplied. Good results as to both fertility and stock can be obtained from the feeding of mixed hard grain, such as wheat, maize, and oats, to the breeders night and morning. Breeding-birds require a liberal supply of green stuff, while ample fresh water and grit are details which must not be neglected.

THE APIARY.

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In these days of organization and co-operation the worry of trying to sell the honey no longer occupies the attention of beekeepers, and they are thus able to devote their whole attention to production. This is as it should be, and leaves a little more time to devote to the off-season work of attending to the repairing of hives and covers, repainting, and generally to make plans for the coming season. If circumstances permit, they will be enabled to enjoy a well-earned vacation, knowing that the bees have been left in good condition, with a plentiful supply of stores, and so will be all right to leave for a few weeks. It may be well to remind those beekeepers who feel they have earned this rest that the annual conference of New Zealand beekeepers will be held at Wellington on the 11th, 12th, and 13th June. The