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PHASES OF POULTRY WORK

FEEDING FOR MARKET

by

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Since fully 75 percent of all poultry shipped from the farm to the market are not fat enough to kill, the subject of feeding is an important one.

When the live fowls arrive at the packing plant, they are placed in crates to be fattened for from five to fourteen days, according to age and condition, before being killed.

Sometimes men buy the poultry from the farms at a low rate, fatten for the required length of time, then sell to the packer, thus making the money for the quick gain that the producers might have had for a little extra work and feed cost.

Usually there is plenty of grain on the farm but instead of using it to increase the poultry profits, the farmer makes this free will offering to the poultry buyer or the produce house.

HENS AND COCKS

It is as profitable to feed hens and cocks before marketing as it is young birds since the growth has already been obtained. The length of time required is less because these birds have attained full size, needing only to add the fat which will make the meat more tender as well as adding a better flavor. Usually five to seven days will fatten a grown fowl.

METHOD OF FEEDING CHICKENS

First:

There are two ways of fattening chickens for market. One is to use a small enclosure or pen, allowing two feet of floor space for each bird. If there is more space the birds will exercise so much that they will not fatten quickly, and if there is less space the weaker ones will be trampled upon as well as being crowded away from the feed trough.

Second:

The second method is to have crates or coops from twenty-eight to thirty-six inches wide, about three feet long and just high enough for the birds to stand straight. Run a partition through the center making each part 14 or 18 by 36. A false bottom of wire netting or slats should be placed about two inches from the bottom so that the

droppings may fall through. If this is done there is less danger of disease and the feet need not be cleaned if the birds are to be killed at home and packed for shipping.

WEIGHING

In order to know whether or not it has paid to feed in this way the birds in each pen or coop should be weighed when feeding begins, and then again at the end of the feeding period. The gain in pounds at market price should far exceed the cost of the feed.

MILK FED

In all quotations on dressed poultry there is a higher price offered for milk fed chickens than for those that were grain fed. This is due to the better flavor as well as to the fact that the dressed birds bleach in cold storage making a far better appearance than those fed grain.

If one has not enough to pack a barrel or box of milk fed chickens, no higher price will be received for them than for the grain fed.

FEED

No fowl will fatten so well on whole grain as on ground feed for too much energy is wasted in grinding the grain in the gizzard.

No fowl will fatten so quickly on dry feed as on a wet mash, as too much time is used in secreting the digestive fluids to moisten the mash.

No grit or gravel is necessary if the feeding is continued not more than two weeks.

MASH MILK FED

For milk fed chickens the following mixtures are good---

First---1 part of ground corn
1 part oatmeal or 1 part ground oats
2 parts shorts, middlings or a cheap grade of flour
Mix well

Second---2 parts steel cut oats or oatmeal
2 parts low grade flour or middlings
2 parts corn meal

Third---3 parts ground oats
3 parts middlings or shorts
2 parts corn meal

PROPORTION

To one part of either mash add three parts of skim milk or butter milk. This will make a thin batter which may be poured into the troughs.

One part of cracked corn to three parts of skim milk or butter milk soaked for half a day should be fed in the evening.

METHOD

Leave the fowls without feed for twenty-four hours to give them a good appetite for the new feed.

Feed the wet mash morning and noon and cracked corn in the evening.

GRAIN FED

If milk is not available add 2 parts of 60 percent tankage or meat scrap to either of the above mashes and mix with 3 parts of water instead of milk.

TROUGHS

The troughs should be placed high enough in the pens to keep the fowls from standing in them while eating. Do not feed so much that any will be left in the trough at the next feeding time. In the coops the troughs should be hung on the outside or placed on the ground just within easy reach.

WATER

Extra water need not be given unless the weather is hot.

SANITATION

Keep troughs well cleaned. Do not mix more feed than will be used at one feeding as fermentation of feed will cause digestive troubles.

"OFF FEED"

If a bird goes "off feed" take it out of the pen and leave it without food for twenty-four hours. If the whole lot go off feed omit one feeding and then continue as before.

BEGINNERS

If this is your first attempt at feeding it is best to feed old fowls not more than seven days and young fowls not more than eleven. Watch closely or you may lose them from over feeding. If they do not seem to do well it is best to sell or kill them before there is any loss.

TURKEYS

Turkeys will not fatten in a small pen or coop but will do better on a wet mash twice daily with cracked corn at evening than on whole grain.

Turkeys should always be dressed at home as they lose too much when shipped alive for they will not eat in the car.

GESE AND DUCKS

Geese and ducks fatten best when given some space for exercise, tho they may be put in a small enclosure and "stuffed". This is done by forcing a moist mash down the throat by means of a rubber tube or by making "dough balls" and forcing them down.

These methods are not often practised in the United States but are frequently used in some European countries.

COMMUNITY PROJECT.

Fattening poultry gives a fine opportunity for the producers of a community to form a circle to obtain better market prices.

1. Make a bargain with the local dealer for milk fed birds
2. Begin feeding the same day
3. Sell on the same day

If there is no local dealer, kill on the same day, grade and pack the birds in the best possible way and ship together.