

it should be. Under the present general system of disposal by the dozen quite irrespective of their weight the purchaser must frequently, if not always, pay too much for small eggs and too little for large ones. For example, it is common to see lines of eggs in shop-windows ranging from $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to $1\frac{3}{4}$ oz. and ticketed up at, say, 2s. a dozen, whereas probably in the next shop 2 oz. eggs and over may be seen marked up at exactly the same figure. Recently a poultry-keeper brought to the writer a line of eggs which scaled 30 oz. to the dozen, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz. each. He declared that in a wholesale way he got no more for this class of egg than the average line of $1\frac{3}{4}$ oz.

It has been decided that no egg under 2 oz. in weight can be considered as a first-grade exportable article, and here the question arises, Why should there be one grade for export and another for local consumption? If it is necessary to specially define what a first-grade egg should be in order to work up a successful oversea trade, then surely it is of equal importance to do likewise for the local market. The local consuming public is prepared to pay a good price for a good quantity and quality egg, but they cannot be expected to pay top prices for eggs of doubtful quality. It is only when the central egg-collecting depots resort to the grading and testing of eggs, as is being done for export, that the local market will be placed on a sound footing. It is at these places that, after being tested and graded, the eggs should be stamped according to their grade and guarantee of quality. Under the present general system of organized control the producer applies the brand of the circle and his individual number, but this is next to useless as a guarantee of quality, as in too many cases the eggs are placed in the carriers just as they come from the nest, without regard to cleanliness or distinction as to size and colour. It would be interesting if some cases of eggs as packed for export were displayed in one of the shop-windows of a leading grocer and offered for sale for preserving purposes. It is safe to say that such guaranteed quality would easily realize from 2d. to 3d. a dozen over ordinary market rates.

It is to be hoped that at the next conference of the New Zealand Poultry Association steps will be taken to place the marketing of eggs on a more satisfactory footing. The egg-laying competitions are making a special effort by means of weight clauses to increase the size of eggs produced in these tests. It now rests with the egg-circle movement to take up the matter in a similar manner by defining what a first-grade egg really is, and seeing that the market rate is based on this and not on the doubtful article.

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THE APIARY.

FEEDING AS A SAFEGUARD.

In many districts there is a distinct break in the honey-flow from the cessation of the willow and fruit bloom until the clover makes its appearance. It is during this period that the bees must be carefully watched, not only to see that they are not dying of starvation, but also to provide for a sufficient increase in young bees which will develop into field workers by the time the main honey-flow arrives. Gently stimulative feeding is the best course to adopt at this period. The quantity of syrup fed will depend largely upon the strength of the hives. If feeding has to be resorted to the sugar-syrup may be fed in a less concentrated form than that which is given in the autumn and spring months, the quantity of water being increased. A syrup fed in the proportion of one of sugar to six of water is all that is required, and will be the means of keeping the colonies strong in brood and bees. The invariable rule should be observed always to feed in the evening and inside the hive.

VENTILATION.

No set time can be given for increasing the size of the entrances, but the action of the bees should be noted. If where the entrances to the hives were contracted in the autumn to prevent the intrusion of mice they have not been already widened, they should be attended to at once. Proper ventilation during the working season is an important item in bee-management, as it relieves large