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Agriculture cooperating.

Poultry  
Extension Circular  
No. 23.

Lameness in Fowls

by

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There are three frequent causes of lameness in mature fowls.

1. Chickens often suffer from rheumatism, especially after exposure to dampness, or sudden changes of temperature. Many cases of weak legs due to rheumatism in adult birds can be cured if taken early by giving 3 grams of sodium salicylate every other day for three or four days.

2. Hens that have been heavily fed and not compelled to take exercise often go lame without the hot and swollen joints which indicate rheumatism. The lameness generally appears in the left leg followed by lameness in the right leg. The bird becomes too weak to stand and in extreme cases, dies. In many cases, the cause is an enlarged and diseased liver. The enlargement of the liver causes it to press upon the other internal organs of the hen, as is manifested by the lameness. The remedy is a well balanced ration not too rich in fat producing elements, plenty of green feed and above all vigorous exercise required of the bird. Grit for grinding the food in the gizzard should be kept before the birds at all times. Green food such as kale, mangels, cabbage, lawn clippings, while having comparatively little food value, are invaluable in the ration for their tonic effect and the aid they are in the digestion of other foods. It should be remembered that the lameness is not a disease in itself, but rather the indication that the hen has been suffering from wrong feeding or lack of exercise or both.

The following treatment will result in the cure of many cases of incipient liver trouble, provided it is accompanied by right feeding and management of the fowls; Measure out one teaspoonful of epsom salts for each bird in the flock to be treated; dissolve in warm water and use the water to mix a mash. The mash may be composed of cooked vegetables and the bran or table scraps and the bran or equal parts by weight of bran and corn meal with one-tenth their weight of beef scrap. The mash should be mixed slightly moist and fed in troughs, care being taken to distribute it evenly so that each bird will get her share approximately. The dose may be repeated every other day for a week. In season, the leaves, stems and blossoms of dandelions fed as a green food are an excellent tonic for laying hens. In winter an occasional wet mash made with ground feed and well boiled onions moistened with the water in which the onions were boiled is better than most condiments and so-called egg tonics offered in the stores.

3. Bumble foot is another cause of lameness in mature fowls. It is an abscess in the foot not caused by bruising or infection. The foot is hot and swollen and in severe cases puffs appear between the toes and the swelling extends up the leg. Remove the cause first. See that roosts are not too high or narrow, that stones are not piled up in the yards, that no bits of glass or broken crockery are where they may hurt the feet of the fowls in scratching and especially make sure that no disinfectants such as quick lime, hot ashes, carbolic acid, etc., are being used where injury may result to the feet of the fowls. The treatment for bumble foot consists in opening the abscess and cleansing the wound with a clean sharp knife. Make two cuts, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long to cross one another at right angles on the bottom of the foot.

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By gentle pressure remove all pus and cheesy matter and cleanse the wound by injecting a solution of listerine, peroxide or any other disinfectant safe for internal use. With a long narrow bandage bind up the foot taking care to leave the toes in a comfortable position. At the end of two days remove the bandage and if no more pus has formed again cleanse the wound and permit it to heal. But keep the wound open and treat the foot as long as pus continues to form. Keep birds under treatment on a deep clean litter.