

In preventing the start or spread of poultry disease it has been found of value to shift the flock from one place to another, from year to year. This is accomplished either by the use of portable poultry houses or by providing runs on each side of the poultry house, either of which is successively used as a poultry run for one year, and alternately cultivated the following year. By this method of rotation the processes of nature have time to destroy many of the germs of disease or the eggs of parasites which otherwise may, with disastrous results, be picked up by the birds.

Correct Feeding a Preventive

Nutritional diseases as a class are the diseases of captivity in the lower animals and poultry. Various forms of nutritional deficiency

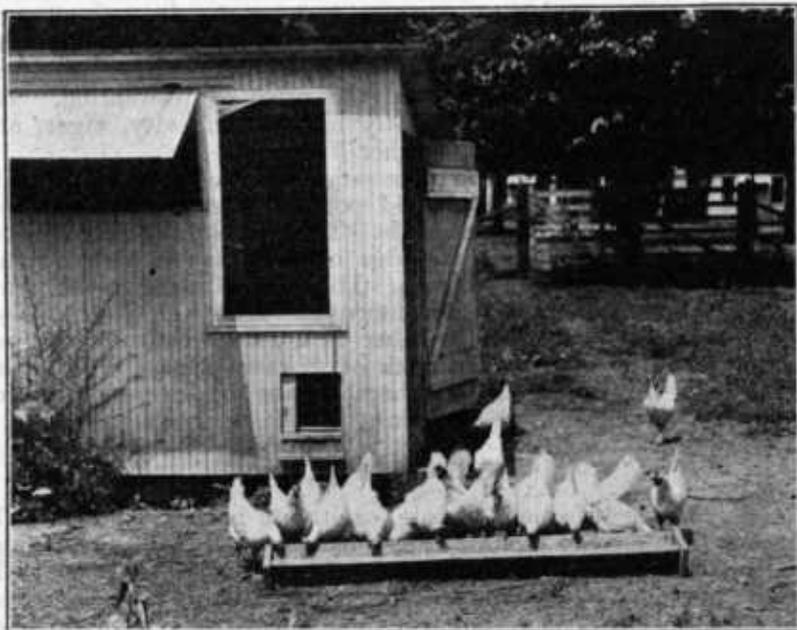


FIG. 185.—Proper selection of feeds and clean equipment will largely prevent the numerous nutritional diseases that affect domestic fowls

produce rather definite symptoms and lesions in birds. The nutritional disease manifestations include rickets, false roup, leg weakness, and polyneuritis (St. Vitus's dance), with more or less emaciation, anemia, and functional depression. The most common form of nutritional surfeit in poultry is gout, a disease caused by excessive protein feeding. Obesity, from excessively starchy rations, is also common in hens. The general principle of correct poultry feeding is to supply the flock with such essentials as whole and ground mixed cereals, animal protein in proper quantity, shell, grit, and abundant green feed or raw vegetables. Proved formulas issued by this department for the feeding of poultry afford adequate protection against the ordinary nutritional diseases.

In close relation to nutritional diseases stands a group of conditions caused by the eating of spoiled feeds. It is needless to say that all feed supplied to poultry should be fresh, clean, and free of molds, decomposition, or contamination of any sort.

Environmental diseases in poultry are those which are traceable to the conditions under which the birds are kept. Bad ventilation and drafts or dampness in the poultry house are liable to produce definitely adverse consequences. Chilling or overheating, crowding, or lack of direct sunlight are frequently responsible for disease and death among poultry of any age, particularly young birds. Aside from the necessity of a correct type of poultry house, it is important to put the building on well-drained soil, situated so as to shelter the flock from the force of the prevailing storms.

In overcoming the disease tendency of birds caused by their habits of flocking together, it is advantageous to divide a large flock into smaller groups or units, with separate quarters. In that way the conditions of living are under better control. There is less crowding, less dissension in the flock and a more equal distribution of the daily ration allowance. Also, in smaller groups a possible outbreak of infectious disease is the more readily brought under control and relatively fewer birds are endangered.

Birds of widely varying ages should ordinarily not flock together. And finally, birds of different species should be kept from occupying common quarters, and, so far as is practicable, should be kept on separate ground.

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POUTRY and Egg Production Estimates Now Made Accurate current information concerning the production of poultry and eggs is greatly needed. The value of these products in 1925 is estimated to be somewhat over \$1,000,000,000—about the same as that of all cattle.

Aside from decennial census figures, about the only information of a general nature available has been the receipts at the principal markets, the annual estimates of numbers of poultry on farms, and production of poultry and eggs as reported by the voluntary crop reporters of the Department of Agriculture. Annual reports from sample farms show the number of chicks hatched, and as this figure is related to numbers raised as reported by the decennial census, estimates of the annual production of poultry have been possible. The total production of eggs has been roughly approximated from the change in numbers of poultry during the year, on the fairly well proven assumption that conditions affecting increase or decrease in numbers tend to influence proportionately the production of eggs. The receipts of eggs at the principal markets appear to bear out this assumption.

Since September, 1924, the crop correspondents have been reporting the number of hens and pullets of laying age in their flocks and the number of eggs laid, on the first day of each month. These samples number about 20,000 and include both ordinary and commercial farm flocks, with a small proportion of town flocks. They should afford dependable information on the monthly trends of egg production. Owing to the time required for eggs to reach the mar-