Bred-to-Lay Flocks.

In developing flocks of farm poultry the bred-to-lay factor is deserving of much emphasis. Several systems for selecting laying hens have been tried with varying success but there is no method of accurately determining which hens are the best layers except the trap-nest. Breeders who have been making trap-nest records for a long period of years have been able to produce hens which possess a marked ability to lay eggs and transmit the power to their progeny.

Some breeders claim that the high normal layers are the best breeders and this seems sensible. The two-hundred-egg hen may frequently be a better breeder than the phenomenal layer which produces nearly three hundred eggs. It is the flock averages that count. Stock from a strain with eight or ten generations of two-hundred-egg hens is more reliable than stock from two generations of hens which will lay two hundred and fifty eggs per year. The two-hundred-egg stock bred over the longer period is more apt to have the characteristic fixed to stay.

In selecting bred-to-lay stock the time that the eggs are produced has some influence on their market value. Five birds of a prominent strain made a record of one hundred and thirty-four eggs during January in a Missouri laying contest. At a January price of fifty cents per dozen these eggs would have been worth $5.58, or about $1.12 per hen for the month. In May another pen produced one hundred and thirty-three eggs, but at that time eggs were selling for about twenty-five cents per dozen. Their eggs would only bring $2.77, or about fifty-six cents per hen for the month. Undoubtedly this ability to lay winter eggs can be developed in some strains of fowls to such an extent that they can be made much more profitable than the ordinary type of farm hen. The breeders who develop these high-quality winter layers seem to depend very largely upon the trap-nest to produce high records. Of course, they also emphasize vigor which is of prime importance in developing a flock of birds with the vitality to lay winter eggs.

Busy hens lay because exercise is fundamental to health and the bird that is not in a healthy, vigorous condition is not prepared to produce eggs. Keeping the hens busy in the winter also keeps the poultryman on the jump. Plenty of clean litter must be supplied for scratching. Dust baths must be prepared and filled with clean garden loam so that the hens will have a chance to fight pests and sun themselves while dusting in the earth.

It pays to have something for the hens to peck at during winter months. Clover can be wrapped in a small cylinder of poultry wire and suspended from the wall of the house. The birds will enjoy pecking at the leaves and blossoms and will obtain much healthful food by that means. Mangels placed on nails will supply green food and help to keep the birds busy.

Watch the flocks occasionally at night and note the hens that are always willing to stop work and go to bed early. They are often the hens that are poor producers and also the ones that are the slowest to come from the roost in the morning and start scratching. The busy hen seems to have a good disposition; she is apt to be the bird that sings while she hunts for feed in the litter. The lazy hen which spends much of her time humped up in the corner is usually a poor layer. She may show some signs of life at feeding time but she is more apt to watch for the grain the other hens scratch out rather than do her own hunting. The busy hen is apt to lay and pay, and during the winter one of the poultryman's biggest jobs is to keep the hens busy.

The Flame Game.

The little city cousin and the little country cousin sat together by the bright hearth. They had come to visit their aunt, who lived in a small town halfway between their two homes. As they watched the colored flames that frisked and frolicked over the burning driftwood logs they began to grow very well acquainted.

"I see a little green flame," said Janie, the country cousin.

"I see a little blue flame," said Hilda, the city cousin.

"And I see an orange flame!" cried Janie.

"And I a little violet flame!" Hilda added excitedly.

They were silent for a while, with their gaze fixed on the logs. "Oh, look!" Janie exclaimed presently. "Whole flocks of yellow flames!"

"And crowds of red ones," Hilda said. "I don't believe there's any end to the different colors. Red, orange, yellow, blue, green and violet."

"Like a rainbow broken to bits," Janie said. "And each bit looks different, somehow, from all the others."

Hilda narrowed her dark eyes and gazed steadily at the dancing lights. "Let's make a game of it," she suggested suddenly. "You pick out a flame and tell me what it looks like to you; then I'll tell what it looks like to me. That will be fun."

Janie thought so, too. She leaned forward, with her face in her palms, and gazed earnestly into the fire. "I see a tall red flame," she declared after a while. "It makes me think of the big red dahlia that grew in our garden by the fence last fall."

"It makes me think," said the little city girl, "of a red balloon in the bunch of toy balloons that the Italian sells on our corner."

"Oh, look, there's a whirly green flame!" exclaimed the little country cousin. She pointed toward the end of a stick of wood. "It's exactly like the weeping-willow tree by the brook at home, when the wind swirls through it."

"How funny!" said Hilda. "It looks to me like the green signal light that comes and goes in the subway to guide the cars."

"I've never been in a subway," Janie said thoughtfully. "But see that peeping, creeping violet flame! It makes me think of the spring violets in our woods."

"It reminds me," said Hilda, "of some lovely purple frills that I saw hanging over the counter in the big store where I go to shop with mother."

Janie's eyes searched the shining fireplace. "There's a quiet blue flame," she said at length. "It's just like the wavy meadow pool that we sail our leaf boats on."

"I don't know just what it looks like," Hilda observed, "but it is exactly the color of the little blue tea set in the china store downtown that perhaps I shall have for my birthday."

Janie was so interested in that piece of news that she forgot to take her turn.

"See that yellow flame!" Hilda cried, forgetting, too. "It's for all the world like the sparkly electric letters on the big hotel sign two blocks below our house."

"The idea!" said Janie, smiling. "It makes me think of nothing at all but the way the morning sunlight flashes on the tin milk cans by our kitchen door."

They laughed aloud over the difference in their ideas.

"Town seems to be very different from country," remarked the little country cousin after a while, "but very wonderful."

"Yes, and the country seems very different from town, but very wonderful, too," the little city cousin agreed.

Then they made the same remark at the same instant. "I wish you would come to see me," each one said. After that they played the flame game very often, sometimes in the city and sometimes in the country.

Entries on Dominion lands in the West will not, The Regina Leader says, be cancelled by land agents between December 15, 1918, and April 1, 1919, except in special instances. Proxy entries held by soldiers where satisfactory evidence of military service is on file are protected under general instructions until the return of the holder of the entry.

THE HOG THAT EUROPE WANTS

Winners of the first prize for Export Hogs at the Ontario Winter Fair, Guelph, exhibited by J. E. Brethour and Nephews, Burford, Ont.

The two Yorkshire pigs which won first prize as ideal bacon hogs at the Guelph Winter Fair were exhibited by J. E. Brethour and Nephews, Burford, Ont. They weighed about 200 pounds each. They represent the ideal type of hogs required by the export bacon trade.

"There never was a time when prospects for the producer of bacon hogs was so good," said Mr. Brethour. "We have developed a big bacon business during the war and we can hold it, I am sure of that. Most of the farmers of this country are now familiar with the requirements of export trade. Fifteen years ago we didn't know so well, but our exports then were higher than just before the war. The war had developed the industry here. We are well equipped now. We know the class of goods demanded. We have a larger number of good breeding stock than ever before. Even Ireland has not a better type of bacon hog than Canada has. Yorkshires predominate in Canada. I should say that easily 70% of our bacon hogs are Yorkshire blood."

Mr. Brethour says that even though feed is high in price, hogs can be produced at 20% profit, as he has proved by his own experience.

Europe, during the war, ate deeply into her breeding stock, and the shortage of hogs in the principal countries—excluding Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Balkans, as here the shortage is impossible to estimate at the present time—amounts to 32,000,000 head. During the war Canada's exports of bacon increased by 571%. The opportunity is now open to hold this trade permanently and increase it, for Canadian bacon has become favorably known in France and Italy, and Britain, and our best quality has always been able to hold its own in comparison with the best produced in Denmark or even Ireland—in both of which countries a heavy shortage now exists.

BESIDE HOME'S THRESHOLD

Farm Mothers Have Every Help at Hand for Anticipating the the First Year at School.

By Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

If we stop to look for them, we will find opportunities for education at the door-step of the farm home. The city school must substitute a laboratory, pictures, brief trips and excursions, stuffed and dried specimens of animals as substitutes for real life.

The farm child has the whole world of primary education within the limits of the farm. The farm mother has abundant opportunity for starting a child in the three R's at home.

Every child on entering school finds one of his difficulties in the beginning of arithmetic. He is given a book and must try to make abstract figures stand for concrete facts. The multiplication table, such problems as how much plastering to buy for this room and how many shingles for that barn, or how much interest a certain amount of money will earn in a year at a certain per cent., are all confusing mental operations for the child who is not yet at the stage when reasoning powers are developed.

He needs objects and tangible experiences before he tries to express these problems in terms of figures. A few home helps to arithmetic in the farm child's life will smooth his difficulties and send him to the top and beyond his class when he is in school.

Arithmetic begins usually with abstract exercises that aim to have children answer the question, "How many?" The ability to count and to do simple problems in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division may all be taught to the country child as a natural part of his daily living.

Counting comes first with the little child. At the age of four and five he has an instinct to number objects and if parents will take advantage of this natural interest they will be able to turn, at home, the child's first pages of arithmetic.

This can be done by encouraging the youngest child to count as much and as far as he likes; the buttons on his clothing, his blocks, the eggs in the barn, rows of flowers in the garden and the number of plants in each row, the pebbles, nuts, twigs and other nature material he gathers, the birds he sees during a day, the teams that pass by on the road, the apples that drop in the orchard and all the other unlimited series of interesting objects that lie within the daily reach of the country child.

It will also be a good plan to procure a box of large figures, either cut from cardboard or printed on cards, from a school supply shop. If these are not obtainable the figures may be cut from a large calendar and mounted on cards.

With these figure cards, which seem like a game, the child can be taught to record the results of his counting. Beneath a number of seeds, nuts, twigs or other objects he is taught to place the figure or figures corresponding to the number.

The divisions into tens and hundreds may be taught by grouping small objects and putting together the figures that represent their number. In a surprisingly short time the difficult bridge between the concrete and the abstract in arithmetical calculations will be crossed.

The next step in this home teaching of arithmetic is to give the child as many numerical experiences as possible. Let him place an equal number of seeds, pebbles or nuts in small boxes or dishes. By combining some of these and separating them, he makes a beginning in concrete addition, multiplication and substraction.

In each instance he should record his results with his cardboard figures. To put three chestnuts in each of three small tins, to put all nine in one and then to put them back in their original places is to "work out" three fundamental "problems" in addition, multiplication and subtraction. Thus arithmetic loses all its hardship because it comes in the guise of play.

The day's work of the farm leads to other as simple and valuable number experiences for the home child. Measuring milk, vegetables, fruit, berries, cooking ingredients and learning the names and capacity of all the receptacles used for this liquid and dry measure; measuring and laying out flower and vegetable beds; counting and measuring the material used for building fences, a dog house or a bird house; all these are important home training in arithmatic for the child on the farm.

The schools would be glad to duplicate such training and so give life to the dry bones of their teaching of mathematics. Each experience should be made a permanent lesson by having the little student copy his card figures and record the results of his measuring, counting and comparing.

When regular teaching of arithmetic is begun in school there are many home exercises that will help the farm child to make his growing knowledge of numbers a practical part of his everyday living. Some of these are; keeping an account of his own small weekly allowance, raising and selling truck, dairy or fowl produce and keeping a record of all expense and income, having his own bank account no matter how small, learning some interesting numerical games that need quick wits.

Geography is another study that has been brought home from unknown places and taught in the schools from knowledge gained at the child's home threshold. The home teaching of geography deeply interests every child if he or she is taught understandingly.

Nowadays we teach children to do less bounding of provinces and more studying of what the province needs. We say less about the Dead Sea and more about the wharves and shipping of the child's home river or sea coast.

This new method of teaching geography opens up an unlimited number of home experiences that will give a child a general viewpoint on the subject before he opens its pages in school.

The world in miniature lies at the farm gate and from this familiar point the boy and girl may discover the points of the compass, the number of and directions of the roads and the prevailing winds, the forms of the water courses, hills or mountains, the character of the soil.

In the sand pile by the barn he can model river courses, roads, fields, lay out townships. In the home brook he can build toy docks and dams and learn outside of books, the simple laws of land and air and water.

Neighboring towns, their direction, their industries, their railroads and where the railroads run, together with what kind of freight they carry, why and where, may be studied next. All children love a railroad time-table and from one of these folders there is a vast amount of home teaching in geography to be had. In it he finds the names of towns and their distances from each other. The accompanying map is more valuable than any in a geography because it is a chart of the child's own neighborhood. Any railroad company will send upon application a collection of time-tables and they will be found most valuable in this home teaching of geography.

A study of the physical characteristics of land, together with their relation to life and especially the life of the community, forms an important part of geography in the schools of to-day. This may be learned first hand on the farm. The country child has an opportunity to feel, know and work in various soils and become familiar with the values and crops of each. The farm furnishes opportunity for a liberal education along this line. Government bulletins on soils, markets, roads and road buildings, choice of crops, drainage, boys' and girls' poultry clubs, corn and pig clubs, the utilization of waste land, are excellent textbooks.

The foreign news in the daily papers may be read to him and explained.

A good encyclopedia should form part of the home library, within easy access of the boys and girls.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON
JANUARY 26

Lesson IV. Israel Crossing The Red Sea, Exodus 14: 21—15: 2.
Golden Text, Ex. 14: 30.

14: 1-31. The Prose Narrative. "Encamp by the sea." Moses must have expected to find a passage here, possibly by a ford or at low tide. There was an Egyptian fortress near (the name Migdol means fortress) and an army was already in pursuit. The tide was in when they approached the sea, and the people in alarm found themselves hemmed in on every side. They were "entangled in the land," and there seemed no escape. Panicstricken, the people turned on Moses with fierce reproaches. "Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have brought us here to die?" Beset by perils, and assailed by the reproaches of cowards and weaklings, the faith of the great leader shone out resplendent. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." "The Lord shall fight for you," he said. Night came on, the wind changed to the east, the tide went out, and a way was opened through the sea. On the right and on the left the sea formed a barrier, protecting them against a flank attack. Behind was the pillar of cloud, perhaps a heavy fog driven by the wind in the face of the enemy. And so, upon firm ground, the people passed over to freedom and safety. The Egyptians sought to follow but their chariot wheels dragged heavily in the sand and mud, the wind changed, and the tide came back, so that the Lord "discomfited the host of the Egyptians," and overthrew them "in the midst of the sea."

In verse 25 we should read "he bound their chariot wheels" (see margin of Rev. Ver.). The chariots were made with a light wooden body, a stout axle set as far back as possible on the two wheels, and a pole which passed beneath the floor was fixed into the axle and then was bent upward and attached by a band of leather to the font of the chariot. The horses were yoked to the pole and without traces. Chariots of a later age had the wheels armed with scythes. There were two, or often three, men in each, of whom one drove, one was an archer with bow and arrows, and one the bearer of a shield. The "tank" is the adaptation of the same kind of machine to modern warfare—but how great the difference!

15: 1-21. The Song of Victory. There were war poets and minstrels in Israel. An early collection of songs was known as "The Book of the Wars of Jehovah" (Num. 21: 14), and it is possible that this song may have been preserved in that same collection. It breathes the exultant fire and passion of that first great victory and the new confidence in God which it inspired.

"I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath
triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath he
thrown into the sea.
Jehovah is my strength and song,
And he is become my salvation."

For "Jehovah is a man of war." He has fought the battle of His people and won. Henceforth they know His power. In every subsequent peril of their national life they remembered this deliverance at the Red Sea. It became the symbol and the assurance of salvation, as it is with us to this day. For does not God still save those who trust in Him and discomfit their foes?

It seems probable that some of the latter verses of the song are of later date, and were written after the conquest of Palestine. See, for example, verses 13-18, where God is said already to have led His people to His "holy habitation," that is, the Holy Land, and to have stricken the people of Edom, Moab and Canaan with fear.

Keeping Dairy Herd Records.

The Dairy and Cold Storage Branch of the Ottawa Department of Agriculture has issued an eight-page circular giving exact instructions relative to the keeping of dairy herd records. The circular states that the Department will pay to any qualified tester 10 cents for each Babcock test made from the composite samples of any herd. The party who does the testing must provide the Babcock tester and the necessary glassware and equipment for making the test. The Department will provide free of charge the sulphuric acid preservative tablets, return envelopes, credit slips, labels for the composite sample bottles, and blank forms for recording the weights of milk at the farm. The duties of the testers will be to test the composite samples each month, enter the tests on the record sheets and forward the same to Ottawa. With the circular, a sample is given of the record and the manner in which it should be kept and blank application forms, first, for assistance in herd record work and, 2nd, for employment as a milk tester. It should be stated that no postage is required when writing to the Dairy and Cold Storage Commissioner, Ottawa, and also that the circular here referred to can be had free from the Publications Branch at Ottawa.

Finance Canada With W.S.S.

Canada must finance herself, and War Savings Stamps are a splendid means for the conserving of the surplus money of the mass of the people for this purpose.

THE TRAPPER.

How To Trap Mink.

Mink are most easily trapped along small streams, where the lodging of the driftwood in the crooks and windings of the shore affords fine hiding places for the animals and consequently fine spots for setting traps either in or out of water. But where possible the sets should be made in water and on the lower bank of the stream. A guideway is made of two logs, the traps set in between and on the far side placed a half a dozen drops of the best mink bait. Again, the traps may be set in the water near some weeds or tall grass, and a few drops of good mink bait placed on the weeds or grass.

Other good places to set traps for mink are inside old hollow logs or in the hollow of an old tree close to the stream. The bait should be placed near the trap but not on the trap. In winter the traps should be set near the ripples or thin ice where the mink is most likely to come out.

In working around the traps, gloves and shoes should be scented with the best trail scent in order to remove the effects of the human odor of which the mink are very wary. If a mink den can be discovered, and the animals found inside a good smoker will drive them out so that they may be easily caught.

In preparing mink for the market, they should be stretched pelt side out and all superfluous flesh and fat scraped off. Skins should be dried in a cool, dry place, not near the fire or in the sun. After being stretched enough to hold their shape, the skins are ready for shipment.

Reading Good Books.

The reading of books, if they be in any sense worthy, can scarcely fail to be a most fruitful and worthwhile exercise. If a book only succeeds in taking a man out of himself for a time, it at least does that much good. But if in doing that, it takes him into a place of clearer thought, or truer feeling or higher impulse, then it surely performs a service past all estimating. And it will do some one or all of these things if it is a good book. Now if good books were with us more than they are we would be better men and women than we are. And good books are all about us, stretching out their hands to us and asking that we know and use them. And we have time to give them, for we could easily spare it from some of the things that keep us busy hour after hour. We could all give enough time that we might read at least one good book every month and if we would all do it the sum of our intelligence and happiness and usefulness would be very very greatly increased.

Patriotic Fund.

The total receipts of the Canadian Patriotic Fund, including interest amounting to about $850,000, reached $43,785,953.74 on December 17, 1918. The total contributions to the fund to date have amounted to a little under $42,000,000.

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