

# Soils & Goods

Address communications to Agronomist, 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.

## FOUR WAYS TO GET EGGS WHEN PRICES ARE HIGHER.

I suppose we all think sometimes that our hens are determined to lay all the eggs they can when eggs are cheap, and out of contrariness take vacations when eggs are high.

It is true that hens do lay more eggs when hen fruit is cheap, and fewer when it is high. But the reason is that when everybody's hens are shell-ing out eggs the price goes down because there are lots of eggs. And when production slows up, naturally the price becomes greater.

I am not going to promise that you can make hens lay most heavily when prices are high and less when eggs are low. But I will say that it is wholly possible by careful, sensible management to get more eggs than usual during the later summer months, when eggs are always higher. I am going to mention four plans that I have found by experience will bring more eggs during those months:

Four reasons for the usual summer slackening of egg production are:

1. Broodiness.
2. Parasites.
3. Poorly balanced rations, during the spring as well as in the summer.
4. Heavy laying in spring that lowers the hen's vitality.

So if we're going to get more higher priced eggs in July and August, these are our problems. The solutions may not be exactly easy, but my experience has shown me that enough can be accomplished to make the effort very profitable indeed.

The slump in egg prices, which usually continues through April and May, by July generally changes to an upward tendency, with higher prices from then on. I am well convinced that it pays to try to manage the flock so that the laying season is lengthened out. Here are the methods I have used to accomplish the purpose:

### 1. Prevent broodiness.

If checked at the very start, broodiness will affect the egg production but little. But if your hens are allowed to sit a few days and get heated up, it is not hard to break them, but they are also apt to be through with laying for a long period.

The best and simplest way to make a hen decide she doesn't want to raise a family is to put her in a small crate with a wire or slat bottom. This ventilated bottom allows air to circulate under the hen. She is kept uncomfortable. Still better, hang the crate up by wires so it will swing. Two or three days of this will usually break the most determined hen.

Feed in the crate the regular egg mash, plenty of green food and water. This will tend to keep the hens laying and prevent them from drying up. It is well to go through the hen house every night or so during the late spring and early summer, lifting the hens off the nest and taking them to the crate. After roosting is the best time.

I find this plan far superior to starving hens, which in itself checks production, or by wetting them, or any other commonly practiced plan.

### 2. Destroy parasites.

Warm weather means more active lice and mites. They sap vitality. Lice and mites are often confused. They are different, and require different treatment. Lice are always on the fowl. They can't live unless they are on the bird where they breed, hatch and grow. There are several different kinds of lice, some feeding on the head, others on the neck, some on the back, since their feeding habits are alike, all can be fought alike.

Investigators a few years ago found that sodium fluoride powder was an absolute specific against chicken lice. For about 50 cents a pound your druggist will supply the commercial drug— it need not be chemically pure—and a pound will dust at least 200 hens.

I use it this way. I hold the hen by the legs, head down. I rub a pinch of fluoride held between thumb and index finger along the base of the tail feathers, around the vent, under each wing, down the back, up the back of the neck and on the back of the head. I usually take three or four pinches for each hen.

Within three or four days it is well forced by lights, and skillful feeding,

is likely to mean lower summer production. But, in any event, experience has thoroughly convinced me that, measured by the bank account, the effort to get eggs when prices make them most profitable will be followed by results worth while.

### Sales From My Garden

My experience in marketing crops right around home last season taught me that the way to sell is to let people know what you have to sell. I had planted more peas, beets, turnips, and cabbages than I needed for home consumption. Always before, I had found it necessary to haul the stuff twelve miles to market or let it waste. This time I tried different tactics. Many of my neighbors did not have the same kind of produce, so I resolved to see what a little advertising would do. First, I told a few whom I knew had no early gardens. The result was that all my produce was sold out in short order. I charged the regular city market price, and my patrons were more than satisfied. You would not think such things as beet greens, bunch beets, turnips, and carrots would sell in a farming community. I sold them last year. Cabbage and peas came on the last of June and I did not have half enough. This year I am planting more.

When sweet corn was ready for market, I put a notice in the entrance of a small shoe factory in a village two miles away. I sold several hundred dozen ears in a week. I sold my

early potatoes and all my garden crops, the customers often coming to the door. In other cases I delivered within a radius of two miles from the farm. It paid me to develop the home market. C. H.

### Farmers Securing Premium for Select Hogs.

A large number of farmers in the Province of Ontario are marketing their hogs on the graded basis and receiving the premium for "selects." Co-operative shipping, more than any other agency is making this possible. In the Toronto stock yards alone no less than 7,180 hogs were received in the month of April bearing such marks of identification as enabled the farmers who shipped them to secure the premium of ten per cent. for such selects as they sent in. These hogs came from seventy-three shipping stations and were raised by 1,534 farmers. The payment of the premium for selects is resulting in more careful attention being given not only to the manner in which the hogs are being raised, but also in the type of sows kept for breeding purposes. Farmers are finding out the mistake of finishing their pigs too young, as well as of making them too thick before selling. Shippers report a distinct improvement in this regard.

Knowledge hurts nobody; ignorance and stupidity can well be left behind.

Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, the famous surgeon.

## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

JUNE 17

**Esther, the Patriot Queen, Esther 4: 13 to 5: 3. Golden Text—Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?—Esther 4: 14.**

LESSON FOREWORD—In preparation for the lesson, the whole of the book of Esther should be read. One scholar puts the story briefly thus: "Esther is the story of a beautiful Jewish queen, whom Xerxes (Ahasuerus) raises from his concubines to be his queen, and who uses her influence over him to save her people from general massacre, which the grand vizier (Haman) has prepared for them by way of avenging an affront from one of their race." The story of Esther has ever been popular with the Jews, for it magnifies the importance of the Jewish people and maintains throughout the traditional pride of their race. It has also importance for the Jews, since it explains the origin of the feast of Purim, one of the great Jewish feasts. See ch. 9 and especially vs. 26, 31, 32.

Haman, puffed at Mordecai's lack of courtesy to him, persuaded the king to issue a decree permitting the slaughter of the Jews. (See ch. 3:1-15.) The Jews are filled with consternation and Mordecai sits by the palace gate clothed in sackcloth and ashes. When Esther sends out other clothes to him, he refuses to put them on; but urges Esther to go to the king and beg that the decree be rescinded. Mordecai's message was taken to Esther by Hatach, one of the eunuchs of Ahasuerus' court, and probably a personal attendant upon Esther, the queen. He must have been a trustworthy man to carry such confidential messages between Esther and Mordecai. Ch. 4:1-10.

In order to preserve the dignity of court life and to prevent the assassination of the king, it was a law of the Persians that no one could approach the king without being summoned. Not even the queen could appear before him except she was summoned. It was not thirty days since Ahasuerus had sent for Esther. It would, therefore, be dangerous for Esther to venture unbidden into the king's private chamber.

I. AN URGENT REQUEST, 10-17.

V. 13. Think not that thou shalt escape. Esther was, of course, a Jewish girl and also a relative of the hated Mordecai. But this was not known at the court. Yet when, and if, it were finally known, she would perish in the general massacre of her people. But it was just as dangerous for her to remain away from the king as to go to him.

V. 14. Enlarge and deliverance to the Jews from another place. The book of Esther nowhere directly mentions the name of God. This is an instance of how the mention of it is avoided. "Another place" is just a roundabout way of saying "God." In later times, the Jews did not pronounce the name of God, since they believed that the mere utterance of the ineffable name had a magical potency.

The passage here means that if Esther will not plead before the king for her people, then God himself, remembering his ancient promise of Israel, will deliver them. But thou and thy father's house, etc. If Esther will not intercede on behalf of the Jews, she will be visited with a special judgment, which will involve all of her family. Eventually the other Jews may escape the decree massacre, but Esther and her family will not escape. Who knoweth, etc. Remember that Mordecai is urging Esther to appear before the king for Israel's sake. He has urged other arguments, but now he pleads on very high grounds. God may have elevated Esther to the queenship for the express purpose of delivering her people from the threatened catastrophe.

V. 16. A deep chord among Esther's heart-strings has been touched, and now vibrates with a noble response. She resolves, with calm determination and with her eyes open to the grave dangers involved in her course, to enter, unsummoned, the inner chamber of the king. She requests that all the Jews in Susa should lend her their spiritual support. They are to fast for three days. This general abatement will be accompanied, no doubt,



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### Observations on Hog Grading.

There is some confusion in the minds of hog raisers between the "thick smooth" and "select" type of hog. One has only to observe hog grading in practice, and to discuss the matter with graders, to learn the precise difference between these two classes of hogs. The difference is not a matter of weight so much as type. Many very good types of Yorkshire and Tamworth hogs weighing from 200 to 220 pounds have to be classed as thick smooths. They fail in one or two particulars. For example: length and smoothness of shoulder are essential factors in a select hog. If it fails in either of these points it does not earn the premium. Condition of fatness is also a deciding factor. What used to be regarded as a finished hog, that is, one with a well rounded back, does not suit the bacon trade. When split, the carcass should show a uniform thickness of fat from 1 1/2 to 1 1/4 inches down the full length of the back. The practiced eye of the grader is able to decide fairly accurately just how a hog will kill out. Until hog raisers can get these points established in their minds, they will not fully understand why some of their very good bred and bacon type hogs do not get into the select class.

### THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

#### OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS— THE BLUEBIRD.

BY LERINE BAILLANTYNE.

One of the first arrivals among our feathered friends is the Bluebird. He comes with the Robin and the Meadowlark. Sometimes he is the first of the three to greet us, so that apart from his other virtues, he should be welcomed each year for the glad herald that we know him to be.

The bluebirds are brave little fellows, and very confident. That they trust us is evident from the fact that they build in orchard trees, birdboxes, and sometimes the nests abandoned by woodpeckers.

The bluebird wears a pretty coat of light blue with a vest the color of brick-clay—a sort of reddish brown. This brilliant coloration, together with its gentle ways and murmuring notes, make this bird quite a prized addition to any garden or place in which it cares to make its home.

Because it feeds mainly upon injurious insects, it is highly beneficial, and can in one season work a tremendous amount of good in one locality. Weeds also form an important part of its food, and though it eats a small percentage of soft fruit, practically no cultivated kinds are taken by it. We can therefore regard it as a consistently useful bird.

How lovely it would be if we could attract a few of these pretty feathered friends to our homes. If they could be persuaded to use our bird boxes, would it not be a charming sight to see the little flashes of blue darting among our trees, and when we consider the number of insects those bright little eyes can detect as they go up and down each branch, would we not find them valuable little friends to have around the lawn or orchard.

APPLICATION.

Let us set down some of the good elements in the character of Queen Esther:

(a) Although she sprang from a humble home and a foreign race, she did not forget her friends and relatives when she was promoted suddenly to the highest office in Persia open to any woman—that of queen. She did not forget Mordecai who had cared for her during her childhood, nor did she forget the people of her own blood, the Jews. When the opportunity came, she showed herself their helper and benefactress.

(b) Esther was a woman of extraordinary courage. She faced the possibility of death when she approached the Persian monarch unbidden, ch. 4:5.

(c) She was wise and resourceful in carrying out of her plans for the saving of her people from the horrible edict that had been promulgated by the Persian king at the instigation of the small-minded Haman, ch. 3. She studied the situation carefully, and so clearly that the king must be brought to see the black motive of his prime minister, Haman. The king pledged himself to give his beautiful queen whatever she would ask, and at the psychological moment she made her accusation against Haman, ch. 7.

3. Let us now set down some of Esther's defects, bearing in mind that they reflect the characteristic feelings of her people.

(a) Esther's patriotism was too cruel and harsh in its feelings for outsiders. She pushed her advantage with the Persian Xerxes to an extreme, and asked that Haman's ten sons should be hanged, ch. 9:13. The spirit of revenge is too strong. Edith Cavell has taught us a better way, and she learned it from Jesus.

(b) Esther's love of God is very inadequate. She and her Jewish countrymen evidently thought that God would be pleased with the slaughter of 75,000 of their enemies. Berg again, we must not forget that this notion of God was common to the Jews at this time. It was the chief task of Jesus to show his countrymen a richer thought of God.

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