



Typical type of fold unit. This system has lost much of its popularity in recent years, mainly because artificial lighting in winter is not a practical proposition with it.

artificial lighting in winter is used with the latter system. During the war and post-war years the deep litter system was developed and as experience has grown with this new system it has become evident that it is another method by which increased winter egg production can be obtained. At the same time experience was gained with the straw yard system, which has proved to be a better proposition for winter egg production; more particularly for the general farmer who in the past has kept birds on free range or in fold units.

Thus the commercial egg farmer in Britain is turning more and more toward intensive systems for running pullet flocks because of the chances of increased winter egg production and the consequent greater monetary returns in winter.

**Comparison of Intensive Systems**

If it is accepted that the intensive systems give increased winter egg production as compared with the semi-intensive fold unit and free range system, the question arises as to which of the intensive systems give the best money return for eggs produced. Evidence collected to Britain from experiments and practical demonstrations indicates that the highest production, particularly in winter, can be obtained with laying batteries including the use of artificial lighting during the winter months.

The laying battery system involves a considerable capital outlay on metal cages plus a satisfactory laying battery

house. Figures quoted in July of last year were 20s. to 30s. per single bird cage and a further 20s. per bird for the battery house. It was stated that on average it cost 45s. per bird as a capital charge for the laying battery system. The cost per cage varies according to whether the battery is fully mechanised; that is, has the cafeteria or static type of feeding. Costs are reduced when two birds are placed in each cage, the latter then costing 20s. per cage. For reasons which were not evident there does not appear to be a majority of two-bird cage batteries in spite of the obvious saving.

Considerable interest in the laying battery system is being shown in New Zealand at present. A limited number of laying battery units have been established; in some cases with equipment from Britain. It is reasonable to believe that this system has a future in New Zealand and will gradually increase in popularity in spite of the heavy capital cost. Imported cages are about double the price of those quoted for Britain.

Experience of this system under New Zealand climatic conditions will be necessary, but it is highly probable that for many areas the type of battery house used could be much simpler in construction and therefore cheaper than those used overseas where severe winter conditions are experienced.

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