

MANAGEMENT OF HOUSEHOLD POULTRY . . .

Experimental studies have shown that with reliable preservatives the loss in the vitamin content of eggs stored for 6 to 9 months is so small as to be negligible.

When preserved eggs are used in cooking each one should be broken separately into a saucer as a precaution before tipping it into the other ingredients.

Progress of Pullet Rearing

By December provision should have been made for replacement pullets for next season's laying. Householders have had the choice between breeding from their own hens and buying stock; between buying them at day old or at the perching stage; between buying them sexed or unsexed; and even between buying them at 6, 8, or 10 weeks of age or ordering them for delivery when they are near laying. Some of these courses are not open now, but if pullets are required to replace old birds being culled out, early arrangements should be made for their purchase. The aim should be to have the pullets from 12 to 15 weeks old in the case of light breeds and 16 to 19 weeks old with heavy and cross-breeds by Christmas time.

Many householders rear their replacement stock from chicks hatched in November and even later, but these birds will be late in coming into production and will not show the margin of profit that will be given by chickens hatched in August or September.

Poultry keepers who are now rearing young chicks should bear in mind that, proficient as the mother hen has become through the ages, Nature has put obstacles in the way of any plant, animal, or bird crowding out the rest. Consequently, provision must be made to guard against the weather, disease, parasites, and natural enemies.

A broody hen which is to rear chicks must have proper shelter. A weatherproof box or coop with an adjustable door and reasonable ventilation should be placed in a dry position, safe from flooding in the event of a storm. It must be sufficiently roomy and should have a wire-netting coop adjoining for a run. This coop is made with a wooden frame, the netting being stretched over two sides, one end, and the top. The uncovered end is placed against the box coop. Both units should be moved frequently to clean positions on short grass. The hen and chicks can be allowed to range outside the coop on suitable days if there is no danger from natural enemies or of damage being done to the adjacent garden.

It is essential that the mother hen be in good health, free from contagious disease, scaly leg, lice, and intestinal worms. She should be treated and freed from parasites before the chickens are given to her. Her quarters should be treated for red mite. These troubles are certain to be passed on to the chicks if the broody hen has any of them.

If artificial brooders are used, when the chicks no longer need the heat and have learned to perch they should be transferred to their growing quarters. They should be neither left with the mother hen or in a brooder coop which has become too crowded nor transferred into the hen house with the layers. If space is restricted, the hens should be kept inside their house and the growing pullets given all the fresh, clean run space possible—recently-spelled land with ample greenfeed coverage. The elaborate type of house required for the layers is not necessary for the pullets. All they need is reasonable shelter (mainly at night), perches 3 to 4 in. wide, clean feeding troughs (and perhaps hoppers), drinking vessels kept in a cool spot, and a box of grit. As long as ventilation is ample and the flooring can be cleaned out readily almost any simple type of rainproof shelter is sufficient. Instead of a solid floor to the colony house good-quality netting stretched tightly over the floor supports allows droppings to fall through so that the pullets cannot scratch among them. The pullets should be transferred to their laying quarters when they redder up just before coming on to the lay.

Seasonal culling should not be restricted to the older birds. The progress of the growing stock should be watched constantly and the owner should not hesitate to cut the potential loss of profits from backward pullets. Retaining backward and ailing pullets is a waste of time and feeding cost, and hoping that they will catch up to the others later is too optimistic. They are a danger to the rest, as it is the weaklings that contract diseases first.

A. AND P. SHOW DATES

FOLLOWING are the dates and venues of A. and P. shows up to the end of February.

December 3—Winton A. and P. at Winton.

December 3—Tokomairiro A. and P. at Milton.

December 3—Whangaroa A. and P. at Kaeo.

*December 3—Hauraki A. and P. at Paeroa.

December 6 and 7—Gore A. and P. at Gore.

December 10—Motueka A. and P. at Motueka.

December 10—Wyndham A. and P. at Wyndham.

*December 13 and 14—Southland A. and P. at Invercargill.

December 17—Otago Peninsula A. and P. at Portobello.

January 2—Nuhaka A. and P. at Nuhaka.

*January 13 and 14—Wairoa County A. and P. at Wairoa.

January 14—Waikouaiti A. and P. at Waikouaiti.

*January 21—Tauranga A. and P. at Tauranga.

January 21—Marton District A. and P. at Marton.

January 21—Central Hawkes Bay A. and P. at Waipukurau.

January 27 and 28—Horowhenua A. and P. at Levin.

January 27 and 28—Taumarunui and District A. and P. at Taumarunui.

January 28—Waiapu A. and P. at Tautapepe.

January 28—Helensville A. and P. at Helensville.

*January 31 and February 1—Feilding I. A. and P. at Feilding.

February 4—Palmerston and Waihemo A. and P. at Palmerston.

February 4—Rodney Agricultural Society at Warkworth.

*February 4—Woodville A. and P. at Woodville.

February 4—Clevedon A. and P. at Clevedon.

February 4—Golden Bay A. and P. at Takaka.

*February 7 and 8—Dannevirke District A. and P. at Dannevirke.

February 10 and 11—Rangitikei A. and P. at Taihape.

February 10 and 11—Taranaki A. and P. at New Plymouth.

February 11—Murchison A. and P. at Murchison.

February 11—Hukerenui A. and P. at Hukerenui.

February 11—Katikati A. and P. at Katikati.

February 11—Waitemata A. and P. at Waiwera.

*February 11—Pahiatua A. and P. at Pahiatua.

February 11—Putaruru A. and P. at Putaruru.

February 15 and 16—Ohura A. P. H. and I. at Nihoniho.

February 16—Christchurch Stud Ram Fair at Christchurch.

February 16 and 17—Christchurch Flock Ram Fair at Christchurch.

February 17 and 18—Franklin A. and P. at Pukekohe.

February 17 and 18—Masterton A. and P. at Masterton.

February 18—Northern Wairoa A. and P. at Mititai.

February 18—North Kaipara Agricultural Association at Paparoa.

February 18—Te Puke A. and P. at Te Puke.

February 22—Te Awamutu A. and P. at Te Awamutu.

February 22—Opotiki A. and P. at Opotiki.

February 25—Waiapu P. and I. at Ruatoria.

*February 25—Whakatane and Rangitai A. and P. at Whakatane.

February 25—Waimarino A. P. H. and I. at Raetihi.

February 28—Otorohanga A. and P. at Otorohanga.

* The Department of Agriculture exhibit will be staged at this show.