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SMALL EGGS

Pullets invariably start laying small eggs but generally approach maximum egg size rather rapidly. Maximum egg size in the flock usually occurs in the month of March. Small birds generally lay the smaller eggs. Since size as well as number of eggs is important, the breeding program must include the selection of early maturing pullets of good body weight. A deficient ration may cause the birds to lay smaller eggs than they would on an adequate one.

SOFT-SHelled EGGS

During early pullet production nature's egg factory apparently requires a preliminary "warm-up" or "try-out" before it is operating smoothly. The pullet in early production is still growing. She must, therefore, have an extra supply of calcium (oystershell or limestone grit) at all times and must have plenty of vitamin D through direct sunlight or through vitamin D supplementation in the feed. The necessity for an adequate laying mash with plenty of grain has been emphasized previously.

RUPTURE OF YOLKS

May be caused by cholera, rough handling, fright, flying on and off of high perches and nests, and by faulty nutrition.

NESTS AND WATERERS

Nests can be hung on the partitions between pens and on the end walls if necessary. For waterers, we have found 10-quart water buckets suspended from the ceiling by baling wire so that they clear the floor to be satisfactory. Wherever possible we prefer to hang these over the droppings pits or over frames screened with 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) inch netting or slats in order to keep the birds away from the damp area under the waterers.

CROOKED BREASTS

During the early period of production many pullets develop breasts with contours similar to those found in the average snake. Pullets in early production are actually laying more calcium in the form of shells than they are absorbing from their digestive tracts, even though there is plenty of limestone grit or oyster shell present. Under heavy production there would therefore be a tendency toward softer bones. This tendency is apparently inherited. Deficiencies of either calcium, vitamin D, or both during heavy production would tend to bring out this weakness.