

# Start a Flock

J. B. HAYES AND F. E. MUSSEHL

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## Start a Flock

All the fresh eggs you want and the "big end" of an occasional Sunday dinner!

Sounds good, doesn't it? But the best part of it all is that you can have both by spending a very little money in fixing up a shady corner in your backyard, in buying a few good hens and then giving the care they need to keep them healthy and thrifty.

The city dweller with a few feet in his back lot, or the suburban dweller with a larger space, can help in this nation-wide movement. The left-over table scraps can be converted into eggs and meat. The waste material of the American table in the aggregate is tremendous.

The city man who has a taste for the handling of poultry can get pleasure and profit in using the table scraps to keep a dozen hens going. It is true that some feed must be bought, but this will principally be the grain ration. Oyster shell, grit, and charcoal should be before them at all times. In this way you will get returns from your table waste, which now is entirely lost.

The little flock will, if properly handled, turn the refuse from your kitchen and the surplus from the garden into fresh eggs and meat. It will pay you just as did the backyard flock of a Whitewater business man. He started with a dozen hens. The first month (November) they laid 24 eggs worth 70 cents and consumed \$1.55 worth of feed, causing a loss of 85

cents. In December they laid 143 eggs worth \$4.42, ate \$2.05 worth of feed, and made a profit of \$2.37. In January he got 262 eggs, worth \$9.05, their feed cost \$2.15, and the profit was \$6.90. In February he had 229 eggs, worth \$7.30, their feed cost \$2.02, and the profit was \$5.27. And they are still laying.

**Uncle Sam's egg basket is low. Why not turn the scraps from your kitchen, and the surplus from the garden into fresh eggs and meat.**

This business man will keep on keeping a few hens. His family enjoy a plentiful supply of fresh eggs to eat and to use in

cooking. His chickens make use of the table scraps which otherwise would be wasted. He sells enough eggs to his neighbors to pay for the chicken feed and when his garden and lawn get well started he will cut down his feed bill again.

#### POULTRY DOES WELL ON BACK LOT

Why don't you combine poultry raising with your gardening? The two lines go splendidly together. As poultry stands confinement well, the shady part of your back lot, not suitable for gardening, will furnish an excellent location for the poultry plant.

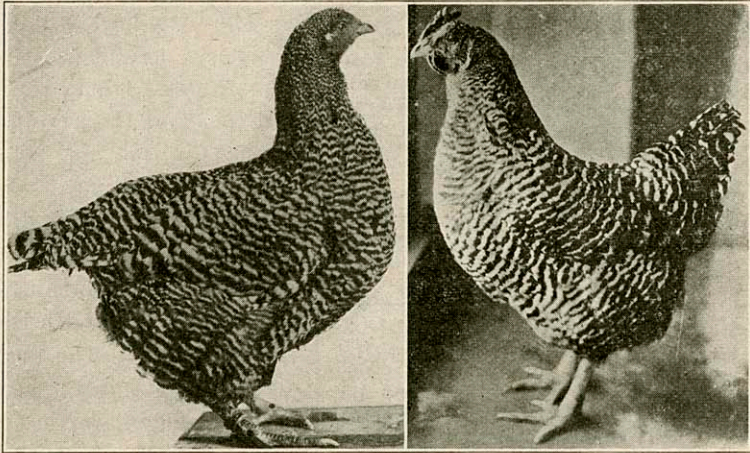


FIG. 1.—PICK THE GOOD LAYER

The one on the left looks sad and her laying record is sad. The strong, vigorous hen, which is always hungry and sings all day, is the good layer.

You can raise poultry more cheaply than can the commercial poultryman because (1) your investment is small,—no expensive houses or extensive chicken runs are needed; (2) you will have no labor costs to pay; and (3) the flock's feed can be foraged largely from the garbage pail.

#### START ON A SMALL SCALE

It is advisable to start poultry keeping on a small scale. The secret of success is in keeping just enough hens to economically turn the otherwise waste material into valuable food products. If possible, start with one of the standard breeds which has

been improved and adapted to our present-day conditions. Such breeds are Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, Rhode Island Reds, Leghorns, and Orpingtons. A standard breed will give greater production and more personal satisfaction.

In case you plan to keep the flock only during the summer months buy a few hens from the nearest butcher shop. Select only those that are good and vigorous and have short heads, prominent eyes and reddish combs. The hens that the butcher considers ideal for killing will be the best producers.

#### PACKING BOX MAKES GOOD POULTRY HOUSE

A piano box or a large packing box will make an excellent temporary summer house for a dozen hens. Construct a small yard, 12 feet long, 2 feet high and 6 or 8 feet wide. Make the frame of 2" x 2" or 1" x 4". Cover one end, the sides and the top with a 2-inch mesh wire and attach the frame to the house. When the hens are given an abundant supply of green feed daily, this range is ample. Keep the yard clean by spading up a small part of it each day.

#### HOUSE FOR ALL YEAR ROUND

A house for winter can be cheap and still be comfortable. Comfort for chickens means plenty of room, sunlight, and fresh air. A house 8 x 8 feet is large enough for a dozen hens.

Remodel the old woodshed or construct a house from the lumber that has accumulated around the cellar. Board up the walls roughly and make it draft and water proof by covering with roofing paper. In the winter, keep the floor covered with about 8 or 10 inches of dry leaves, straw, or hay chaff, into which the scratch feed should be thrown. Put an 18" table or platform across the rear of the house about 2 feet above the floor. Place the roosts 6 inches above this table so that the droppings can be collected for the garden and the floor kept clean and dry. Orange crates make ideal nests when nailed through the side to the wall two feet above the floor.

If you build a new house and do not expect to enlarge your flock, cut the rear studs 4 feet and the front 6 feet in length. Use 2 x 4's for the frame and let the rafters project about 6 inches. Have the high side to the south and put in two six-light, 8 x 10 inch glass sash,—one sash above the other. Join the upper

sash to the lower by hinges and fasten the two in place with wooden buttons. It is not necessary to have a window frame. Cut a door 30" wide in the front or in the end—whichever is the more convenient. Construct a temporary out-door yard, using five-foot poultry fence. Remember that the shady part of the yard makes an excellent poultry lot. With this equipment one can keep hens the year around at a profit. One may have the house made at the lumber yard or buy it ready made if it is impossible to take the time or difficult to get the tools to make it.

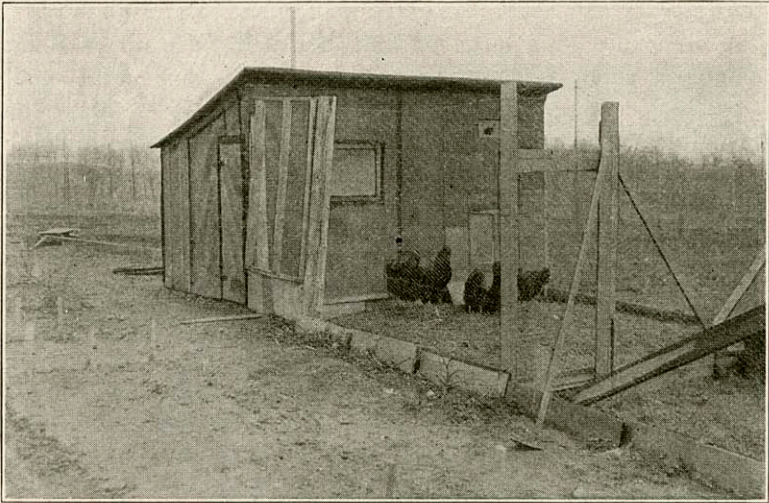


FIG. 2.—A PACKING BOX HOUSE WHICH COST 75 CENTS

A comfortable, all-the-year-round house which accommodates a dozen hens can be made by the backyard poultryman from inexpensive material.

In addition, get a cigar box or make a grit hopper and keep it constantly filled with crushed oyster shells. Put a small box on the floor near the front of the house on which to keep the water dish. Have a small box or hopper for dry mash.

#### WHAT TO FEED THE FLOCK

**Garbage pail important**—Hens need a variety of feed and plenty of fresh water. Use the kitchen, garden, and lawn refuse as an important part of the hen's diet. Save all the table and kitchen scraps, egg shells, garden refuse such as lettuce leaves,

beet tops, and lawn clippings for the poultry. In addition to this a certain amount of grain feed should be given.

Have the local feed dealer mix a scratch feed of 4 parts of corn and 1 part of oats. Feed this in the litter or yard very lightly in the morning and all that the hens will clean up at night. A commercial scratch feed may be used in place of the mixture recommended. The feed should in all cases be clean and wholesome. Avoid musty, mouldy feed or that containing a large amount of weed seed.

A mash feed consisting of 2 parts ground corn, 1 part ground

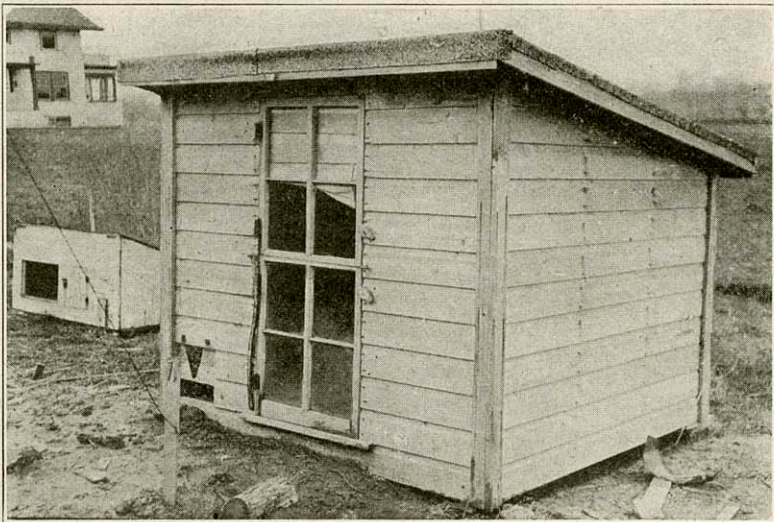


FIG. 3.—A READY-MADE POULTRY HOUSE

The poultry house can be purchased already constructed or built at home. Ransack the cellar; there is probably enough lumber stored away down there to build a house large enough for a dozen hens.

oats, 1 part bran and 1 part middlings placed in a box or hopper gives the hens an opportunity to balance their own ration and decreases the cost of feed. Mixed poultry mashes containing the same materials already mixed can be purchased of all feed dealers and many grocerymen. The garden refuse supplies green feed; egg shells supplemented by oyster shells the supply of lime for shell formation; sour milk, buttermilk or waste meat from the table the protein feed and an abundance of fresh water completes the ration. Regularity in feeding is essential for egg production.

A part of the lawn clippings should be dried, hung up in a sack and when moistened with hot water made an ideal green feed for winter use.

Overfeeding will stop egg production, but since hens differ in the amount of food they need, you cannot determine their ration in advance. Follow this plan: Feed all the scraps, you can get. Keep a small box in the house filled with mash feed; the hens don't like it well enough to over-eat. Give them all the sour milk, buttermilk, or waste meat they will eat. Then when you come with the scratch feed—the grain ration—unless the hens are eager to greet you, feed very lightly; if they have left any feed from the last meal, skip a feeding. Keep the hen hungry and working.

Watch the hens for body lice. They will be found in the fluffy feathers at the rear of the bird's body. Dust with a commercial louse powder or make a powder according to these directions:

Mix 1 part coal tar disinfectant and 4 parts of gasoline. Stir thoroughly and add enough plaster of Paris to take up all the solution. Spread out on a board and allow to dry away from the direct sunlight. When dry place in a baking powder can, puncture a few holes in the top and sprinkle thoroughly through the feathers. The process should be repeated in about a month. A box filled with fine soil or road dust placed in the house as a dust bath will help control the lice.

Mites are the little red spider-like parasites that are found in the house and live off the hens at night. Control them by cleaning the house regularly. Paint the roosts and spray the walls of the house with kerosene oil or one of the coal-tar disinfectants.