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Culling Poultry For Profit



Circular 200

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Culling Poultry for Profit

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Culling means examining poultry of any age to identify and eliminate the undesirable and unprofitable birds. Culling is a continuing job of getting rid of the poor producers or the non-producers from your flock.

Culling Begins With The Baby Chick

Keep your baby chicks comfortable, properly fed, and provided with clean and sanitary quarters. Avoid crowding, chilling and overheating. Give your chicks every chance to develop normally.

Destroy the small, weak and unhealthy chicks when you find them. They never will develop into good pullets, and they may be disease carriers. Cull them early!

Keep After The Growing Birds

See that your growing pullets develop uniformly. Give them every chance to grow out evenly.

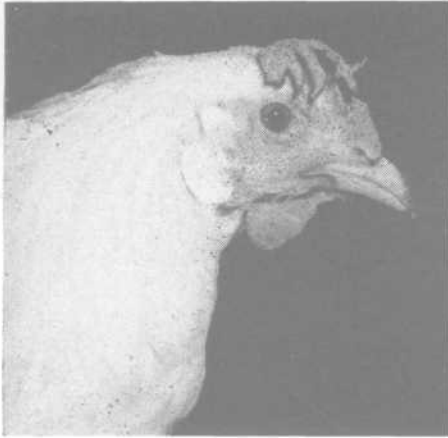
Cull the slow-developing, slow-feathering, crow-headed, small-bodied birds and those that have pale shanks.

Keep those that have large bodies, broad heads, prominent eyes, and relatively short beaks. Rapid feathering is a factor in the thrift of a pullet and indicates early maturity.

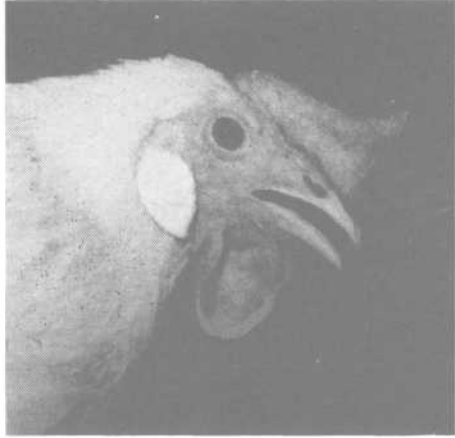
Continue to Cull In the Laying House

If you manage your flock well, you can expect a production rate

CULL



KEEP



COMB and WATTLES

Bird Out of Production

Comb and wattles small, scaly, shriveled. **Face** fleshy or sunken. **Eyes** dull, sunken, small.

of over 50 percent. The best poultrymen keep their flocks producing from 60 to 75 percent.

Do not expect high production from hens that are uncomfortable due to poor management, poor feeding, colds, lice, mites or internal parasites. A hen produces at her best only when she is comfortable.

To give your hens the greatest comfort, see that the laying house is properly ventilated. Keep the litter dry. Correct all management faults before you cull. Give your hens a chance.

Bird In Production

Comb and wattles large, red, plump, waxy. **Face** clean cut, bright red. **Eyes** bright, bulging, alert.

Remember, a poor producer consumes from 80 to 90 pounds of feed a year. It will take from one to two good hens to pay the board bill of one cull. There is no profit from feeding poor layers.

There will be some culls in your flock no matter how well it is bred or managed. In good poultry flocks, owners may have culled as many as 50 percent of the original number of pullets before the first laying year ends.

Move your loafers to market or eat them. Cull weekly. Save only your best layers.

Cull Regularly

Cull all unthrifty, listless and broody hens as soon as you find them. You will usually find the low producers on the roost in the day time. A continuous, all-year culling program will help you make the most profit from your flock. Most flocks require more intensive culling from the first of May through September.

Birds must have the capacity to be good layers. Average-weight birds usually lay more of the average weight eggs for their breed. Small birds generally lay small eggs. Very large birds within the breed may lay larger, but fewer, eggs. High-producing hens usually have good body weight, but are not overly fat. Very late maturing pullets lay fewer eggs than early maturing birds.

Cull Early Molters

Birds ordinarily molt in late summer or early fall, and early molters are usually poor layers. Unless force-molted, summer molters may take 4 or 5 months to complete their molt. Fall molters may only be out of production for 2 months.

All-Pullet Flocks

In recent years, many poultrymen have begun the practice of selling their old hens in the fall and filling the laying house with pullets. Also, they are raising one or two additional groups of replacements during the year to keep their

laying house filled to capacity and to maintain a more even production of eggs throughout the year.

For most commercial and farm flocks this is the best practice. The hens are grouped together in the laying house and room is made to put pullets in the laying house together.

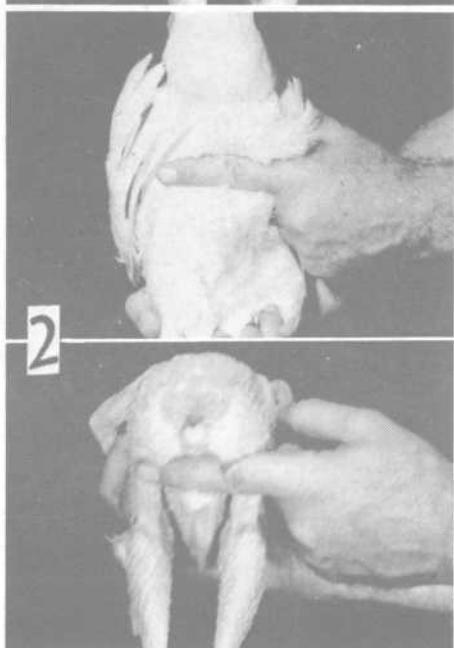
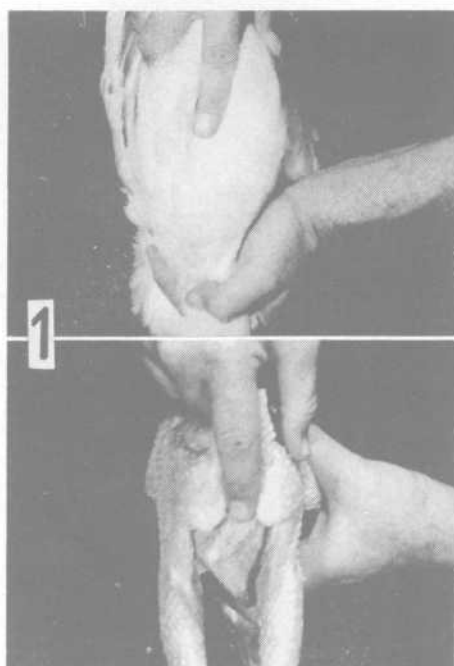
Be sure the laying house is properly cleaned and disinfected before the pullets are put in. This greatly reduces the possibility of spreading disease from the old hens to the pullets. Always house pullets separately from the old hens to avoid spreading disease.

If you keep old hens a second year, guard especially against spreading common colds and coryza from the old hens to your pullets. Do not house them together.

Consider These Factors

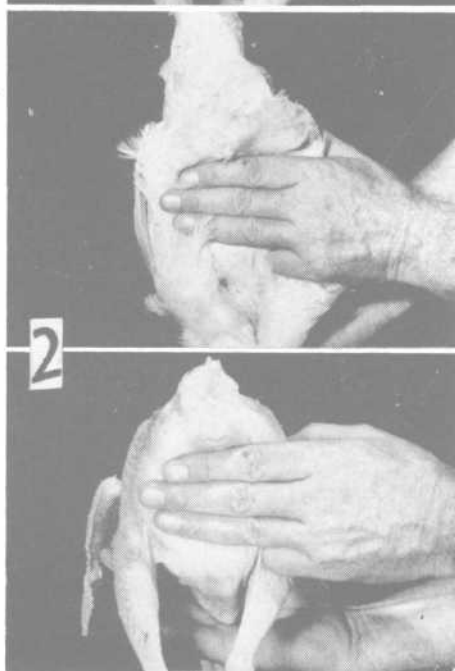
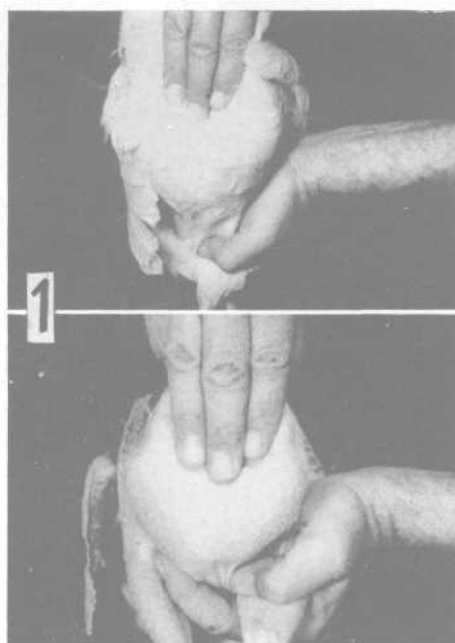
To cull with any degree of accuracy you must be familiar with the particular strain of birds, know the composition of the ration used, and how much supplemental feeds have been used and whether parasites or disease are or have been present in the birds.

You also need to know when the birds were hatched, the rearing conditions, when they began to lay, whether lights were used, and the production and approximate grain and mash consumption month by month. All these functions affect pigmentation, body weight, time and degree of molt and other characteristics used in culling. Lack of such information is responsible for many a poor job of culling.



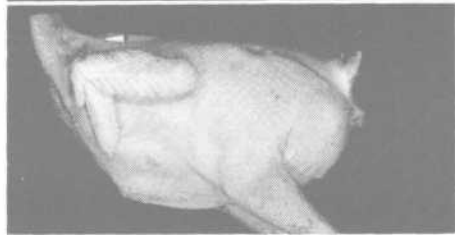
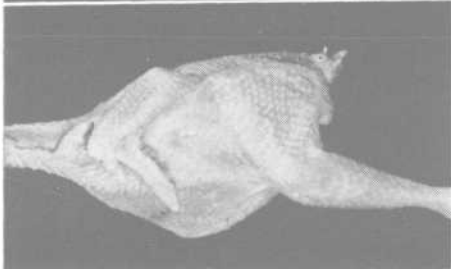
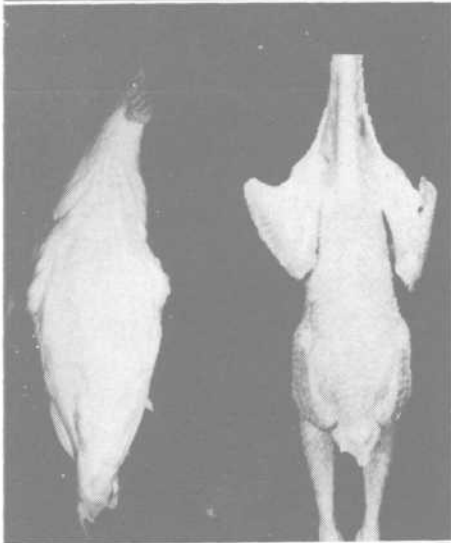
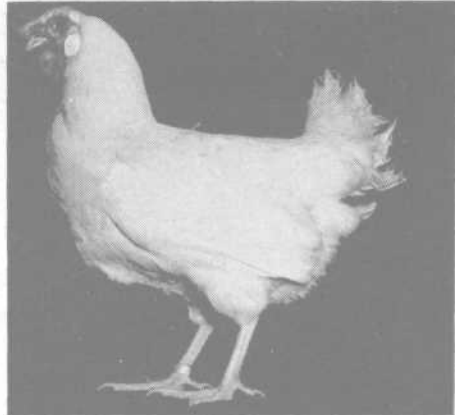
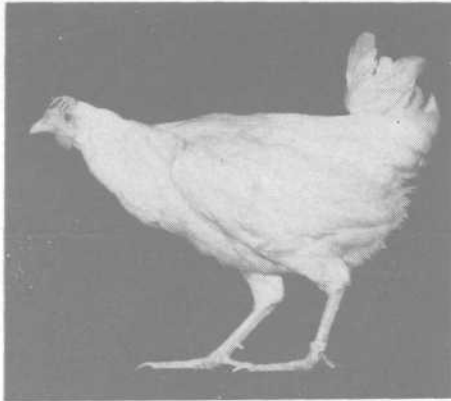
Non-Layer

1. Pelvic measurement (narrow).
2. Pelvic keel measurement (not much space).



Layer

1. Pelvic measurement (broad).
2. Pelvic keel measurement (deep space).



BODY TYPE

Poor layer with shallow body; long, thin, small head and face; and shrunken comb.

Good layer with good body type; deep body; full head, comb, and wattles.

SELECTING LAYERS

A "Good-and-Poor" Production Chart

Parts of Body to Study	Good Layers	Poor Layers
Back	Long, wide	Short, narrow
Body	Long, wide, deep	Short, narrow, shallow
Keel (breast) bone	Slopes downward	Slopes upward
Pelvic bones	Thin, straight, pliable, wide apart	Thick, curved in close together
Vent	Large, moist	Small, dry
Abdomen	Full, good capacity	Shallow, lack capacity
Skin	Soft, pliable, loose	Hard, dry, tight
Health	Vigorous Active Alert Well fleshed	Not vigorous Not active Drowsy Thin
Fat	Good flesh, not excess fat	Excess fat under skin on body and especially around abdomen
Feathering	Close, tight	Loose, fluffy
Plumage	Worn, ragged, faded	Bright, glossy, clean, not worn
Molting	Late and quickly	Early and slowly
Comb and Wattles	Large, red, plump, waxy	Small, scaly, shriveled
Head	Feminine, refined	Masculine, coarse, or crow-head
Face	Clean cut and bright red	Fleshy or sunken
Eyes	Bright, bulging, alert	Dull, sunken, small
Beak	White	Yellow
Shanks	White, thin, flat	Yellow, plump, round

*Note: White-skinned breeds can not be scored on skin bleaching.
(Courtesy of the Agricultural Extension Service, Washington State College, Pullman, Washington.)*