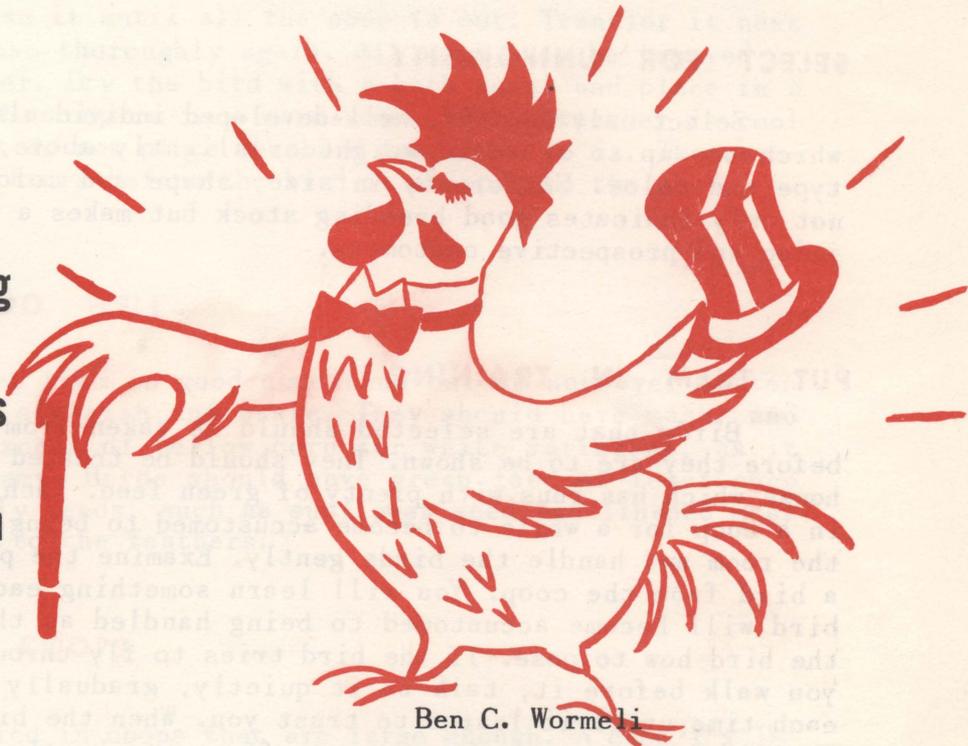


Mrs. Dorothy Hollauk

**Fitting and Conditioning  
Exhibition Birds  
for the Show Room**



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**STUDY YOUR BREED**

In preparing birds for a poultry show it is advisable to secure a copy of the rules and regulations and score card to be used in the judging. This information is shown in the premium list of the show or fair that is to be entered. Study this information thoroughly and select the birds for entry on the basis of this information.

For success in winning the blue ribbon on your poultry, know your breed and condition and train your birds to show at their best before the judge.

The successful breeder compares his birds with the ideal he has set up in his own mind. To get a correct picture of this ideal, every poultry breeder should study the *Standard of Perfection*, the recognized authority on all breeds. For production classes study the *International Poultry Guide*. Numerous sources of information such as breed magazines and publications of breed organizations give valuable pointers. The following bulletins are available from Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

F.B. 2065 - *Breeds of Chickens for Meat and Egg Production*

F.B. 2066 - *Ornamental and Game Breeds of Chickens*

After getting a working knowledge from these sources it is always helpful to discuss the finer points with a recognized breeder or poultry judge and profit by the information he may give.

## **SELECT FOR UNIFORMITY**

Select only healthy, well-developed individuals, several weeks in advance, which are up to standard weight or slightly above, and approach the ideal in type and color. Uniformity in size, shape and color is essential. Uniformity not only indicates good breeding stock but makes a favorable impression on the judge and prospective customers.

## **PUT THEM IN TRAINING**

Birds that are selected should be taken from the flock at least 3 weeks before they are to be shown. They should be treated for lice and put in a small house which has runs with plenty of green feed. Each day they should be confined in a coop for a while to become accustomed to being handled. Move quietly about the room and handle the birds gently. Examine the plumage each time you remove a bird from the coop. You will learn something each time you do this and the bird will become accustomed to being handled as the judge examines it. Teach the bird how to pose. If the bird tries to fly through the top of the coop when you walk before it, talk to it quietly, gradually getting closer to the coop each time until it learns to trust you. When the bird allows you to place your hand in the coop, as a soothing effect stroke the wattles gently. Then use a round, blunt-pointed stick to make it stand correctly. The judge will use the same type stick. Throughout the entire training period, be patient. Never become angry with the bird regardless of what it does. It takes time to train a bird properly.

## **DRESS THEM UP**

Usually a few broken feathers, some off-colored feathers, or some that have not grown out properly can be removed legitimately. Remember that it takes from 6 to 8 weeks to grow new wing or main tail feathers, so do not remove them just before the show.

The feet and legs of fowls should be soaked in warm water a few minutes and then scrubbed with soap, water and a brush until they are clean. A little sweet oil or vaseline rubbed on after washing will make the legs look better. Do not get any of the oil on the feathers. The combs and wattles can also be made to appear fresher and more of a brilliant red by rubbing with vaseline.

White-colored varieties should be washed. Practice on a bird that you are not going to show, before trying to wash the birds selected for your exhibit. Have three or four tubs of soft water (tubs about three-fourths full). The first should be lukewarm, the second a little cooler and the third cool; and in the last, just about as much bluing as the housewife uses for her white clothes. Grasp the birds by the legs, holding the wings close to the body and immerse slowly, thoroughly soaking the feathers. Then soap the bird until a good lather forms, using only a high grade soap. Do not use laundry soap. Rub with the feathers, never against them, taking care not to break any. After the feathers are clean, rinse off as much soap as possible in the first tub; then place the

bird in the second tub and rinse it until all the soap is out. Transfer it next to the tub with bluing and rinse thoroughly again. All soap must be removed or the feathers will stick together. Dry the bird with a bath towel and place in a clean dry coop. Be sure that the coop is in a warm room. If the weather is cool or cold, provide a warm fire but do not place the bird too close to it. The washing should be done at least 36 hours before the bird is shipped to the show.

### **FEED WISELY BUT NOT TOO WELL**

Feed birds enough to keep them in good condition but do not over fatten as this causes them to become sluggish and stale. They should have mash, and plenty of grain, but not an excess of yellow corn for white varieties, as it causes the feathers to be creamy. Birds should have green feed at least once each day. A small amount of oily feeds, such as sunflower seed and linseed meal (O.P.), are said to give gloss to the feathers.

### **PROVIDE GOOD SHIPPING COOPS**

The birds should be carried in coops that are large enough. A coop 1'x 1½' and 1½' high is about the right size for individual birds. It is better to send each bird separately; never send more than a pen of five in one crate. Be careful to provide plenty of feed and water on express shipments.

Pad the bottom of the coop with deep litter to prevent bruises.

FEED WISELY BUT NOT TOO WELL

Feed birds enough to keep them in good condition but do not over-feed them. As they grow they become sluggish and fat. They should have fresh and plenty of green, but not an excess of yellow corn for white birds, as it causes the feathers to be greasy. Birds should have green leafy food once each day. A small amount of oily food, such as sunflower seed and mixed meal (O.P.), are said to give lustre to the feathers.

PROVIDE GOOD SHIPPING COOPS

The birds should be packed in coops that are large enough. A coop 1 1/2 feet long and 1 1/2 feet high is about the right size for individual birds. It is better to send each bird separate in newspaper more than a hen of five in one crate. Be careful to provide plenty of feed and water in express shipments. Pad the bottom of the coop with deep litter to prevent bruises.

TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

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