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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Tuesday, August 2, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Animal Industry, United States Department of Agriculture. Publications offered: "Poultry Keeping in Backyards," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1508, and "Farm Poultry Raising," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1524; also "Protecting Poultry from Predacious Birds," Leaflet No. 96.

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Speaking of questions, as we always do on Tuesday -- speaking of frequent questions, I'd like to mention the one about raising chickens in the backyard. Every week the year around this question appears at least once in the mailbag and it usually comes from a homemaker. City and country women both ask for the latest information on successful poultry raising. Apparently women believe the old saying about the gold mine in the humble hen.

Well, your Aunt Sammy would like to suggest two good answers to this question -- two bulletins, both free for the asking. One is called "Poultry Keeping in Back Yards," No. 1508. The other is "Farm Poultry Raising," No. 1524. If you have just a small flock, you'll probably find "Poultry Keeping in Back Yards," No. 1508, most helpful. But if you are going into the chicken business in quite a big way, you'll want a copy of "Farm Poultry Raising," No. 1524. You are welcome to either or both. Order your copies from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Another question listeners often ask is about protecting their chickens from hawks and owls and other birds of prey. And again the answer is in a Department of Agriculture publication -- this one a small leaflet called "Protecting Poultry from Predacious Birds." That's quite a long title to remember and quite a mouthful to say. Maybe you will find it easier to order this leaflet by number instead of name. Just write the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C., and ask for Leaflet No. 96. It's the leaflet that tells how to build chicken coops that will keep hungry wild birds away from your chickens.

The mail this week has also brought in a couple of turkey questions. One listener wants to know how to make use of turkey eggs. She says that after the hatching season there seems to be no market for these eggs.

Answer: One solution to the turkey egg problem is for the farm family to eat turkey eggs instead of chicken eggs and sell the chicken eggs. Turkey eggs are as good as any other kind of eggs -- just as nourishing and delicious, but not enough are produced to make a place for them on the market. By continuing mash feed to turkey hens, you can keep them laying all summer. Their eggs will help pay their board bill.

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Another listener who is raising turkeys asks about a fishy flavor and odor that sometimes shows up in turkey meat after cooking. She writes: "I understand that turkeys need cod-liver oil or fish meal for good health. But if this gives the meat an unpleasant taste, no one will want to buy my turkeys, healthy or not. Is there any way to avoid this fishy taste and smell?"

Answer: A fishy flavor does not always develop in turkeys and some fish meals and oils are more likely to cause it than others. The way to avoid it seems to be to stop feeding the fish oil or meal at least two months before the turkeys are to be slaughtered.

A young housekeeper has a letter in this week's mail asking how to choose a good frying chicken at the market.

Here's what the poultry marketmen have to say by way of reply. They say that fryers are not the youngest chickens used for the table. Fryers come along about the first of July and on through October so they are a little older and a little heavier than broilers and probably have more meat on their bones. As sold, a fryer or frying chicken is usually not drawn, has its head and feet still on, and weighs 2 and a half to 3 and a half pounds. When that chicken is drawn, dressed, and ready to cook, it will weigh about three quarters of its weight as purchased.

Now about choosing a good fryer at the market. Here are some points to look for. Look for a broad, well-rounded breast with thick layers of white meat on each side of the breast bone. See that the thighs are well-covered with meat and that the fat is well distributed over the whole body. The breast bone should be soft and flexible. Test it by pressing the end. A soft and flexible breast bone indicates a young chicken. As for the meat, that should be fine-grained, soft, and light in color. The skin should be soft and oily, should feel velvety to the touch. Milk-fed chickens have white flesh; corn-fed chickens have yellow flesh.

The appearance of the chicken indicates quality, too. Choose one that has been bled well and is free from pin feathers. If it is not well-bled, the skin will be reddened and blue clots of blood will usually show through the skin of the neck. Such poultry does not keep well and does not have the fine flavor of well-bled birds. The skin should not be torn or scuffed from picking, or discolored by rough handling or wrong cooling. The short-legged, stocky type of chicken with a well-rounded body is usually the best type for the table.

That's all the questions for this week. More will be answered next Tuesday. Perhaps you'd like me to repeat the names and numbers of those free poultry bulletins once again. Here they are: "Poultry Keeping in Back Yards," No. 1508; "Farm Poultry Raising," No. 1524; and "Protecting Poultry from Predacious Birds," Leaflet No. 96. Order any or all from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.
