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LITTLE ECONOMY IN PREPARED HEN FEED

Investigation Shows Whole Grain Can Be Purchased Much More Cheaply.

WEEDS AND GRIT IN MANY

Suggestion Is Made That Buyers Insist on Knowing Amount of Various Ingredients in What They Buy.

From Department of Publications, Michigan Agricultural College.

East Lansing, Mich.—Keepers of poultry—who includes the little fellow who keeps a few hens as a hobby as well as the big poultry man who is in the business for the money—there is in it a great many of them following a policy of "penny wise and pound foolish" in the buying of their scratch feeds. Lured on by fancy names and pretty pictures they have been paying extravagant prices for commercial mixtures made up of common grains, often of inferior quality, adulterated not infrequently with weed seeds and limestone grit.

A few shrewd individuals have for some time been more or less aware of this fact, but it remained for the chemists of the experiment station of the Michigan Agricultural college a few days ago to prove it. Going at it systematically, as is the way with scientific men, the college chemists made complete analyses of practically every scratch feed sold in the state. Their conclusion was that with prices as they stand at present (November, 1917) it will save poultry man from 25 to 100 per cent to go into the market and buy his own feed. If necessary, buy the whole grain and mix it themselves.

As with all things, of course, both good feeds and bad were found, but irrespective of what class they fell into, it was proved that the whole grain was a much cheaper feed for poultry men to use than the scratch feed. There was one feed, and it was one of the best by the way, offered on the market for \$4.75 a hundredweight. The corn, wheat, oats, and rye of which it was composed could have been purchased anywhere for \$3.86. The grain contained in another commercial feed was worth just \$2.87 at prevailing market prices—mixed up and sold as a pretty good feed. It was selling at \$4.50 to gullible poultry men. In the very best sample there was only \$4.13 worth of grain—and it was selling at \$4.80. In most samples the value of the grain ran from \$2.87 to \$3.75, and they were selling at prices ranging from \$4.50 to \$4.75.

Of course much stress has been laid by the manufacturers on the fact that these scratch feeds are offered as "balanced rations" to give the birds variety in their diet, but any poultry man with half an ounce of brains can feed his hens a superior fare at a dollar less per hundredweight. One feed, for instance, was found to contain 50 pounds of barley, 30 pounds of corn, 10 pounds of buckwheat and 2 pounds of kafir corn in every 100 pounds. Another was made up of 44 pounds of corn, 10 pounds of barley, 30 pounds of wheat, 4 pounds of kafir corn, 10 pounds of weeds and 10 pounds of grit. A fourth contained 55 pounds of corn, 15 pounds of barley, 10 pounds of wheat and 20 pounds of weeds. Thus it went through the whole catalogue of feeds tested.

Some few reliable firms, it is true, used pure grain, but the majority of the brands inspected showed a variety of contents of questionable value. Forty-nine samples were found to contain grit, which was being charged for at the rate of approximately 2 cents a pound. In other samples the grains used were mostly of inferior quality and light weight; and in some cases salvaged grains were substituted for the sound.

But most objectionable in a large number of samples was the presence of weed seeds. In some cases running as high as 30 pounds in every hundredweight. Among these were many of poisonous varieties, such as nightshade, erect and prostrate, and containing night shade, when fed to hens on the college farm as an experiment resulted in the death of two and affected all the others. The fact that the seeds are always whole and are therefore not all eaten by the hens probably accounts for the fearful fatalities.

The final conclusion drawn from the inspections was that if poultry men will buy the whole grain and mix it at home they will save themselves all the way from 25 to 100 per cent in the cost of their scratch feed and will in addition guard their flocks from possible injury by poisonous seeds and other possibly harmful ingredients.

But in any event, before a man insists on clinging to a commercial mixed variety, he should be sure at least that he is buying a feed made up of good clean grain. The difference in cost between the kind of feed set out by the college and the kind that containing impurities and poisonous weed seeds is so slight that there is no excuse for buying the latter.

SOWS NEED WINTER RATIONS

Proper Nourishment of Brood Animals Now Determines Success of Spring Litters.

By W. E. J. EDWARDS,

Department of Animal Husbandry, Michigan Agricultural College.

East Lansing, Mich.—The near approach of winter has made the matter of winter rations one of much concern to the man who has brood sows on his hands, for as every breeder of hogs well knows the success of spring litters is largely predetermined by the treatment accorded the brood animals from this time on. Sufficient nourishing feed is essential and plenty of exercise is important.

The exact amount of feed required to winter sows, however, cannot be stated definitely, for much depends upon the condition, age and the individual sow. The best rule to go by is not to allow them to become thin, while on the other hand it is not wise to allow them to become very fat. Sows in fair condition in the fall should gain from 50 to 75 pounds at least before farrowing time, for the loss in weight during parturition may be equal to this. This gain should be put on gradually, for it is advisable to keep the sows in the entire period, especially during the final six or eight weeks of pregnancy. By so doing the healthy development of the unborn litter is assured.

With sows in good healthy condition and 15 pounds of grain per day for every 100 pounds of live weight should produce about the desired gains. Some sows need more, others less. Equal parts of ground corn, oats and barley, well mixed, makes an excellent ration. During the colder weather if plenty of exercise is provided, a larger proportion of corn can be fed. Barley or rye, in place of the corn, do well also. Equal parts of corn and midlings, or 10 to 12 parts of corn to one part of midlings, will do well. One part of 60 per cent digestor tankage, make good rations. It matters little which ration is used if care be taken to see that it is palatable, has the proper bulk and contains the desired nutrients. Corn, barley and other fattening feeds must be fed in limited quantities; muscle and bone builders, such as middlings, oats, tankage and alfalfa, are very essential and should form a considerable portion of the ration also. Good, well-cured alfalfa, fed in racks, is greatly relished and supplies at the same time the necessary bulk. It is also a good bone and muscle builder. Some prefer to chop alfalfa, and after steeping in water for several hours mix it with the grain ration. Handled in this manner the amount eaten can be more nearly regulated.

A small amount of succulent feed, such as mangels or cabbage, gives variety and tends to keep sows in a healthy condition.

SHOW PEDIGREED GRAINS

Meeting of Growers at M. A. C. in Few Weeks Will Be Occasion for Display of Pured Grains.

East Lansing, Mich.—Pured grains, which have become one of the big factors in Michigan's effort to augment the supply of the nation, will be given homage at the Michigan Agricultural college on January 15 and 16—the dates that have been chosen for the annual session of members of the Michigan Crop Improvement association. It will be recalled that it was these men's crops of Red Rock wheat, Rosey rye and Worthy, Alexander and Success oats which played so large a part in the campaign last summer and fall.

In connection with the meeting in state prizes. The exhibit, of course, will be in charge of J. W. Nicolson, farm crops extension specialist for M. A. C., to whom those desiring to make entries are requested to write. This year's session of the Crops Improvement association, it is said, is likely to be a highly important one, since much that has come up as a result of the food campaign must be considered.

Big Convention of Stockmen.

The annual convention of members of the Michigan Live Stock Breeders and Feeders association—each winter the greatest gathering in the state of men identified with the live stock industry—will as usual this season be conducted at the Michigan Agricultural college on January 17, 18 and 19. One of the fruits of the session is expected to be a statement from the fathers of beef cattle, sheep and hogs of the part they expect to play in the coming spring drive to keep the national leader stock. Another feature of the session, one intended to promote the wider use of purebred stock in the state, will be a sale of pedigreed animals.

Buttermakers Will Attend School. Working on the theory that they are never too old to learn, experienced buttermakers and managers of creameries in Michigan will become "pupils" at the Michigan Agricultural college from December 17 to 22, inclusive. During these six days a special course will be offered for them, taking up advanced and particularly important features of the buttermaking business. The usual college spirit will be assisted during the sessions by a number of outside experts. Any creamery man or buttermaker in the state who cares to attend is eligible, it has been announced.

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Garrick

"Canary Cottage," the much-heralded comedy with music, which last season ran for six months at the Morosco theater, New York City, and is being brought here direct from a two months run at the Olympic theater, Chicago, is said to be the biggest and best musical output of Oliver Morosco, not forgetting "Be Long, Letty" and "What Next." The same duo of librettists, Oliver Morosco and Oliver Harris and the same composer, Earl Carroll, that gave the theatergoers the popular "Be Long, Letty," are responsible for the book and music of "Canary Cottage." Only it is said that this, their latest work, is one hundred per cent better, funnier and more tuneful than the former.

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