

keep them longer even if all could be sold later on. In the advertising section of this issue will be found the conditions and prices at which birds for breeding purposes may be secured from Wallaceville.

#### Standard Grade Eggs.

The question of selling eggs according to their weight and internal quality is receiving more attention than ever before in many parts of the world, including England and Canada, and New Zealand is at last awakening to the necessity for this move. Should this much-needed reform be carried into effect it is safe to assume that nothing less than a 2 oz. product will be regarded as first-standard grade. Under the present system of marketing—at any rate so far as Wellington is concerned—the man with a small-egg strain of birds is in a happy position, as he receives a similar price for his 1½ oz. eggs as the man with a 2-oz.-producing strain. Obviously the consumer pays on this basis relatively too much for small eggs and not enough for large ones.

The worst feature of this system lies in the fact that there is no inducement for the producer to breed for large eggs. I have in mind a flock of Black Minorcas which, apart from the early-laying stage of the pullets, can generally be depended upon to produce eggs weighing from 2 oz. to 2¼ oz. While the great merit of many strains of the domestic fowl we possess is undeniable, there is a tendency for the average flock to become smaller and smaller individually each year; consequently the eggs laid are also smaller. Although the present system of marketing gives little or no encouragement to breeders to work up a large-egg strain, it is satisfactory to know that there are still in the Dominion strains which retain the needed size, stamina, and power to produce good numbers of first-grade eggs. The warning, however, is at hand that the consuming public will not long continue to pay top prices for eggs which rattle in the egg-cup.

Poultry-eeper possessing a small-egg strain would be well advised to mend their methods of breeding and management, so that at least the great majority of the flock will produce 2 oz. eggs or over—the size so much desired not only on the local market but overseas as well. Just as the number of eggs can be increased by careful breeding and selection, so can the size be increased by the same process. The tendency to small eggs will never be counteracted while yield in numbers is regarded as the one and only essential in a breeding-bird. A hen, however good a layer, should not be put in a breeding-pen if it lays a small egg. The birds laying the best eggs should be chosen—provided, of course, that their laying-capacity is satisfactory and that they possess points indicating a strong constitution.

As a means of tracing birds which lay good-sized eggs the use of trap-nests or single pens is necessary. It is true that the man with a trained eye for form can generally distinguish between the good and bad layer towards the end of their first productive season, but it is impossible to judge from the appearance of a bird at any period of its life the size of egg likely to be produced. It must be admitted that individual hens will sometimes lay eggs of varied size according to the season of the year, &c., but as a rule a normal product may be looked for a few weeks before the termination of the first laying-season. One of the secrets in maintaining a large-egg-laying strain lies in knowing that the male bird is the son of a mother that produces an egg of a desired size. Obviously this cannot well be ascertained unless the use of trap-nests or single pens is resorted to.

—F. C. Brown, Chief Poultry Instructor, Wellington.