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4-H Broiler Project : Extension Circular 14-06-2

W. F. Aubol

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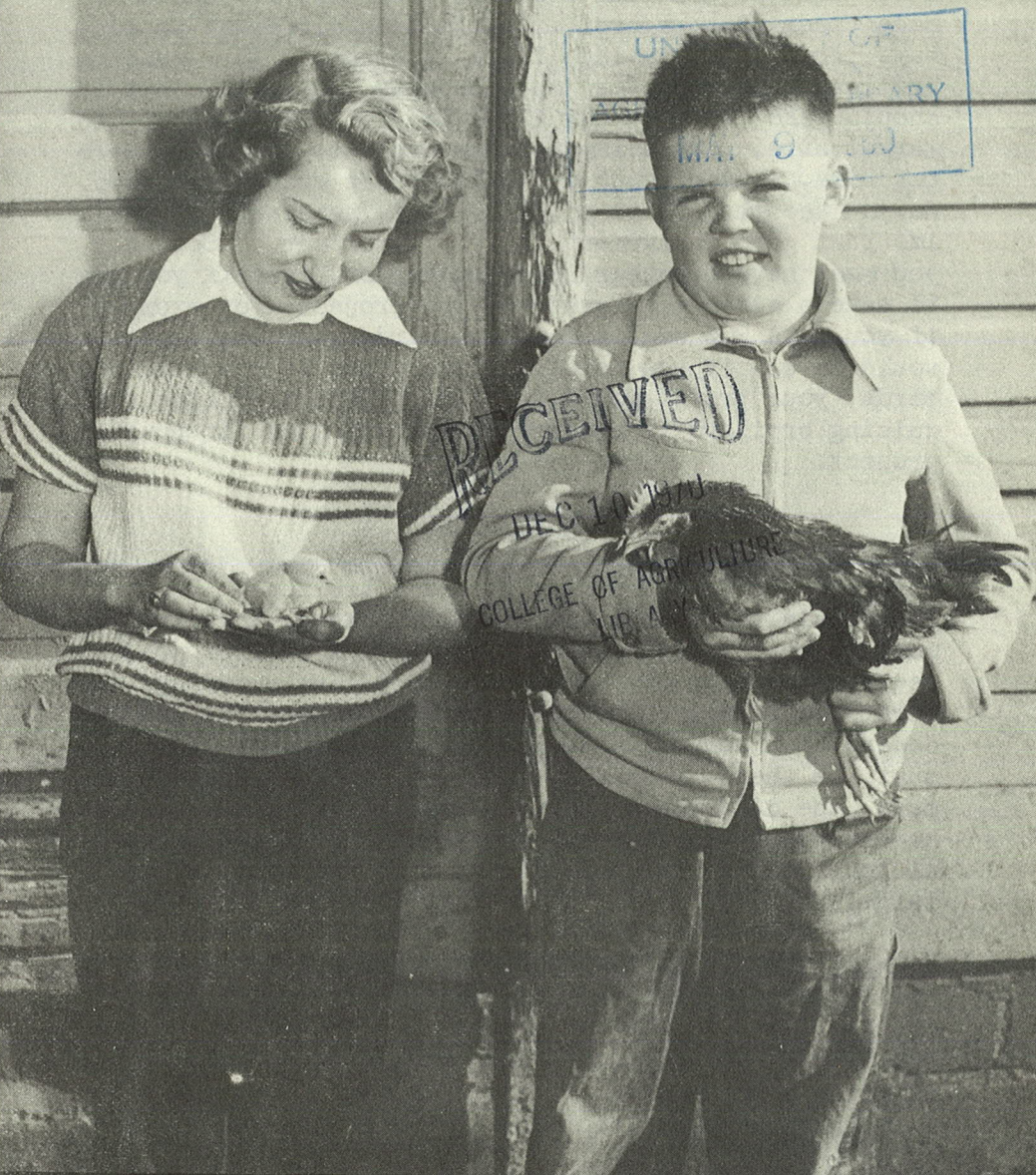
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1950

E.C.14-06-2

4 - H BROILER PROJECT



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS.
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, AND THE UNITED
STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING, W. V. LAMBERT,
DIRECTOR, LINCOLN.

4-H BROILER PROJECT

W. F. Aubol

So you want to raise broilers! Well, let's take a few minutes and talk about it. Perhaps it should be made clear that a broiler project is different in many ways from the laying flock project. In raising broilers, your profit on each bird is small, but it should take only about 12 weeks to raise them up to market size. On a laying hen project, you make more per bird, but of course it also takes much more time. So you see that first of all, it is necessary to realize that good management is very important. Secondly, you must have a rather large number of birds if you are to make a sizable income from the project. For example, if you make 20¢ profit for each bird, your total profit would be \$20 if you sold 100 birds but if you sold 500 birds, your profit would be \$100. This indicates that raising broilers is a very specialized kind of poultry project.

REQUIREMENTS

Interest Before deciding to raise broilers, you must be certain that you like raising chickens, that is, you must be really interested in poultry. A broiler project requires a lot of attention, especially during the first few weeks. In this type of project you can not depend upon someone else caring for your chickens. You must be there yourself, because good management may make the difference between profit and loss. As we have already mentioned, the profit per bird is small although the profit per hour of time spent may be quite large.

Housing Now we will suppose that you are interested in poultry and really want to raise broilers. The next consideration is that of housing and equipment. Before you start the project you must, of course, have a building. The number of broilers that you can raise well is found by multiplying the length of the building

in feet by the width in feet, which gives the number of square feet. Since about one square foot of floor space is needed for each broiler, the number of square feet of floor space in your building is also the number of chicks for which you will have room. For example, if your house is 20 feet wide and 40 feet long, the total floor space would be large enough for an 800-bird project.

The building should be in good condition. If it is insulated it will aid in maintaining an even temperature.



The feeders and waterers were arranged and brooder put in operation several days before the chicks arrived.

Roosts are unnecessary for birds that are raised for broilers. Chickens that roost on the floor have fewer crooked breasts and breast blisters. Dim lights used all night are advisable to prevent the chicks from becoming frightened and piling up. A twenty-watt bulb is strong enough for a room twenty feet square.

MANAGEMENT

Brooding You may use a brooder which uses either kerosene, electricity, or gas. Care should be taken not to crowd the chicks under the brooder. In fact, it is not advisable to place more than 400 chicks under a brooder, even those of the largest size. An electric brooder should be used only when you are sure of a continuous supply of electricity.

Before the chicks are received you should have the brooder regulated so that the temperature will remain at 95° F. two inches above the floor. To be certain of constant temperature, start operating the brooder several days in advance. This temperature should be maintained for the first week, after which time it may be gradually reduced at a rate of 5° F. per week to 75° F. Experienced poultrymen do not rely entirely upon the temperature but are also guided by the behavior of the chicks. During the day the chicks should move freely in and out from under the hover if the proper temperature is maintained. At night the chicks will be found near the edge of the hover.



The chick-size feeders have been replaced by larger feeders during the sixth week. Food can be conveniently stored in a metal container as at the right of the door.

Feeding Equipment For the first ten days your chicks will need shallow feed troughs so they can easily reach the feed. The sides of the trough should not be more than two inches high. These feeders should be placed around the brooder like the spokes extending from the center of a wheel. Allow at least one inch of feeding space for each chick. The waterers can be placed between the feeders. Use four one-quart size, or two one-gallon size waterers for each 100 chicks. Larger feeders that are equipped with a reel to prevent the chicks from roosting on them will be required when the chicks are 10 days to two weeks old. Two inches of feeding space is required for each chick six to eight weeks of age. These feeders will be enough until the

chicks reach about eight weeks, at which time the feeders must be replaced with a larger size which holds more feed. From the eighth through the twelfth week, each bird will require about three inches of feeding space. Wood or metal feeders may be used, either of which will give good results.

Covered water containers will keep trash and filth out of the water better than the open type. Any type of waterer will require cleaning and refilling with fresh water at least once per day. One quart size waterers are convenient for starting chicks but should be replaced with a larger type when the chicks are two weeks of age. A sufficient number of waterers should be used to permit 10% of the birds to drink at one time.

Feeding Program A mash should be fed that contains all of the nutrients, vitamins, and minerals required by the chicks. The same mash can be used throughout the growing period. A good mash for broiler production is known as Nebraska Broiler Ration No. 857. The formula is:

Yellow cornmeal	625	lbs.
Meat scraps	100	
meal	100	
iten meal	70	
Fish soluble blend (or fish meal)	25	
Alfalfa meal (17% protein minimum)	50	
*Mineral Mixture No. 45	30	
Act. animal sterol (2000 AOAC units vit. D per g.)	1	
	<hr/>	
	1000	
Ave. Protein		20%

*Mineral Mixture No. 45

Limestone	60.00	lbs.
Iodized salt	30.00	
Manganese sulphate	0.75 or 12 oz.	
	<hr/>	
	90.75	

Encourage the chicks to eat as much feed as possible because the more they eat, the faster they will grow. Each bird will consume about twelve pounds of feed during the twelve-week growing period. Hard grit or road gravel is needed in small quantities after they are four weeks old.

Choosing Your Chicks There are several breeds of chicks that you may use for broiler production although New Hampshires are the most popular breed used at the present time. Some cross bred chickens of heavy breeds are also good. Buy your chicks from a local hatchery that has a reputation for selling chicks that live well and grow rapidly.

The best time for starting a project is either in the spring or fall since it is difficult to keep the house cool in summer or warm in winter. The birds should be kept in the house all of the time for best results. Chicks started in September will be ready for market by Thanksgiving or Christmas. A good demand for broilers usually exists during these holidays and prices are generally good.

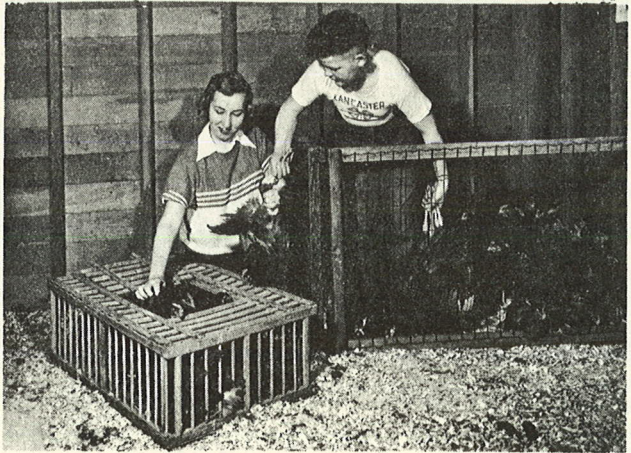
Advanced Preparation If you plan to use the same brooder house as used by your parents it should be thoroughly cleaned. Scrape and sweep all dirt and filth from the floors and walls. Next scrub the house using an old broom with a solution of hot lye water (one can of lye to 10 gallons of water). After the building is cleaned, open the doors and windows to let the house dry. (Allow the sunshine in whenever possible.)

You can save a lot of work by using a built-up or deep litter system, which if properly managed usually gives very satisfactory results. Fine straw, shavings, or ground cobs may be used for litter, any of which will give good results. The litter should not be allowed to become more than six or eight inches deep. It is necessary to stir it occasionally to keep it from becoming damp. If it does become moist or wet, it will

dry more quickly if you add ten pounds of hydrated lime to each one-hundred square feet of floor space before you stir it.

When the feeders are set up, place a draft shield surrounding the brooder and feeders. This shield may be a cardboard strip about 12 or 14 inches wide arranged in a circle to prevent the chicks from straying away from the brooder. When the chicks are ten days old, the draft shield should be moved back to enlarge the area inside and be removed entirely by the end of the second week.

Sometimes chicks may be lost because of crowding in the corners of the pen. Losses may sometimes be reduced by rounding the corners of the room with wire or cardboard.



Birds can be caught more easily by using a catching frame to keep them in a corner. Handle birds by holding both legs to avoid bruising.

MARKETING

The demand is greatest for birds weighing three to three and one-half pounds each, and highest price is usually offered for these. Good birds with good management and feed should average three pounds each by the time they are twelve weeks old.

The most common way to market is to sell the live birds to a produce dealer. You may however, be able to

get more money by selling them directly to the consumer either alive or freshly dressed.

COMPLETING PROJECT

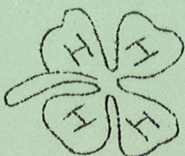
When your birds are sold, clean the house thoroughly. The equipment should also be cleaned and stored so it will be ready for use in your next project.

All of the final entries must be made in your 4-H record book. When all entries are made, the final analysis can be completed. Have your record book ready to be turned in at the next regular club meeting.





Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
H. G. Gould, Associate Director, Lincoln



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By changing the date published as listed in Circular 0-06-2 to the present date, you will bring your key circular 0-06-2 up to date. The dates for the publication of circulars are at the left hand of the page, and for the forms at the right hand of the page. For example:

Circulars

O-GENERAL

Forms

_____) 45 Boys and Girls Clubs

0-01-2

First Month's Report

45 (____)

E. W. Janike
State 4-H Club Leader

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