

# Preparation Is Important

*It is essential that young racing pigeons are properly prepared for the work ahead if the owner is to get away to a good start.*

The three main factors in this initial preparation are health, education and physical condition, and all young birds should possess these factors before they are given the first training flight.

There is little doubt that most of the early losses of young birds can be contributed to inexperience—too much has been expected of them before they have been ready.

While health and physical condition are linked in one respect, they are as far apart as the two poles in another.

It is not possible for a pigeon to be in good flying condition unless it is healthy, but on the other hand it is quite possible for a bird to be healthy and still not be in good flying condition.

The first aim for the beginner is to have a healthy batch of young birds.

Good health is the result of good management and is gained by a combination of many factors, the most important perhaps being fresh air, sunshine, clean food and water, and clean bodies.

Pigeons which are kept free of internal and external parasites, and are fed and watered properly in sunny and airy lofts are usually a healthy lot.

## LICE AND POX

The novice will find it pays to treat his birds for lice at regular intervals and this can be done by the use of perch paint every five or six weeks.

It also pays to vaccinate against pigeon pox for if this disease gets a foothold in a loft of untreated birds, it can reach epidemic proportions and ruin a whole season's work.

Another good idea is to treat the flock for worms a few weeks before preparing the team for training flights.

This can be done cheaply and effectively and is always a sound insurance against infection.

In the meantime the birds have gained the preliminary education of the exterior of vice in the process of their "breaking in." When the owner is satisfied with the health of his pigeons he can begin the secondary stages of their education.

It is a good idea to place a food and water trough inside the loft so that the youngsters can be fed and watered in similar conditions to those which will later be met with in the race basket.

This education will ensure they don't miss out on a feed and a drink when entered for

the longer races later in the season.

They have already learned how to enter the loft through the trapping aperture, but if the best is to be obtained from them on race days, they must be taught to trap into the loft without delay.

The best way to gain the desired result is by means of their stomachs and if the beginner begins a set routine of feeding, and sticks to it, he will find that it won't be long before his birds enter the loft immediately on their return.

When he begins the schedule of continuous daily exercise, which should start at least five or six weeks before the date of the first training flight, he should make sure his birds leave the loft with empty crops.

It is just as important that a supply of food and water is available for the birds inside the loft immediately they come down out of the sky.

He will find that within two weeks his birds will enter the loft in haste and once this habit has been formed it will continue throughout.

It is also useful to train the birds to a stick which is used to urge them to enter the loft should some be slower than others in complying with the fancier's wishes.

Once they become familiar with the stick, one or two waves in the air is usually sufficient to make the tardy ones obey.

On the other hand, untrained pigeons will react by taking fright and fly into the air if suddenly confronted with an unfamiliar stick, so the beginner should make sure his birds are conversant with the practice before the use of a stick is adopted on race day.

Once his pigeons become used to the daily exercise routine they will commence to "run" soon after release each morning.

## VITAL STAGE

When this habit of leaving the home area begins another vital stage in education commences.

Batches of birds from various lofts in the district form together in one large group and the experience of flying together in large groups is essential if the pigeons are to behave in a serene and normal manner later when they are released in numbers at training and race points.

Several purposes are served when large batches are exercising together. The birds learn to accept the company of hundreds of others in flight; they learn to leave others and return to their individual lofts, and the process as a whole conditions their muscles so that eventually they are able to remain on the wing for several hours without any effect of physical distress.

It is most important that the owner is certain his birds have progressed to this stage of their

## Pigeon Notes

By Vin Blanden

educational and physical conditioning before he gives them their first training toss.

Providing they have graduated to this stage, and they are not subjected to a sudden change in weather conditions or hawk attack, young birds should complete their early training flight schedule without incident.

However, the young fancier is warned that plenty of trouble can result if his pigeons are started on the training flight programme before they are mentally or physically ready.

## RESULTS

The Vitesse Club opened its new system programme with three races in the one day from Gawler. A total of 69 birds competed in the events without loss.

L. Duits won the single prize special race of 11 birds in 38 min. 38 sec. L. Falkai won the four prize old bird race of 17 birds in 48.37 and C. Kolenberg won the ten prize young bird race of 41 birds in 46 min. 57 sec.