

Notes for the Poultry Farmer

Contributed by Officers
of the
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It is well known that there is a marked difference in the producing capacity of hens of different breeds, and of individual birds of the same breed and strain, in spite of the fact that the birds have been carefully bred, managed, and fed in the same way.

For these reasons the art of culling, or eliminating from the flock those

portance of physical strength and constitution.

Just as there is a marked difference in the producing capacity of hens, so there is a variation in their vigour and vitality, and for this reason, if the best results are to be obtained, culling must be almost a constant job, especially on the commercial egg-farm.

beads. It soon learns to eat and drink, is difficult to catch, and appears quite independent.

Watch Constitutional Vigour

As constitutional vigour is so important, it is advisable to keep a careful watch on each batch of chickens as they grow, and any that fail to develop like the majority or suffer from indigestion, diarrhoea, or other ailments should be culled, or at least marked so that they will never reach the breeding pen. This is advisable because it is quite possible that some such birds may appear to grow out of a weakness, but there is always the danger of a weakness being inherited, and if these birds are used for breeding the weakness is likely to be transmitted to their offspring.

Fig. 1 shows two White Leghorn chickens of the same age and from the same hatch. The bird on the left is strong and healthy and has done well since birth, while the bird on the right is a weak specimen that is never likely to be profitable. Such birds should be destroyed, for they are a danger in any flock. They are susceptible to any ailment, and are likely to start trouble, or even an epidemic.

Fig. 2 shows two Black Orpington chickens of the same age and from the same hatch. The bird on the right is a normal healthy specimen and has done well, while the one on the left is stunted and is never likely to give the best results. Such a bird may grow out of the apparent weakness, but it is advisable to cull it from the flock, or at least it should be marked so that it will never be used for breeding purposes.

Culling Pullets

It is a good plan to give the pullets a careful inspection when they are being placed in their laying quarters. Any backward or unthrifty birds should be culled, together with those showing any deformity, such as

The Art of Culling

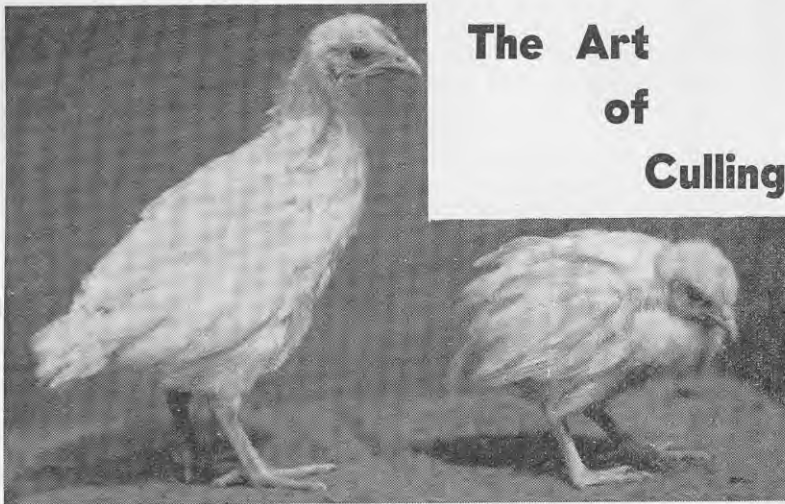


Fig. 1.—Two White Leghorn chickens of the same age and from the same hatch. The bird on the left is strong and healthy, while the bird on the right is a weak specimen and never likely to be profitable.

birds that are not likely to produce sufficient eggs to give an adequate return for their keep, is one of the greatest essentials to successful poultry-keeping.

When to Cull

The modern utility White Leghorn hen is expected to produce about five times her own weight in eggs during her first laying year. This production very largely depends upon the ability of the hen to eat and digest a large amount of food in excess of that required to build up wasted tissues and maintain natural conditions. Therefore, one must realise the great im-

To start with, there is usually a certain number of weak chickens in each hatch. These should be destroyed, for only good, strong chickens should be placed under the brooders.

The weak chicken can usually be picked out by its small, short, thin body, squeaky, peevish voice, and thin, pale shanks and beak. It lacks activity, appears dull and stupid, has a poor appetite, and is slow to learn to feed and drink. On the other hand, the strong, healthy chicken has a plump, full body, good strong well-coloured shanks and beak, is very active, and has dark bright eyes standing out like