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## Hens that Cut the Cost of Living

(Continued from Page 8)

eight hours, or longer, after they burst their shells. Nature having obligingly arranged matters so that the yolk is absorbed by the hatchling, with a clear conscience, enclose the chick, with a dozen of his brothers and sisters, in a well-ventilated box, and ship him a journey of many hundred miles. When he arrives (the chick, of course) he is ready to eat, drink and be merry. To be sure, the express companies have to be reckoned with; and what they do sometimes can only be properly described with the aid of long, black marks. But the poultry keepers of the country have not been besieging their expansive congressmen and frock-coated senators for a parcels post without making some impression, it seems. How they will bless the day that frees them from the vagaries of the express corporations!

But once again, let us return to the back-yard flock. Assume that it belongs to a commuter who is away all day, and so has little time to care for the birds. The solution of his problem lies in keeping

poultry keeper that the hens approve this plan. Study the psychology of the hen, and you will no doubt discover a close relationship between a contented state of mind and a well-filled egg basket. Anything that keeps a hen happy will help to increase the egg crop. This is a point for the amateur to ponder.

When there is a garden, most of the green food may be raised. Rape may be cut in a few weeks after being planted, and can be used all through the summer. If the leaves are broken off, they will promptly grow again and continue to do so time after time. A row twenty feet long will keep a small flock supplied with greens for months. Yet, a certain degree of caution in feeding rape to laying hens must be exercised. A greenish tinge to the yolks is a danger signal, and should be acted upon by reducing the amount fed.

Swiss chard may also be grown and used in the same way. Cabbages are not the best of poultry food; but a few are worth growing, to feed during the winter. Grass clippings are excellent. A good plan is to lay a square of poultry netting on the ground, cover it with dried clippings and roll it up. A wire will hold the roll in place, and if hung on the wall of the poultry house, it will furnish a large amount of succulent fodder without waste. Cut mangels in half, and spike them to a board. If potatoes are fed, boil them.

If other green food is not available, sprouted oats may be relied upon. They are easily prepared by soaking the oats over night in warm water, and spreading them an inch deep in a box kept in a warm room or in the furnace cellar. The box should have a few holes for drainage, unless there are open cracks through which the surplus water may run off, and an old grain sack may be thrown over the box until the oats have sprouted. The oats must be sprinkled daily, and should be fed when the sprouts are about two inches long.

Some economical housewives have learned to cut the cost of living by storing the eggs that are laid when eggs are cheap, to be used when the price goes up. If the water glass method of preserving the eggs is followed, they will be perfectly satisfactory for home use, and the eggs laid in the fall or early winter may be sold at a profit. Other thrifty poultry keepers send a few cases of fresh eggs to the cold storage plants in spring, and withdraw them the following fall when the prices of fresh eggs begin to soar. The storage cost is but a few cents a dozen, while the amount saved is well worth the little trouble involved.

Poultry keeping is one of the few forms of recreation that pays a profit. Some people can't realize that it is a recreation at all. It isn't, as poultry is often kept. With a comfortable house, however, maintained clean and sanitary, and with a flock of pure-bred birds, the care of a small flock becomes a real pleasure. It is impossible to get enthusiastic over a lot of nondescript fowls, mixtures of half a dozen breeds in assorted sizes and a variety of colors. The only idea of poultry that some people have, any way, has been gained from dung-hill hens seen on run-down farms. Nobody is advised to keep birds of that kind. A dozen hens, practically the same in size, shape and color, make a very different impression. A well-marked hen is indeed a thing of beauty, although hardly a joy for ever; for it ought to perform its last service in cutting the cost of living by appearing on the family table in its second year.



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the floor of the poultry house covered with litter several inches deep—hay, straw or leaves. Into this litter, at night after the fowls have gone to roost, he throws a liberal feeding of grain. In the morning, he repeats the operation. He may feed but once a day in the winter; but the allowance should be a double one. It is important that the grain be worked well into the litter, so that the hens will be forced to hustle for what they eat. It is an adage among poultry keepers that the busy hen is the laying hen. If the amateur wants a short cut to this desirable end, there is one ready-made for him. There is a self-feeding device so arranged that the hens keep a little stream of grain falling into the litter. The hopper need not be filled oftener than once or twice a week, and in the meantime, the amateur need have no concern about the matter. A wall hopper may be used for dry mash; and it, too, will need replenishing only once a week. With such devices, feeding becomes a very simple matter.

There remains, then, the question of water; for an egg is largely water, and the laying hen is a heavy drinker. Ordinarily, a pail of water set on a shelf a foot high will last a flock all day. Setting it on the shelf serves to keep it cleaner than would be the case if it were on the floor. The amateur may give the birds enough water to last two or three days, by using a simple siphon device that is attached to the side of a common butter tub.

Of course, the average family has a considerable amount of table scraps, that may be utilized for the poultry and will go far toward supplying the needs of the flock. The best plan is to feed the scraps at noon. The chorus of hen music that issues from the pen is evidence to the

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