

POULTRY

— IN THE —

SALT RIVER VALLEY OF ARIZONA

ARIZONA, and especially the southern portion in the lower altitudes, has distinct advantages for poultry growers which are being capitalized by some egg producers. The winters here are mild, some frost but very little freezing weather; the rain-fall is slight, usually through the winter season from three to four inches; wind storms are rare, and there is low wind velocity at practically all times, and very few fogs. These factors make it possible to build poultry houses that are adequate with low cost.

We also have very moderate priced feed, and very reasonably priced land. We have good markets in the mining towns of the state and the larger cities. The consuming population is increasing so that the state demand would require considerable increase in production before it would be necessary to develop markets outside.

An active Cooperative Egg Marketing Association has been formed, and this is functioning satisfactorily, though on a small scale, and it has brought out some salient marketing facts, chief of which, probably might be mentioned, the quality of eggs which are being produced here by the best producers. This Association has proved too that eggs of high quality can be produced and can be stored during the storage season.

Another advantage here is the possibility of growing green feed throughout the entire year, though because of the larger use of alfalfa leaf and blossom meal and straight alfalfa hay the importance of green feed is perhaps not stressed as much as it was at one time. If alfalfa hay is used as a substitute for green feed generally, as it is being used now by some of our most progressive poultry growers, we are indeed fortunate in having close at hand an abundant supply of choice alfalfa growing lands which are producing high class alfalfa hay.

We have three months of rather warm weather and production in these months is less,

but on the other hand production in the winter, under good management is higher than in most parts of the country, so that the average production is very gratifying, and shifting the season of production towards the winter season is of course favorable for higher prices. Experienced growers do not consider our summer months to be detrimental.

The success which has attended the efforts of many commercial growers here, covering a long period of years, is sufficient proof that poultry growing when taken up as a business will prove as profitable as any other small farm enterprise.

Recent developments indicate that we have an advantage that is not shared by any other sections of the country, and possibly not in all the world. Some years ago a disabled veteran short of funds felt the necessity of out-door work. With the aid of an advisor of the United States Veterans Bureau he worked out a plan for an out-door roosting system. This plan, which has been modified by a number of poultry growers, but which possibly has not been improved, consists of a stand and roosting platform about 6 feet by 6 feet, with roosts placed about 6 inches above the platform.

The original plan was to make two of these stands and during the cold weather set one on top of the other. It was found, however, that the additional cover did not seem to produce any better results, and probably there are 50 to 100 poultry growers who are following this system in the Salt River Valley at the present time, on a large or small scale, who are not using covers at all and are getting splendid results. In some instances it appears that inclement weather decreases egg production for one or two days, but recovery is rapid.

With the experience of successful poultry growers, using the out-door system and with the data now available, we are justified in the belief that we are able to handle poultry with a cost for equipment of less than 25 per cent of the outlay required in most parts of the country.

The poultry industry in Southern Arizona has been an important and growing industry for many years. In spite of its growth, the increased consumption of eggs and poultry has been greater than the increased production, consequently we are still shipping eggs from California by the carload, express shipments and by parcel post, and we are also shipping in eggs from the middle-west to some extent. Live poultry is also shipped from the middle-

west at certain seasons of the year to supply the demands.

The mining towns of Arizona are heavy consumers of eggs, and in spite of the large production in the Salt River Valley it is impossible to produce enough eggs during the last half of the year, that is from July to December, to supply egg consumers within the boundaries of Arizona.

The poultry industry is confined largely to the production of eggs. Those who have been most successful with poultry seem to feel that egg production should be the major branch of poultry farming, and in consequence the Leghorn breeds are the most popular, especially on the commercial poultry farms.

The Egg-Laying Contest carried on at the University of Arizona, and consisting of 200 selected Arizona-bred birds, has made some wonderful records. Several birds have produced above 300 eggs a year.

The feed cost in the Salt River Valley has been found to be \$1.85 to \$2.50; the average production a little better than twelve dozen eggs for each hen. For those who build comfortable, but not elaborate houses, the cost of houses, yards and water system runs about \$1.00 for each laying hen. The cost of the outdoor roosting system would probably not exceed 25 cents a hen, including yards, roosting platform and water system. Egg prices will average 30 cents or more.

The Poultry Department at the University of Arizona has done some excellent work, and in addition to the Egg Laying Contest, flocks are maintained. Experimental data is being obtained, and an Extension Poultryman is available to assist poultry growers.

The United States government has established at Glendale, the only exclusive poultry experiment station under government supervision. A trained investigator is in charge, and special studies are being made in nutrition and in breeding stock. The data which is being obtained from these experiments is of tremendous value to the poultry growers of the entire southwest.

Most commercial poultry growers specialize in the production of eggs, and do not attempt to grow any considerable amount of the feed required, finding it more economical to buy from growers or dealers. A considerable part of the grain used for poultry is grown on farms in the Salt River Valley, and the tendency is to use as large a percentage of home-grown feeds as can be utilized economically. The principal

grains raised in the Salt River Valley are wheat, barley, and grain sorghums, (Milo, Kafir and Hegari). The grain sorghums largely take the place of corn. Dried buttermilk is also produced here, and there is available from near-by quarries an excellent quality of limestone grit.

The use of electricity on modern poultry farms is increasing. Electricity for operating incubators, brooders and for lighting the houses in the winter months to lengthen the day, for pumping water and grinding grain, is more convenient, cleaner and safer than any other heat or power.

Electric lines are now being extended through the Salt River Valley to carry electric energy to every farm house. The power is developed from plants on the irrigation system, and is available at a low rate.

The cost of electricity for incubation has been found to be less than one and one-tenth cents for each chick for five weeks. In this mild climate chicks are usually ready to leave the brooder at the end of the fifth week.

An Agricultural Economic Survey of the Salt River Valley was made jointly by representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Economics and the University of Arizona, Agricultural Extension Service. A group of poultry growers worked with experts in making the survey and drawing conclusions. They found many poultry growers prosperous but in general found the most profits were made when there are flocks of 2,000 to 2,500 birds. They considered the size of the flock an important factor.

It is generally believed by those who are in a position to know, that the poultry industry here, offering as it does the special advantages named, will become increasingly more important, until within a short time, instead of importing eggs from other states we will be shipping them to eastern markets.