

COP. AL. 1357

CAPON PRODUCTION

Interest in Capons - The principle reasons that capon production is not more generally practiced appear to be that it is less profitable and more troublesome than the production of roasters and turkeys. Other objections might be the difficulty of securing the services of experienced caponizers, the time capons must be kept before they are ready to market, and lastly the number of slips which may occur.

Characteristics of Capons - The comb and wattles retain their juvenile size and fail to show the red color. The head usually seems small in proportion to the large hackle and body, giving a feminine appearance. Capons are less active, more docile, have little tendency to crow, and little inclination to fight or to disturb pullets. Large numbers can be run together and they are much easier to handle than cockerels.

The principle objects of caponizing are to retain the soft, palatable flesh of the young birds, to secure more economical gains in weight and to obtain a better market price when sold. The capon readily accumulates fat over all sections of the body and between muscle fibres. While a capon usually will weigh more than a brother cockerel when mature, the difference in size has often been exaggerated. For several months following the operation capons usually average less in weight than do cockerels. Up to five months of age the weights are about equal. At seven and one-half months of age the well fed or reared capon may weigh two pounds more than the cockerel.

Most economical gains are made up to seven months of age, when birds should average about eight pounds each, which weight usually commands the highest market price.

Breeds to Caponize - Large general purpose breeds or crossbreeds, e.g. New Hampshire, White and Barred Rocks, Light Sussex, Rhode Island Reds, Rhode Island Red males X Barred or White Rock females, or New Hampshire X Barred Rock are preferred by some.

Age to Caponize - There will be fewer slips and a lower mortality if cockerels are caponized at five to eight weeks of age or at one to one and one-half pounds. The incision is smaller, the healing more rapid and the



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shock to the birds less, when the operation is done early in life.

Feeding - Any good growing ration consisting of mash and scratch grain will suffice for the young capons. To obtain rapid growth, the ration should contain an ample amount of protein and mineral.

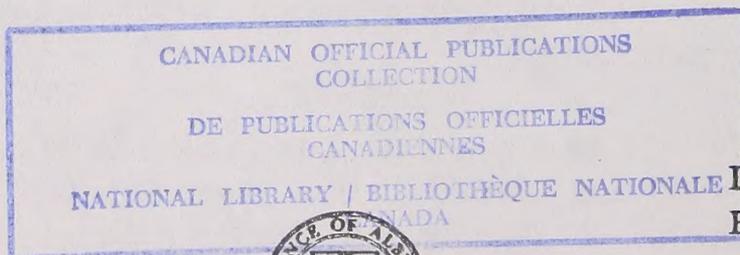
Identifying Sex - MALE: Head - broader above eyes
Comb - slightly longer
Beak - stouter - arched
Back - not so well feathered

No problem if chicks are sexed as day-olds.

Preparing Birds -

1. Choose only vigorous birds. A weak, undersized, small-boned cockerel will not make a first class capon.
2. The withholding of feed twelve to eighteen hours, and water four to six hours before the operation allows the intestines to empty and settle away from the gonads and upper walls of the body. When properly starved, cockerels are in less danger of puncture of the intestines when the incision is made. Starving for a longer period is unnecessary and may retard growth.
3. Water and feed soon after operation.

The usual practice is to permit the cockerels to have their feed and water in the evening before. No feed or water is given the next morning and they are in condition to operate upon by nine or ten o'clock.



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