Artificial yards offer fowls protection from contaminated soil thus enabling poultrymen to keep a larger number of birds on a much smaller area of land than otherwise would be possible. The wire porch is a type of artificial yard that meets practical conditions a little better than some other types. The college has used wire porches successfully with both chicks and adult fowls.

No vegetation should be permitted to grow under the wire porches, at least not high enough to allow the birds to reach it. Such vegetation is always contaminated from an accumulation of the fowls' droppings and if the birds can reach it, the very object of having the porch is defeated. An application of oil or weed poison to the ground under the porch is the best method of handling this phase of the problem.

For chicks, a porch twelve feet wide and as long as the brooding chamber will provide sufficient area if the cockerels are removed as soon as they can be identified. It is best, both from the standpoint of durability and of the birds' feet, to use as heavy gauge wire as possible. Experience has shown that 18 gage, 3/4" mesh galvanized after weaving is the best for chicks. This is a special wire which any dealer can order in the 48" width if he does not happen to carry it regularly.
It is recommended that the panel type of construction be used. In this type panels or frames 4 feet by 12 feet are made of 1" x 6" boards and the wire nailed to one face. Where the movable brooder house is employed, the three panels that will constitute the porch floor are laid side by side upon two 2" x 4" which rest on the ground, or if the ground be uneven, on small blocks of such size as is required to make the porch level. The chicks are kept on the porch by three panels 2' x 12', made of 1" x 4" boards and 1" mesh wire, set up around the outer edge. The 2" x 2" posts, nailed permanently to the ends of the outer panel make possible the stretching of 36" wire, when needed, on top of the fence panels. This arrangement is shown in the accompanying illustration.

The permanent brooder house will require a different arrangement of the porch supports. Here, it will be necessary occasionally to remove the accumulation of droppings from the ground under the porch which should, for that reason, be at least two feet off the ground. The porch floor is made up of 4' x 12' panels, which rest upon any suitable framework of posts and 2" x 4". The chicks may be kept on the porch by panels, or posts may be set permanently along the outer edge of the porch and wire stretched on these.

For adult birds, a porch 8 feet wide and running the length of the laying house will provide sufficient area. The arrangement of the framework for supporting the porch and the surrounding fence can be made like that used for a permanent brooder house. The wire should be of 1" mesh, 18 gague, galvanized after weaving. Due to the fact that it is frequently possible to purchase this wire only in 36" width, it may be necessary to make the panels 3' x 8'.

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