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Virginia farmers "went over the top" last year producing eggs and poultry. Even Blacksburg, Virginia will be needed this year.

There are more hens in Virginia than there were a year ago and if these are well cared for, state goals will be met. Proper management of the flock rests on **good feeding, comfortable housing, and good stock.**

Good Feeding

For one just starting in poultry management, probably good feeding should be considered first, as it is the factor that will show results most quickly. The common practice on many Virginia farms is to feed corn or wheat once a day. But the hen is a manufacturing plant, and her finished product is determined by the raw material she gets. To make eggs, she must have some form of protein, such as milk, meat scrap, or soybean oil meal, in addition to the grain.

When home-grown grains are used and the hen is given all of these she will eat, plus all the milk she will drink, she should lay fairly well. If milk is not available, protein in the form of meat scrap, fish meal, or soybean oil meal should be supplied at the rate of about 2½ pounds for each 100 hens daily. However, better production will be secured from a regular laying mash. Keep it before the hens all of the time, and, in addition, give them all of the scratch grain they will eat before going to roost.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.

from Fewer

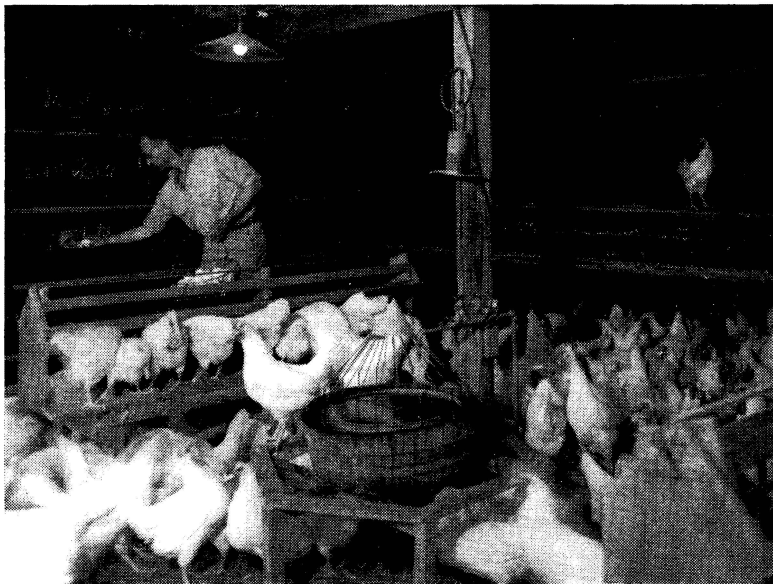


Egg production is often limited because the hens cannot get sufficient feed. If the flock owner does not have or cannot buy all of the feed his hens will eat, it will be much more profitable to sell a part of the flock and feed the rest properly.

Good Housing

The hen should have a comfortable home. This means a house with a roof that does not leak, and a house free of drafts. There should be openings on the south side for ventilation and light. Straw or other litter should be kept on the floor at all times and the birds should be encouraged to scratch in this.

The house shown below is a good house. Note the tight wall at the rear. Note also how the roosts and dropping boards are arranged; that the nests are many and well bedded; that there is plenty of hopper space, up off the floor; and that running water is so arranged as to keep floor litter dry.



SIX RULES

1
Start
with
Good
Chicks

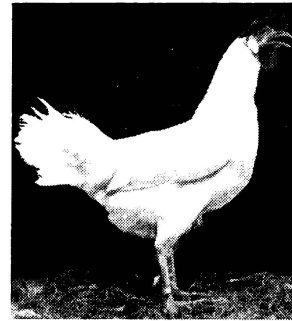
2
Feed
Them
Well

3
Keep
Grounds
and Houses
Sanitary

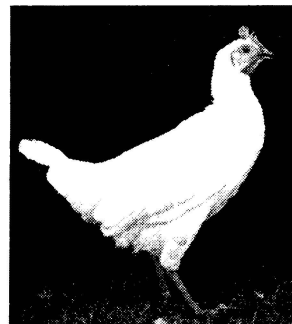
4
Put
Pullets
in Good
Houses

5
Feed
for
More
Eggs

6
Gather
Eggs
Twice
Daily
Market
Twice
Weekly



This hen laid 229 eggs.



This one laid only 63.
It takes at least 80 eggs
to pay for a hen's food.

Good Stock

Late winter or early spring is the time to start the chicks to replace the laying stock next fall. Since laying ability is inherited, egg production records of the parent stock are important. Chicks from hens that lay 200 eggs a year do not cost a great deal more than chicks from hens that lay only 50 to 75 eggs a year. Only good layers make profits. If you cannot get chicks from someone near you who you know has good stock, buy them from a state-supervised hatchery, preferably a Virginia-supervised one.

Egg prices are highest from September through November. Chicks hatched in March or early April and given a good growing mash all summer should start laying eggs in September.

The Daily Schedule

1. **Water.**—Wash the drinking fountain or container each morning. During cold weather, warm water will help get more eggs than ice water. Keep a constant supply of warm, fresh water.

2. **Feed.**—Keep laying mash in an open hopper before the hens all day. For best results in bad weather, keep hens shut up so that they will eat all the laying mash they possibly can. What to use in a good farm laying mash is given in the table on the next page.

Mash Formula

100 lbs. yellow corn meal	}	81 lbs. soybean oil meal
100 lbs. wheat flour middlings		17 lbs. steamed bone meal
100 lbs. wheat bran		3 lbs. salt
100 lbs. meat scrap (55% protein) or		(Use 1½ lbs. for each lb.
100 lbs. ground oats or barley		of meat scrap replaced.)
5 lbs. salt		
10 lbs. cod liver oil (85D)		

515 lbs. laying mash		

A scratch feed of corn and wheat keeps the birds' bodies in good laying condition. The chickens should have all they will eat the last hour and a half before roosting time. The layers will eat nearly as much wheat and corn as mash, but wheat and corn **alone** is not a good egg producer.

3. **Care of Eggs.**—Provide clean, well-bedded nests. Gather eggs regularly. **Keep them in a cool room.** Sell only the best. Market at least once, preferably twice, a week.

4. **The Hen House.**—Straw or other good litter will provide the necessary scratching material and cover for the floor of the laying house. From four to six inches of litter gives excellent results. If there are no drop boards, a board six inches high should separate the roosting section from other parts of the house, to keep the hens from scratching droppings out into the litter. This dropping section should be cleaned once a week. The east, north, and west walls should be draft-proof — free of cracks and knot-holes. Cold drafts cause colds and colds keep hens from doing their best job of laying.

If you wish more detailed information, ask your county farm or home demonstration agent, whose offices are, as a rule, at or near the county courthouse, for Extension Division Bulletin 51, called "Poultry Production," and Farmers' Bulletin 1524, called "Farm Poultry Raising."