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USEFUL HOMEMADE EQUIPMENT

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USEFUL HOMEMADE EQUIPMENT.

In raising poultry one is too apt to spend so much for equipment that the birds cannot pay interest on the investment and a reasonable amount for labor. Advertisements are so attractive that we find it easier to buy the manufactured articles than to make those that will answer the purpose. Following are some pieces of equipment that may easily be made by any club member.

Figure No. 1.

CHICK FEEDER

Shallow Box for Chick Feeder.

Although one chick feeder is not expensive, if we need three or four it means more money than we should spend unless we have become well established in the business.

Shallow boxes about 2" deep, 6" wide, and 18" long make very good feed boxes, because the chicks cannot be smothered in them. Fill them about half full so that the feed will not be wasted. These boxes may be made from orange crates or similar boxes at practically no cost.

Figure No. 2
FEED HOPPER

Figure Number 2 shows a feed hopper that will hold about 100 pounds of mash and is intended for grown birds. A hopper of this size saves labor. In a large flock it is best to have two of these or the weaker birds will not get enough mash because they will be crowded away by the stronger ones.

Figure No. 3

Feed Box for Small Flock of Grown Fowls.

Figure No. 3 shows a shallow box with poultry netting tacked on a frame of lath that fits into the box so that it goes down as the mash is lowered. The netting prevents the birds from scratching the food out of the box. This feed box is one that does very well for a small flock.

WATERERS

One of the big problems is to keep a supply of fresh clean water at all times. For small chicks use a tomato can and saucer, or a syrup pail and pie tin.

Punch a row of holes about one inch from the upper edge of the can or pail — from 6 to 8 holes are plenty. Figures 4 and 5 show the plan. When ready to use fill can or pail with water, turn saucer or pie tin over the top, hold tightly in place and invert. The water will come through the holes till the saucer or pan is full and as the chicks drink the dish will be refilled. Be sure that the holes are not so far from the top of the can that they come above the edge of the saucer.

Figure No. 4.

Figure No. 5.
FOR WINTER Use

The big problem in winter is to keep the water from freezing. The vacuum waterers and those with the lamp are expensive. If there is a dirt floor dig a hole the size of a 3-gallon stone jar or lard can. Fit the jar or can into this hole so the top comes even with the ground.

In a box about 2 ft. square and 1 1/2 feet high cut a hole (the same size as the top of the jar or can), tip the box upside down over the sunken jar, into which you have placed a lamp. Set a pan or pail of water over the hole in the box. The heat from the lamp will keep the water warm. The box is large enough to allow the birds to stand on while they are drinking. Because the water pan is up so high there will be no litter scratched into it, and since the lamp is at the bottom of the jar there is no danger of fire. This plan has been used successfully for three years in Hanlin County at an average cost of 2 1/2 cents per day.

Figure No. 7

Barrel Waterer for Large Flock.
WATERER

Figure No. 7 shows an empty oil barrel used as a waterer for a large flock. This has been used successfully in Stanley County by a man who found that one of his biggest problems was to have plenty of fresh water for the flock at all times. A gas pipe with an elbow was fitted into the opening when the spigot was removed. The barrel was laid on blocks about 6" high. A large pan was placed on a box 3" in height just under the end of the barrel. This allowed the pipe to come about half an inch from the bottom of the pan so that the waterer works on the same principle as the tomato can and saucer in Figure No. 4.

If there is no shady place to put it, one can easily drive four stakes (two at each end) to support a shelter of boards or straw. This will insure cool water as long as there is any in the barrel. If a hole is made in the side of the barrel, one can refill it by using a large funnel, replace the plug and the water supply is taken care of for several days. The pan should be kept clean to prevent the spread of disease.

Figure No. 8

DUST BATH

For the winter months the birds need a place in which to dust themselves to prevent body lice from increasing too rapidly. It is easy to build a dust bath on the south side of the poultry house by using one or two storm windows or by using half sashes of ordinary windows. The dust bath may be made as large as you have windows to cover. Figure No. 8 shows how it will look when finished. For a permanent one cement may be used instead of boards but it is more expensive in the beginning.
Even though the birds in a flock are handled often enough to keep them tame it is a long hard task to catch each one of them even with a hook like that shown in Figure No. 9. This hook is made by fastening a piece of heavy wire to the end of a broom handle or a stout stick about that length. The wire is bent like that in Figure No. 9. The length of wire depends upon the size of the building in which the birds are housed - if in a small house the wire needs to be short enough to be easily handled without striking the walls or windows.

Figure No. 10 shows another effective chicken catcher. Take a hoop 1 foot in diameter if for young chicks or larger for grown fowls. Fasten it securely to a handle about the length of the one used in Figure No. 9. Fasten a bag of thin strong cloth, or weave a mesh bag to the hoop, or make a bag of poultry netting.

Figure 11

Crane for Catching Birds.
Figure No. 11 shows a crate for catching birds when the whole flock is to be handled. Set this crate in front of the small opening or creep through which the birds are in the habit of coming out of doors. Raise the slide from the inside of the house. When the birds have filled the crate drop the slide, go outside and you will find it easy to take out the birds for culling, treating for lice or for any other purpose. The crate is 3 ft. long, 2 ft. wide and 1½ ft. deep. A frame of 2 x 4's is covered on two sides and one end with poultry netting, the top with removable slats, the bottom and one end left open.

For Ridding Birds of Scaley Leg Mites.

In going through a large packing house the dressed chicken showed 60 per cent of scaley leg mites which lowered the grade because people think scaley leg mites is a sign that the birds are old. This we know is not true, for young birds may have it if the older birds are affected.

By placing a shallow pan or the bottom of a barrel like that shown in Figure 12, just in front of the creep the birds will cure their own scaley legs. The barrel is cut about 3 inches from the bottom leaving two hoops. Put in about 2 inches of water with enough kerosene to make a heavy skim. In going in and out the birds walk through this getting enough kerosene on their feet to kill the scaley leg mites.

These are only a few of the pieces of equipment that help to make the care of poultry easier and more profitable. Any club member may have better plans for equipment or may make things that are not suggested here.