

DID YOU KNOW?

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CHICKEN FEED TODAY – THE STORY OF FEED

I have chatted and corresponded with several of our “old timer” poultry lovers over the years learning many things such as how they fed and what they fed their birds when they started in the poultry fancy. We are talking about men of such an age that they used to ship their birds to shows across the country in railroad cars. The information below is taken from notes from these wonderful gentlemen, such as T. Lloyd Faubel, Ken Scarlett, William Schaffer, John Norris, O. Fayne Whitney, Harold Miller and more that I’m sure I’ve forgotten, were fountains of interesting information. All of these gentlemen have passed on and I miss them, their funny stories and their knowledge. I’ll always miss what they could teach us about the history of our poultry fancy. Most of these men were showing and working on breeding birds during the inception of the American Poultry Association.

Did you know that there was no commercial type chicken feed that was taken seriously until the American Poultry Association was formed in 1873 and serious poultry fanciers tackled the problems of what was nutritious for their birds?

The problems of poultry keeping assumed increasing importance and this was studied by a rapidly growing group of fanciers, who were striving earnestly to produce better birds. However, it wasn’t until the turn of the 20th century, that the poultry industry began to show such startling growth that this idea of a formulated feed product be manufactured by grain or feed mills.

The first state feeding stuff law was enacted in Maine in 1898. By 1909, feed manufacturing had become an industry of national importance to warrant the organization of the American Feed Manufacturer’s Association.

Out of this triple union of the growth of nutritional knowledge, the development of the poultry industry and the creation and improvement of new byproducts and concentrates grew our present day commercial feeds.

Probably the greatest contribution which the feed industry made in modern poultry keeping was mash feed, a pure invention of man. Milled feed wasn’t purchased in bags like it is today. Farmers and poultry fanciers used to take barrels or boxes on their wagons to the granaries to load their feed with a shovel.

Once feed granaries/manufacturers discovered mashing they started adding supplements/concentrates to the feed to supply these birds with the exact elements they need to produce more eggs and healthier poultry. Hence was born the feed industry as we know it today. You have to remember we are talking about a period of only 2 years for this new industry to spread across the United States.

About 1912, the first chick starter was put on the market by a large feed company. Previously most chicks were fed certain scratch mixtures, meals or home-made feeds. Many of these were most weird and expensive. The advent of a starting mash also marked the general recognition by feed manufactures of at least three distinct feeding stages in a hen’s life – chick, growing and laying. By the time of the World War, the line-up of modern commercial poultry feeds was reasonably complete.

Fortunately, the commercial feed manufacturer has not been content to rest on his laurels, but is constantly striving to better what we feed our birds. Probably no class of livestock is today more scientifically and efficiently fed than poultry. Over the years simply to have the desirable quantity and quality of proteins, fats, fibers and carbohydrates was not long enough. The field of vitamins and of minerals was studied

and added over time in an attempt by feed manufactures to better their brand of commercial feeds and give poultry fanciers better feed. Along with this research came the introduction of pelleted feed was discovered and made great headway in what we choose to feed our poultry.

Did you know the type of feed or what you feed your birds effect the color of the egg yolk?

