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EC1439 Screened in Roosts

J. H. Claybaugh

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Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
H. G. Gould, Acting Director, Lincoln

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1439

SCREENED IN ROOSTS

J. H. Claybaugh

The practice of placing wire netting beneath and in front of roosts to prevent poultry from contacting the droppings has gained in popularity. Such roosts not only protect the health of the flock, but save the labor of frequent house cleanings and aid in keeping egg shells clean. Many eggs laid at night are not broken when they hit the wire. When the roosts are level, extra feed troughs and waterers can be placed on top of the roosts.

Such arrangements are sometimes referred to as dropping pits. The more common term used in Nebraska is roosting racks. Greater satisfaction with screened-in roosts result where a few essentials are followed in the construction.

TYPE OF WIRE: One by two inch mesh, 14 gauge, electric welded, galvanized wire is the most common type used. This is strong enough to last over a period of years. It is small enough to catch the eggs, and can be used for chicks that are two weeks old. When properly built, this size lets the droppings through. Those who have used the one by four inch meshed wire have also been satisfied with the results.

SIZE OF FRAMES: When the frames for the roosts are made in sections and all of a uniform length, they can be moved from one house to another and are as useful in the brooder house for feeding platforms as they are in the hen house for roosts. They can also serve as the floor of an elevated sun porch.

The one by two inch, electric welded wires come in several widths. Where the 36 inch width is used, the frames are small enough to be easily handled and thus used in more places. The frames need to be built enough wider than the wire to permit stapling the wire onto the side pieces. A handy length for each frame is 60 inches with the five cross pieces that serve as the roosts centered at 15 inch intervals. If one more roost is desired, the length should be increased to 75 inches.

The wire must be stapled directly to the underside of the frame that serves as the roosts. This permits the chickens to walk on the wire and work the droppings to the floor that might otherwise clogg the wire. When such frames are used as a feeding platform or the floor of a sun porch, the wire side is placed on top.

As the drawings indicate, the cross pieces for these frames are usually 2" x 2" material. Material, a full inch thick and 3 inches wide, has also given satisfaction for both cross pieces and outside frames.

The side pieces for these frames can be 1" x 2" material when the sides are to rest on the supports. Where more weight must be supported, the side pieces can be 2" x 2" or 1" x 3" material.

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When heavier materials are used, they are harder to move and can seldom be converted to other uses.

SUPPORT FOR THE FRAMES: The series of frames which make up the roosts can be supported on the back by a series of iron or wooden hooks set into the studding, or by nailing a 2" x 2" to the inside of the rear wall. The front of the frames are supported by a wooden frame built 24 inches high and extending the full length of the poultry house.

Where one or more of these screened frames are to be used for elevating feed troughs or waterers 12 inches above the floor, they can be supported by 1" x 12" boards fastened together to form the base. Details of construction are shown in the pictures and drawings.

LOCATION OF THE ROOSTS WITHIN THE HOUSE: In large rooms, roosts placed near the front reduce the labor of cleaning beneath them. By placing the roosting racks along the southeast and southwest corners of the house with the ends of each rack near a front window, a traveling, loading apron can be used when the accumulations beneath the roosts are cleaned. Where deep litter is used in the poultry houses, the main floor can not be cleaned but once a year. However, the space beneath the roosts are cleaned two to three times each year.

