



How to Make Money Raising Pheasants

by
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Introduction

Many years ago, a hunting friend suggested I put up a small pen and raise a few pheasants. We figured they would be good for training our dogs and give us some pleasure filled hunting hours. Of course, we both had visions of pheasant dinners that made our mouths water.

I bought a dozen week-old ring neck pheasants from a pheasant farm about 100 miles north and built a small pen near the house on one corner of the garden. I was thinking of t^hie excellent fertilizer for the garden when I cleaned the pens. A neighbor's dog broke into the pen shortly after I got set up and killed most of my birds. The rest flew off. My neighbor took care of the dog and I fixed the pen. My second dozen birds were killed by a local possum that is no longer with us.

After this I decided I'd better do a little research on raising birds and building pens. From what I learned through visiting several pheasant farms and reading what little I could find on the subject I built my first varmint proof pen and began to raise pheasants seriously. Many years have passed and I'm still learning from other raisers, reading books and raising pheasants, except now we talk about thousands of pheasants. Whether you raise a few or thousands, I hope the information in this booklet will help you be successful.

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RAISING PHEASANTS

WHERE TO START

To begin raising pheasants, you can purchase fertile eggs, day-old chicks, started chicks, or adult birds. If your desire is to raise one or two groups during the season and your facilities are limited, it is more economical to start with fertile eggs, day-old chicks or started birds.

Eggs, chicks, started chicks and mature birds can be obtained from most pheasant farms. Pheasant farm products can be ordered from or purchased at many different game farms in many different parts of the country. The cheapest is not necessarily the best and starting with poor eggs or birds will cause poor results. It pays to pay a little more and purchase from an established, reputable pheasant raiser.

All birds, regardless of age, should be from a breeder flock that is tested pullorum and typhoid free.

BREEDING STOCK

Breeding stock should be selected from your earliest hatch of the previous season. Select your best and strongest birds. Cull out any birds that are not well formed, well feathered, and healthy. Crooked toes, lame legs, poor feathering, odd coloring, defective beaks and any other physical deformity or imperfection shown on the pheasant is a reason to cull out — unless you want to chance the perpetration of the characteristic.

Retain only those pheasants that are uniform in size, shape and color. Keep a few extras of both male and female, as losses will occur before and during the breeding season.

The chicks are usually six to eight weeks old before they begin to show physical differences between cocks and hens. At this stage, male pheasants or cocks will begin to become larger, show spur beginnings, and have evidence of color changes in their feathers especially around the neck and upper body.

The hen, or female pheasant, will be smaller, have only a scale like marking on the leg where the spur is starting to show on the cock, and her color will be more uniform