EC1495 Improve Market Poultry
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Nebraska

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
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IMPROVE MARKET POULTRY

Part of the Nebraska program to improve market poultry includes
having the surplus cockerels reach the market at the time quality is highest.
This means selling cross bred and Leghorn cockerels when 10 weeks of age.
Nebraska Experiment Station Bulletin 386 reports, "With good equipment for
brooding and feeding, the investment of seven pounds of low cost feed to produce
a two pound 'plus' Leghorn broiler at 10 weeks can usually be anticipated as
profitable." Perhaps hatcherymen need to have their own broiler growing plants
where they can demonstrate the profitableness of selling two pound Leghorn cock-
ereels at 10 weeks of age. When chick buyers buy straight run Leghorn chicks
the cockerels can be inventoried into the brooder houses as costing them nothing.
The present demand for sexed Leghorn pullet chicks has resulted in many cockerel
chicks being destroyed. This decreases the supply of available poultry meat.
When Leghorn and crossbred cockerels are marketed at their peak of quality, con-
sumer resistance is low. Studies with economy of gain as well as tenderness of
flashing flavor selling Leghorn cockerels when they weigh 2 pounds. Crossbred
poultry with Leghorn blood should average 2 3/4 pounds at 10 weeks of age.

Nebraska will earn a reputation for better market poultry when broiler
type chickens are so managed that the cockerels are marketed when 12 to 14
weeks of age, weighing from 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 pounds. Good hatchery management demands a follow
up on all chicks sold. One way to make sure that only the best broiler type cock-
ereels are retained as breeders is to have an understanding with the chick customers
that the truck will be sent to the farm at the proper time to make preliminary
selection of the breeding males and haul off the surplus cockerels not needed for
the family's use. Dubbing the cockerels that are to be saved for breeding males
is a distinctive way of marking them.

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