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Phases of Poultry Work: How to Candle Eggs

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PHASES OF POULTRY WORK

(How to Candle Eggs)

by

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Home made egg candler
with hole in box opposite
the flame of kerosene lamp.

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CARDLING EGGS

If you have never tested eggs and cannot decide whether they have live or dead germs, mark the ones that are doubtful and leave them in the nest until you are absolutely sure that they will not hatch.

TESTER: A boughten tester is not necessary, for a paper such as the "Dakota Farmer", "Farmer and Breeder", "The Farmer", etc., may be rolled and tied with a string and wrapped around each end. The roll should be just large enough to loop over the large end of an egg and just long enough to hold easily.

TESTING: Hold this roll with the egg at the end toward the bright sunshine or in front of a lighted lamp if you must do the testing in the evening. If you are at home when the hen leaves her nest to feed, do the testing then. By testing we mean sorting out the bad eggs or those that will not hatch, by looking through the shell. Many people do not believe in doing this, but it is most often because they have never tried it.

When many hens are sitting at the same time enough eggs are usually tested out so that the good ones may be placed under fewer hens and fresh eggs put under the hens that are left without, or else they can be 'broken up' so that they will soon begin to lay again.

FRESH EGGS: A perfectly fresh egg will show clear and full, with only a tiny air cell at the large end. Test one that you know is fresh.

The cross section of an egg showing the various parts may help us to understand why the egg for hatching needs special care.

BLOOD CLOT: Very small dark spots may be seen sometimes. These are the blood clots which are sometimes found when one breaks a fresh egg.

LARGE DARK SPOT: When large dark spots, rings or shadows are seen they show that the germ began to grow, then for some reason it died. These first spots or rings show rot or decay.

SPIDER: When a dark spot with many wiggly lines, looking like a large spider with many legs, is seen it shows that the germ is alive.
LARGE AND DARK: When an egg looks very dark or black, with a large fixed air cell at the large end of the egg, it shows that the chick is nearly ready to hatch.

BUT if the egg looks dark when tested, with a large air cell whose lower line moves around like liquid, you had better handle that egg with care, for it is a sure case of 'rotten egg' which no farm boy or girl, at least, cares to handle roughly.

INFERTILE EGGS: Save the infertile eggs (those that look like fresh ones) to hard cook for chick feed, but destroy the 'rotten ones'. From experience I know that an old oak tree makes a fine target for them.

Do not become discouraged if you cannot tell these different stages the first time you candle them, for many older people find it hard at first. With a little practice you will find it very simple.

Just before the chick absorbs the remaining yolk before leaving the shell.

Approximate size of air cell on 1st, 7th, 14th and 19th day of incubation.