

THE POULTRY PRODUCER

By Leo J. Finch, '28

WHAT CAUSES CULLS?

WHAT causes culls is a question that every poultryman ponders over at times. In a general way, all of us know to some extent the factors that contribute to the making of culls, but have we stopped to weigh their relative values? Recently a summary was published of a questionnaire answered by 785 breeders as to causes of culls. The report was interesting and gave the following seven main causes of culls.

1. Inferior Breeding	31.6%
2. Too Little and Unsuitable Feed.....	30.4%
3. Parasites and Insect Pests	15.1%
4. Poor Housing and Care	12.4%
5. Disease	4.9%
6. Exposure	2.9%
7. Other Causes	2.7%

Note that nearly one half of all culls come from inferior breeding stock. Be careful in the selection of breeders or the source of your chicks, or you will be fighting a losing battle under a big handicap. Why start with chicks from inferior breeding stock when you are sure to have at least one third of the culls come from this source?

Good chicks can be made culls by too little and unsuitable feed. Approximately another one third of the culls are caused in this manner.

Following down the list we can see other causes for culls. Most of them are preventable, and it is up to us, as to the number of culls we have each year.

Let's try to lower the number of culls. It can be done and it is worth while. Let's not think that culls are a necessary evil which goes with the poultry game.

INTERNAL PARASITES

A great deal more damage is being done to the poultry in this state by infestations of intestinal worms than the poultrymen realize. Poultrymen on new land seem to think there is no danger of worms bothering their birds for some time to come. However, cases have been brought to light where young stock brooded and reared on soil that had never before been used for poultry were badly infested before they were half developed. Pigeons, sparrows, crows, and buzzards, or even dogs and cats going from farm to farm start new infection.

Birds badly infested lose flesh, face and comb turn pale, laying hens stop producing and growing chicks are stunted. Upon autopsy of an infested bird, round and, sometimes, tape

worms, easily can be seen. If such birds are found to have worms it stands to reason that a great many more birds in the flock are infected, which will not necessarily show up in outward symptoms, but make itself evident by a dropping off in egg production.

In treating a flock of birds for worms, there are numerous treatments to select from. One which gives satisfactory results is as follows. Keep all feed away from the hens during the forenoon. In the afternoon give them one handful of finely ground tobacco to each one hundred birds. The tobacco should be steeped in hot water and given in a moist mash. Give only enough of the mixture to fill each bird's crop once. Spread this mash out in enough troughs or on boards so that all the birds will have an equal chance to get their share. Follow this up the next morning with one half pound of epsom salts to each one hundred birds; either in a moist mash or in the drinking water.

One of the best sanitary measures used in any poultry house is to tack wire netting to the under side of the roosts to keep the birds off of the droppings. This will keep the birds from working over the droppings and will very materially help in preventing the spread of worms or any intestinal disease. Feed the mash in mash hoppers and use water fountains that are easily kept clean. Give the hens a dose of epsom salts at least once a month.

THE VALUE OF POULTRY SHOWS TO THE INDUSTRY

The value of poultry shows to the industry is significant in two ways. First, of striving to produce better birds and bringing more of them to the standard; and, second, the training and equipping of poultrymen to carry on the industry.

The exhibition of poultry in show room competition in this country is as old as the industry itself. The first shows were not elaborate affairs, but were shows, nevertheless. There are many poultrymen today who remember the time when they used to take a bird under each arm, trudge two or three miles to the house designed as the meeting place, and there meet other people who had brought birds. The main idea at these meetings was to discuss the various fowls in general, and to make a comparison of the good and bad qualities of each bird,

as had been learned from experience. Everyone would return home with a new idea or so on how to improve his own flock. Although not recognized as such in those days, these were the first poultry shows in this country. From shows of this nature have grown the present-day exhibits, which are mammoth and elaborate affairs, where the breeders send birds in the hope of winning ribbons, and go themselves in order to keep abreast of what is new in the poultry world. From the first sign of any kind of show with only a few birds to exhibit, to the thousands of birds on exhibition in shows today, has taken the work of years to perfect.

As the shows began to increase in size, and different districts began to exhibit in competition with each other, need was felt for some kind of a standard by which to be governed. Out of this feeling toward the industry arose the American Standard of Perfection, where we read in part the outline in the general introduction as follows:

"The American Poultry association was organized at Buffalo, New York, February, 1873, by representative poultry breeders from different sections of the United States and Canada. The primary object of the association was to standardize the varieties of domestic poultry which had become so numerous and were, in many cases, so similar that there was the greatest confusion in judging and breeding them."

In making standards and determining what breeds were worthy of recognition, it was necessary that the association should be governed by principles which would be generally recognized as right; for on no other basis was it possible to secure acceptance of its standards as authoritative. The principles adopted by the association at that time were, first, that in each breed then existing the most useful type should be made the standard type; second, that no breeds should be recognized as having distinctive breed characters that could not be readily identified by at least one conspicuous character, not possessed in the same combination by any other breed; third, that recognition of color varieties in a breed should be limited to plainly distinct and attractive color patterns.

In making the first "American Standard of Excellence," issued in February, 1874, the application of
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these principles was affected somewhat by the character of the material to be standardized. In the old breeds, odd and unique features had been developed as a mark of superiority, however, such features led to exaggerations, and it was inevitable that a standard of this nature would be abandoned for one more to the improvement of characters of substantial worth and true beauty.

Many years prior to the appearance of the first American standard, poultrymen had been trying to make such blends of Asiatic and European races of fowls as have produced the Rhode Island Red, Plymouth Rocks, and Wyandotte; yet had failed to produce a breed that could gain wide or lasting popularity. Nor, in all that time had any old, established breed been so improved that it could win and hold the favor of those who kept poultry for egg and meat. Thus we see the advantages of show room exhibition where the birds are all judged from one standard. In fifty-five years of time we have left behind the aimless crossing of breeds, and have instead certain standard bred breeds and varieties with much breeding both for color markings and egg production behind them.

Poultrymen in most states have come together and are furthering the movement toward better birds and the standard of perfection by what is known as flock certification. Its purpose is to create more and more flocks in the respective states that are both good layers and possess the standard requirements of breed characteristics. Those that have already certified their flocks are experiencing the greater profits that accompany such progress.

Aside from the poultry shows rendering the above value to the industry, it is helping to equip many of the new poultrymen coming into the field today. At most of the largest poultry shows of the country today we find a judging contest going on in conjunction. These judging contests are primarily run for schools. The grades in schools competing defined on the nature and limits of the show. Competition of this kind is bound to induce a more thorough study of poultry and spread more knowledge, than the student would get out of an ordinary college course. The competitors are able to obtain the ideas of others brought from all sections of the country, and by this way make themselves better

judges as well as more efficient workers of the industry.

The two largest poultry shows in the United States are the Madison Square Garden Show in New York City, and the Coliseum Poultry Show in Chicago. The Coliseum Poultry Show in Chicago seems to be the most popular, as the number of universities competing each year are increasing in a greater proportion than at the Madi-

son Square Garden show or any others.

The judging team selected by the Aggie club of the University of Arizona Agricultural college for this year will be composed of four men and a coach, and plans to compete with other universities at the Coliseum Poultry show in Chicago. It is to be hoped that when the team returns from the competition in Chicago, that it will bring home honors with it.

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