

meat, meat-meal, &c., are included in the ration, these have the effect of forcing the bird to lay at too early an age, with the result that she seldom grows to a desired size or lays a decent marketable egg. On the other hand, a ration consisting of good grain materials and a liberal supply of green food will tend towards encouraging growth, and not prematurity. Especially does this apply if a high percentage of good plump oats (preferably hulled) are included in the ration. Oats, providing they are of good quality, are an outstanding food for the growing pullet, while, on the other hand, inferior oats are next to useless for any class of poultry.

Of course, in all flocks some pullets will commence laying much sooner than others, even when a plain diet has been provided. In such cases it is a mistake to reduce the ration for the flock with a view to delaying the laying-period. The only safe course is to give the birds as much food as they can eat, and let nature take its course as to when the productive season commences. Generally speaking, the growing pullets require three good meals a day. As is the case with any class of live-stock, good and liberal feeding is one of the secrets in building up desired size and stamina.

Do not on any account neglect, if possible, to give the pullets a good range. The same may be said in regard to the cockerel intended for breeding purposes. It is essential that the birds be kept in the best of health at all times, and there is nothing more conducive to this than a good range, so that ample exercise may be secured. This should not be confused with the management of the cockerel being prepared for market, as confined quarters are essential if the greatest weight is to be put on in a minimum of time.

Never allow the young pullets of various ages and sizes to run together, as this tends against the younger members of the flock making good headway. It is always a wise course to grade young stock according to their age and size. Of course, there are wasters in every flock which are seldom or never worth troubling with. When these are detected they should be got rid of, as not only are they susceptible to all kinds of disease, but they rarely prove profitable to keep for egg-laying.

Always at this season of the year I receive many complaints regarding leg-weaknesses in half-grown cockerels. This trouble is usually due to insufficient exercise, caused usually by confining the birds in small runs, coops, &c. These conditions tend to overforce the body, which becomes too heavy for the legs to carry. Once a bird is affected in this way there is practically no cure. Prevention is the only way of dealing with this trouble, and the best preventive is to provide ample room for exercise. Many breeders, after selecting the most desirable cockerels for future breeding purposes, make a mistake by placing them in confined quarters with little more room than enough to turn in, usually with the result that the most promising male specimens lose the power of their limbs, and are finally sold as table birds. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the cockerel intended for the breeding-pen should never be coddled, but, on the other hand, should rather be given the most natural conditions possible.

#### THE ADULT FLOCK.

The feeding of the adult flock is another matter calling for special attention at the present time. Hens it is intended to dispose of at the end of the present productive season should be provided with a forcing diet, in order that every available egg be secured before the birds are got rid of. On the other hand, birds it is intended to breed from next season should be given a plain diet, with a view to retarding egg-laying, so that their vitality will not be weakened when called upon to produce eggs for reproductive purposes.

A correspondent asks if it would be a wise course to encourage his hens to rest now with the hope of their laying better during the winter months. This I cannot recommend, as the less nature's course is interfered with the better. This brings to my mind the advice spread broadcast a few years ago that by giving a starvation ration and inducing a false moult the hens would lay right through the dear-egg season. It may have proved all right under special local conditions, but some breeders who tried it here found it to be all wrong. The birds moulted when it was desired, but they moulted again in the late autumn, which practically meant that neither autumn nor winter eggs were secured. For winter eggs there is no doubt that pullets, provided they are hatched out at the right time (say, September for the light breeds, and a month earlier for the heavier breeds), are the most desirable birds. Then, if the birds are not to be bred from, every available egg should be forced out of them until they prove unprofitable to keep, and this irrespective of the season and price of eggs.