IF YOU CAN'T GET BEEF, EAT POULTRY: QUICK PROFITS FROM MODERN METHODS IN RAISING CHICKENS, TURKEYS, DUCKS AND GEese: BY FRANK W. GAYLOR

Very few people realize the substantial profit that can be made from poultry raising, as compared with other branches of the farming industry. There is no other live stock that will give as good return for the money invested, in such a short time or on such a small area. The raising of cattle, especially, requires a much greater capital, more acreage, larger and more expensive buildings, and more costly feeding; and as three or four years are needed for beef production, it also means a longer delay before the product is ready for the market. Chickens, on the other hand, require little space or outlay, and are ready for sale in three or four months.

This comparison is particularly significant now that the extension of our beef market and growing scarcity of the product in this country are raising prices that are already uncomfortably high. The suggestion naturally presents itself—since beef takes so long to raise, and since eggs and,
mation he could, he began work, set and hatched a batch of eggs, and by the first of October had 250 white Leghorn pullets. These he put into laying quarters for the winter. From the pullets he produced sterile eggs for table use, and catered to private family trade. During one year—1910-1911—he made a net profit of over $1,000 (not counting his labor). Then he increased his stock to 800, and maintained an annual profit of over $2,000. This was done on a village lot, the total area of which was not more than a quarter of an acre.

Of course, this man specialized on poultry, and gave practically all his time to the undertaking. Such a record cannot be maintained on a farm, where other branches of work demand attention; but it illustrates what can be done by any one who devotes himself to the work. And it is worth noting that the smaller the flock, the more individual care the birds receive—which accounts for the fact that small flocks pay in better proportion on the investment than large ones.

**Cost of Feeding**

During his experiment, the owner of this Flushing plant kept careful account of actual expenses and results, and found that the cost of feeding a laying hen was $1.88 a year. He also found that hens kept for egg production made an average record of 160 eggs per bird during the year—and as he received from forty to seventy-five cents a dozen, according to the season, it is easy to see how the profits mounted up. Since that time, however, the price of feed has risen, and the present cost of feeding a hen is about $2 a year. But even with this difference, a large margin of profit remains. Indeed, the maximum profit, in poultry-keeping, is in egg production rather than
meat. The white egg brings a premium in New York markets, and the brown egg in New England.

THE BROILER MARKET

The broiler end of the poultry business is not so profitable as egg production for the Eastern producer on account of cheap Western products and cold storage. The farmer who raises poultry in large numbers, therefore, had best get rid of his surplus cockerels as broilers just as soon as the market will take them—which is when they weigh about a pound and a half each, alive. It does not pay to care for them beyond that age in the East.

Some practical pointers on this branch of the business were given recently by Michael K. Boyer in an article in the *New York Sun*.

"In order," writes Mr. Boyer, "that the broiler raiser in the East may have ship-
ments ready by the opening of the market and during the season, he must start hatching in October, and continue on until about the middle or even last of March.

"The market in January, while not so good as that of February, is still a profitable one. The hatching is done in September. While it is possible to grow two-pound broilers in twelve weeks, the average time required will be nearer sixteen weeks—or, roughly speaking, four months instead of three. One-pound broilers will require about six or eight weeks, and one and one-half pounds from eight to ten weeks. . .

"To grow good broilers there should be dry quarters provided, thoroughly cooked food, comfortable heat, not too high nor too low, regularity in feeding, cleanliness and good light. The chicks must be induced to take plenty of exercise. . .

"One of the most practical broiler experts the first day gives nothing but wheat bran to peck at. The next day rolled oats are given, and this is continued until the chicks are ten days old, keeping dry bran, charcoal and fine oyster shell by them all the time. The chicks are fed every two hours all they will eat up cleanly. After ten days he feeds a moist mash in the morning and evening composed of cornmeal, middlings, bran and gound oats, with meat scraps in proportion to the age of the chicks. It is best to give these parts by weight. At noon he feeds wheat or cracked corn and keeps green stuff by them, so they can eat all they want, until the last two weeks."

**Capon**

There is some profit to be made in capons, but this branch of the industry requires a knowledge of the operation, extra care, and special quarters for the poultry, and it is problematic whether it is advisable for the average farmer to take up this work.

**Selecting the Breed**

The selection of the right breed for the particular purpose is an important one for the poultry-raiser to consider. When egg production is the main object, Leghorns will be found the record holders. Anconas, Campines, Houdans and Buttercups are also good breeds for this purpose, as well as the Minorcas, which lay a very large egg. All these hens lay eggs with white shells.

Equally good for both meat and egg production are the Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Island Reds, Wyandottes, Buckeyes, Sussex, Faverolles and Orpingtons, the last-
named being especially satisfactory as winter layers.

The best breeds to select for meat production alone, are the Brahmas, Cochins, Games, Cornish, Dominiques, Langhans and Dorkings.

BABY CHICKS

There is one phase of poultry raising that has developed within the last four years—and that is the baby chick trade. This has almost supplanted the eggs for hatching, the majority of people today buying one-day old chicks. On Long Island I found quite a few large chick-producers, the smallest producing and selling 15,000 and the largest, 35,000.

Baby chicks can be shipped 200 or 300 miles without risk. They ship better the first day than when three or four days old, as they require no food the first forty-eight hours of their life.

THE DUCK INDUSTRY

The most profitable branch of poultry meat production is the duck industry. Ducks as a rule command good prices in the market, and a Pekin duckling, properly fed and cared for, can be made to weigh from five to five and a half pounds, dressed, at ten weeks of age—which is the proper time to market.

Very few people have the slightest conception of the size of the duck industry—especially around New York. In a recent canvass of all the duck plants on Long Island, I discovered that the total hatch of ducks during the last season was 1,163,261. The largest Long Island grower produced 100,000, and the next largest 81,000. Many of them raise from 20,000 to 50,000, and very few fall below 10,000. They are specialists, however, in this particular industry; only two of them raise chicks for broilers, and one of these produced this season 5,000 and the other 8,000.

THE GOOSE TRADE

Geese can be raised cheaply and a good profit made, if one has a piece of land with natural advantages—that is, low, marshy ground, where there is a continuous growth of tender young grass. Goslings properly fed and cared for up to a marketable age, which is about nine to twelve weeks, can be made to show one pound for every week of their lives. The goose industry is not carried on much in the vicinity of New York, but through the New England States, and especially in and around Rhode Island, it has reached a considerable development.

TURKEYS

The turkey, which is such a popular bird at this season of the year, may also be a source of profit to the poultry-grower. To quote Mr. Boyer again—"Ever since 1585 the turkey has been recognized as an ideal table fowl for the Christmas feast. Years afterward, when a Thanksgiving Day was proclaimed, it became the center of attraction for those dinners."

"The turkey still retains much of its wild nature, and is the last of our poultry to become domesticated. Its natural food is insects, grass and seeds as found on a range through a rough woodland. The Rhode Island and Connecticut turkeys feast on chestnuts, which impart a very attractive flavor."

"There are seven varieties of turkeys, of which the bronze is the largest and most popular, the adult cock bird weighing thirty-six pounds. The other varieties follow in this order: Narragansett, Bourbon Red, White Holland, Black, Buff and Slate."

"Turkeys cannot stand confinement. They must have range and be taught to come home at night to roost."

"For marketing they are bled from the mouth and are then dry picked and packed in barrels, with or without ice, according to the condition of the weather. Corn is the great fattening food."

GUINEA FOWL

As a word of warning to the amateur, it may be added that guinea hens are not apt to be a satisfactory investment. They are difficult to care for, noisy to have around the place, and usually the mortality of the flock eats up all the profits.

INCUBATORS

The poultry-raiser who uses incubators should start them in January and continue until August. The most satisfactory results are obtained in a cellar about five feet deep, as this gives a more uniform temperature than a room on the surface. The cellar shown in one of the accompanying photographs contains thirty-two incubators, each of which holds 300 duck eggs. This room is part of a large duck plant at Speonk, Long Island, shown in the lower picture.