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EC1446 Fitting and Exhibiting Poultry

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IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

Extension
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FITTING AND EXHIBITING POULTRY

Selecting - The selection of birds for show purposes should begin weeks before they are shown. Double the number of birds to be shown should be selected in order to eliminate the inferior specimens as their defects appear. Some common defects likely to develop in young stock, cockerels especially, are exceptionally heavy and lopped combs, high tails, and shallow breasts.

Birds for show should be free from blemishes and in shape and color conform as nearly as possible to the Standard. Study each individual carefully.

Any defects in the head or any part of it, the comb, eyes, beak, wattles, ear lobes and face, are very noticeable.

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No bird should be shown which has not the typical shape for that breed.

The color markings are important and should be studied carefully, both the surface and under color. In white birds brassiness or creaminess is a very serious defect.

If there is a choice to be made of a bird with one very serious defect or one with several minor defects, choose the one of the minor defects even though greater in number.

Other things being equal, large fully developed birds should be given the preference over the small undersized birds.

Training - The specimens selected should be placed in training coops and continually posed until they learn to stand in the desired position, the trainer using a small round stick for this purpose. The time required would depend somewhat upon the nervous temperament of the birds. Frequent and gentle handling is necessary to make them submissive. Slight defects in the angle of the comb, wattles, or tail may be partially or entirely corrected by persistent manipulations with the fingers.

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Conditioning - Birds should be sent to a show absolutely clean; this means the washing of the comb, wattles, ear lobes, shanks and feet. The dirt under the scales of the feet and shanks can be removed easily after soaking in warm water. When cleaned they should be rubbed with carbolated vaseline and wiped dry with a soft cloth.

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It is becoming the general practice to wash white birds before showing. Washing is a delicate and tedious operation and if not done right the birds may appear worse after washing than before. The general procedure is as follows: Have the washroom fairly warm, at least 70 degrees. Have it equipped with four tubs in each of which is a different solution. Number one is the wash water in which the bird is thoroughly immersed and scrubbed with ivory soap suds, the soap suds being rubbed clear down into the base of the feathers, the solution in the tub being warm. Number two contains rinsing water and is a trifle cooler than

the wash water. All soap is thoroughly washed out in this second tub. Number three contains a second rinsing water a trifle cooler than the preceding tub, into which has been added enough bluing to give a bleached effect without leaving a blue stain on the plumage. Number four contains the last rinsing solution which is to remove any particle of soap. Solution number four should be at the room temperature. The bird is then fanned for a few minutes to hasten the webbing out of the feathers, especially the tail, and is then placed in a clean cage in a warm room, about 80 to 85 degrees. Too high a drying temperature is likely to cause the feathers to ruffle or curl. When dry they are ready for the show. Be sure the shipping coop is large and strong and that it is well ventilated. A slatted coop covered with muslin is excellent.

(Prepared by J. R. Redditt, State Extension Agent, Poultry Husbandry.)

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