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CC137 Poultry Profit Pointers : Selection and Housing Pullets

Elvin C. Schultz

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Pointers

Selection and Housing Pullets

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COOPERATING
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR

Poultry Profit Pointers

Selection And Housing Pullets

by
Elvin C. Schultz

Selection

Selection is the practice of sorting on basis of quality with uniform excellence of performance as the final goal.

Select the pullets for the laying flock for the following characteristics:

1. Large, well-matured birds. Hold back undeveloped pullets, but cull slow developing birds.
2. Husky and well-fleshed pullets with firm, well-fleshed breasts.
3. Broad flat backs that carry their width through the pelvic bone.
4. Vigorous pullets that have bright, clear eyes and bright waxy combs. Cull out birds that have long, thin, narrow-like heads with weak, sunken eyes. Also eliminate pullets with the big masculine heads.
5. Abdomen should be soft and pliable.

Handling the Pullets

The pullets should be handled carefully and gently. They can be easily injured internally. Be careful not to overcrowd the pullets in the catching coops or brooder house during the moving operation. Do not frighten them but help them to get adjusted to their new quarters. This can be done by moving slowly among them to prevent them from becoming excited.

Housing

The house should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected about two weeks before the pullets are housed. Spread clean litter after the house has been cleaned and disinfected, and aired. Ground corn cobs, chopped straw, shavings or other good absorptive material will make a good built-up litter.

Be sure to provide a minimum of 2 1/2 square feet for light breed birds and three square feet for heavy breed birds. Less window space is needed with artificial light. This will conserve heat and less window maintenance.

Feeding the Pullets

It is essential, when pullets are first housed, to put at least half of the hoppers on the floor. However, if they have been using round type hanging feeders, this may not be so important. The purpose is to have

the pullets continue their normal feed consumption when first housed. If they are in production of 10% or more, one does not want to do anything that would upset this production.

Feed the pullets for the first few days the same type of ration they received while on range or in the brooder house. Then change to the feeding programs which have been recommended by the cooperators in this poultry management program.

Provide a minimum of 40 running feet of hopper space per 100 birds. For example, one 10 foot feeder with space on both sides would take care of 50 birds. If a mechanical feeder is used, provide 40 running feet per 100 birds. A round tube type feeder will take care of 20 to 25 layers or 4 or 5 per 100.

Ventilation

Simple ventilation fans or complete ventilating systems are available. For hot weather ventilation, it is desirable to have fan capacity to provide one air change in the house per minute. For cold weather ventilation, move two cubic feet of air per bird per minute. Be sure to use dust-free motors.

If circulating fans are not used, be sure to provide plenty of openings in the front and rear of house for natural air circulation during the warm weather.

Locate the roosts over an enclosed dropping pit. Roosts should be 18 inches from the floor.

Litter

Place a layer 6 to 8 inches of clean litter such as coarse ground corn cobs, shavings and straw in the house at time of housing. It will break up and form a good floor covering.

August, 1956

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University of Nebraska, Col. of Agr.
Nebraska Grain & Feed Dealers Assn.
Nebraska Veterinary Medical Assn.
Midwest Feed Manufacturers' Assn.
Nebraska Poultry Improvement Assn.

Watering

Provide the pullets with plenty of clean fresh water at all times. Automatic type fountains seem to be the recommended practice among poultrymen. It is well to place a water fountain on the roosts for those more timid pullets. Feeders should be placed on the roosts too. This will tend to limit the culls in your flock for the timid pullets can get feed and water and develop into layers rather than to have the more aggressive birds keep them away from the feed hoppers or hanging feeders and automatic waterers. Minimum of one 8 gallon gravity flow fountain per 100 layers. Minimum of one round automatic or jet flow waterer per 100 birds. Birds should not have to travel more than 10 feet to water.

Nests

Provide one nest for each 5 hens. If community type nest are used, such as a 2 feet by 10 feet size, one nest for each 100 pullets. Roll-away nests appear to be quite satisfactory for the production of quality eggs. Provide clean nest material. If you are using wire bottom roll-away nests, brush the wire once a week.

Roosts

Allow seven inches of roosting space for light breeds and up to nine inches for heavy breed hens. Two by two inch roosts, spaced at least 14 inches apart, are recommended.