

Notes for the Poultry Farmer

Determination of Sex in Chickens

SUPERSTITIONS still survive among all classes of people, including poultrykeepers. One of these superstitions is that the sex of the yet unhatched chick is determined by the shape of the egg—a long one would give one sex and a short, round one the other sex. Actually, the shape of the egg has no influence on the sex of the chick at all. More often than not a badly shaped egg is infertile, but there is no doubt that the shape of the egg plays a big part in the physical quality of the chick hatched from it.

In the past, quite a few appliances have appeared which claimed to show whether an egg would produce a pullet or a cockerel chick when hatched, but no method has yet been found to indicate whether an egg was even fertile or not, except the obvious one of incubating it. Naturally, the first step along this road would be the possibility of detecting life in the egg before placing it in the incubator. Determination of the sex in the egg would follow later. However, the determination of the sex of day-old chicks is an accepted fact, and the practice of chick-sexing is established on commercial lines.

Method of Sexing

It is not proposed to give a detailed account of how sexing is done. The underlying principle has been known for some time, but was first exploited by the Japanese. Briefly, it entails the recognition of a small protuberance just inside the vent. To make this examination, the vent is turned inside out, and with care and practice this manipulation will not harm the chicks at all. The sexing must be done while the chicks are very young, as the structural differences by which the sexes are distinguished lose their distinctiveness in a matter of a day or so. Canadian and American investigators also worked on this problem and evolved a slightly different technique, but their method is still based on the recognition of the "genital protuberance."

Essentials for The Work

There are quite a few New Zealanders sexing chicks in this country, and there is enough work for many more. The chief essentials for this work are supple fingers (slender for preference), really good eyesight, and an

By **S. G. HADDON**,
Poultry Instructor, Auckland.

ability to concentrate for long periods. Many young people are taking up sexing while their sight is still good and their hands are not yet set. The equipment needed is merely a good electric lamp of, say, 300 watts, and a suitable shade to concentrate the light in the desired place. Some sexers use a pair of magnifying anatomical spectacles or a single lens on a stand.

Learning Sexing

Two or three publications on sexing illustrated with diagrams and photographs are obtainable, and persons of average intelligence should not have any difficulty in obtaining a grasp of the required procedure from these books. It is then a case of continual practice, which may become rather expensive, as the chicks need to be killed and opened up for verification as soon as they have been sexed. The beginner will learn more by this method than by rearing the two sexes separately, as by the time

the sex of the chicks has become apparent some six weeks later the value of the test will have been lost.

Some of the sexers in this country give tuition in sexing, and this tuition is available at least one agricultural college. Most sexers will agree that accuracy and speed in sexing are largely influenced by correct methods in holding the chick, and on this point alone practical instruction is of far more value than any amount of theoretical study.

Advantages of Sexing

The biggest advantage from sexing is the saving in the amount of brooder equipment needed to rear any given number of pullets. A farmer might have brooder room for 500 day-old chicks, but by using sexed pullet chicks the same results are obtained as if twice the amount of brooder equipment were used to rear 1000 unsexed chicks. The final result would be the same—about 450 pullets. In other words, the use of sexed day-old chicks will just about double the existing brooder capacity.

Another important point is the saving in the amount of food used. Unwanted cockerels have to be kept

POULTRY KEEPERS FARMERS

Owing to our specialised and long experience in the **POULTRY BUSINESS**, and the handling of Grain and Produce, we are able to supply farmers and poultry keepers in ample quantities with Australian Wheat, Stock Meals, Maize, Barley, Meatmeals, Chaff, Oats, and Meals. Deal with this new firm that gives you personal service. Prompt deliveries are made after receipt of order. Write for details and price list.

Special Offer!

PURE PEA MEAL

£11/15/- per ton. 12/- per 100lb.
F.O.R.

A. M. DOULL & CO.

60-62 Hobson Street, AUCKLAND, C.1.
Distributors of Grain, Produce, Potatoes,
Onions, etc.



Mr. Alan M. Doull was until recently, Manager and Buyer of the Grain and Produce Departments of Messrs. Turner & Growers Ltd., and has an extensive knowledge, acquired over a period of 21 years.