

Ameraucana Breeders Club

Vol XIV

#1

1992

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A 52 PAGE MAGAZINE

ROY ROGERS

Comics



READERS' FORUM QUESTION: WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN BREEDING STOCK?

This is an ideal topic to discuss with other fanciers, because selection of breeders seems to involve a continuous learning process. For me to respond to the question completely and specifically, raising at the present time seven varieties of bantam and two of large fowl Ameraucanas, along with four other varieties of bantams, would require a small book. Therefore most of the following observations will be of a general nature.

Assuming the basic points of the Standard have been secured and are breeding true from one generation to the next, I then look for the finer points of coloration. Why? Because genetically transmitted color traits might easily be inadvertently bred out of a strain, never to be recovered short of making an outcross. And outcrosses can ruin years of progress. Devastating!

For example, in wheaten males I look for that elusive combination of an absolutely clean hackle along with as much orange in the wing bay as possible. Complicating the process is the fact that the male should be out of a hen with excellent tail and flight feather coloring (black) so that he will throw correctly colored pullets. But females with great color may tend to throw males with black ticking or striping in the hackle. So unless one intends to double-mate, it's inadequate to merely consider the breeder; the breeder's parantage must also be a known quantity if long term success is to be gained. Enough on color but you can get the picture.

Next I look for an outstanding head on at least one side of the mating. I will tolerate a smaller beard (heterozygous) or perhaps a thin comb (heterozygous for pea/single) as long as the other side of the mating is strong in those areas. However, I will not tolerate a poorly formed beak, as they inevitably lead to crossbills or parrot beaks in subsequent generations. This policy works. None of my established strains have produced a crossbill offspring in the past several years. Don Cable wrote an excellent article on head points some years back (see page 35 of the handbook), and it has impacted in a very positive way, apparently, on my flock.

Thirdly, I look for vigor - as measured not only by general appearance and activity, but also by egg production in the coldest Wisconsin weather - in an uninsulated, unheated building. My young birds all catch colds (various types of the milder respiratory diseases) their first fall or winter. The birds are not subjected to undue stress other than that caused by frigid temperatures, but are comfortably housed, adequately fed, and usually are not overcrowded. They even receive a vitamin & electrolyte supplement in their water once or twice a week during the winter months. Those with the constitutional vigor to snap back quickly from the initial onset of diseases will soon resume normal activity and, in pullets, production. The eventual breeders will be chosen from among this select group.

But there will usually be at least a few in which the symptoms - swollen sinuses, watery eyes, perhaps nasal discharge - will hang on for weeks, then a month or two. As a firm advocate of the Fred Jeffrey theory of culling I remove these birds from the flock permanently regardless of what other fine qualities they may possess. It seems obvious that susceptibility to disease is just as much an inheritable characteristic as is any other trait.

Finally, we arrive at selection for what many breeders, most I suppose, reverently regard as their number one priority - TYPE. At the risk of being branded an heretic, I believe reasonably proper Ameraucana type is comparatively easy to achieve. The Standard was purposefully written to call for moderation in all the described areas, and "middle of the road" is not a formidable goal.

Thus, Ameraucanas with correct type will not exhibit extremely long tails, wide skulls, deep bodies, short shanks, huge beards, or extreme anything else. What we look for in Ameraucanas is BALANCE, or medium everything, if you will. The Ameraucana must be (wince) extremely medium!

Oh, I do look for well fleshed bodies, fairly horizontal body stance, nicely rounded breasts, and I try to avoid using males with low wing carriage. But describing the ideal Ameraucana type with words is about as easy as nailing warm jello to a tree. When it's there you will recognize it; it's "easy to look at".

Didn't mean for this to turn into a sermon, but in closing -- may God bless all of your efforts this breeding season. And "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4)

Until next time -- Mike Gilbert

FROM THE OZARKS

Greetings from the frigid, snowy south. We're in the midst of an Alberta Clipper today...with 5" of snow Monday afternoon, we've had winter in a nutshell.

Not much going on down this way, but did want to comment a bit on the Breeder's forum topic.

I look for type first in my breeding birds, then color; and probably as important as the other two in the long run - disposition. If you have a flighty goofy hen, chances are her offspring will be too. No matter how much you work with them, they really never settle down. Roosters - they never are as tame as the females, but some are hopeless. I have a problem with striping in the hackles and no doubt always will have since it seems to be in my "line". But once in awhile an exception comes along. I've got a blue wheaten cockerel that is a dandy - clean as a whistle!

I don't do anything special as far as feed goes. I use Kent Chick go 18% on my youngsters - up to 12 weeks, then change them to Kent Regulayer 16%. They get scratch twice a day, after they are old enough to handle it. I use crumbles since my birds refuse the pellets. Most of them are able to run loose during the day, so they get bugs, worms and grass on their own. When I can find it, I like to feed a real good quality alfalfa hay in the winter. It's not easy to find and will cost you dearly!

It's only nine months 'til our national with the North Iowa Club. Bart says the show building is fantastic and the motel headquarters is just across the street. Sounds great.

Hope to see a bunch of you there.

Mary Lou Phelps
Central District Director
January 15, 1992

565 Wilderness Rd.
Lexington, KY 40509
Dec. 20, 1991

Dear Jeannette,

Sorry I haven't written for so long. What a year it has been.

I wish I could have met your son while he was in San Diego. It would have been fun.

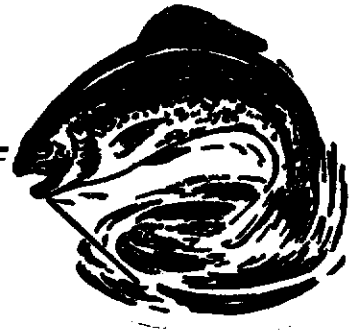
Well, we moved to Lexington, KY the last week of September. Had to leave all our animals in Calif. until we found a place to live.

So I went back to Calif. for Thanksgiving and then my daughter and I drove to Kentucky with 5 cats, 2 dogs and ten chickens in a small pickup - What Fun.

Hope I'll get to meet some of you soon. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sue Getyina

Bill Schiess



WINTER ADDRESS:
777 North 3441 West
Rexburg, Idaho 83440
Phone (208) 356-7275

December 6, 1991

SUMMER ADDRESS:
HC 86 Box 140
Island Park, Idaho 83429
Phone (208) 558-7201
or 558-7755

Jeannette,

Just a few lines to let you know that I am still alive and working with AM's. This past year I left the employ of the Wild Rose Ranch and started my own business, a outfitters and guide service along with a tackle shop called "BS Flies". It is a ploy on my part - people do not forget it and it sells caps!!!!

I am still raising bantam Ameraucanas and am having a lot of fun with them. I have not been able to enter them in a show for the past two years but continue to improve my stock. I now have whites, wheatens and have finally got a beautiful buff pullet.

Let me tell you a little about how I got the buff pullet. I found a guy who had a dark red Araucana and purchased it from him. I crossed him with a very light colored wheaten hen. Out of that cross I got six chicks - all pullets, five of them had a little black in the their tail. But one had not black in the wings or tail, but it's legs were white instead of blue. The pullets that have black in their tails have blue legs. The buff pullet carries the genes for blue legs so I will cross her to my best white cock this spring and see what happens.

If you have any suggestions on what other color I should breed her with let me know. I have thought about getting about a dozen eggs from her and the white rooster and then cross her with a wheaten rooster to see what happens.

I have tried to popularize the Ameraucanas here in my area, but there is not a lot of interest. Last year during the cold they seemed to be hardier than my other breeds. I lost Old English Bantams, Large Fowl Phoenix and Barred Rock Bantams but none of my Ameraucanas. We had temperatures which dropped to -40° and I got up several times each night to build a fire in a barrel stove but still lost a few chickens.

I am still interested in getting some blacks and blue bantam Ameraucanas if anyone has any to spare.

By the way we take grayling only in the spring (May and early June) in Red Rock Creek and Elk Lake in Montana. During the summer we take them in Yellowstone Park but they are small and have to be released.

I mailed my dues to Dave today for another year. I hope that you have a very Merry Christmas and another good hatching season.

Bill

Readers Forum Question -

what to look for in breeding stock - or -
How do you cull? And when? - or -
How do you prepare your birds for show?

Send your responses to:

JEANNETTE FRANK
P.O. Box 824, Great Falls, MT 59403-0824

JEANNETTE

HAPPY NEW YEAR. I BROUGHT MY BIRDS HOME FROM THE "71st MID-WEST ROUND-UP" THIS MORNING. THE SHOW IS PUT ON EACH YEAR BY THE "BAY CITY POULTRY ASSOCIATION". THIS YEAR THERE WERE ABOUT 800 BIRDS ENTERED FROM MICHIGAN, OHIO, ONTARIO AND INDIANA. IT WAS HELD IN PINCONNING, MICHIGAN. THE BUILDING WAS TOO SMALL. HOPEFULLY THEY WILL BE ABLE TO FIND SOMETHING BETTER FOR NEXT YEAR. IT IS HARD TO FIND A BUILDING THAT IS INEXPENSIVE, LARGE ENOUGH AND HEATED FOR A JANUARY SHOW. HERE ARE THE RESULTS OF THE AMERAUCANAS JUDGED.

Large Fowl	Black	Pullet	1 BV & BB	J.W. Blehm	Michigan
Large Fowl	Black	Pullet	2 RV	J.W. Blehm	Michigan
Large Fowl	AOV ?	Cock	1 RV	M. Tufnell	Michigan
Large Fowl	AOV	Cock	2	J. Hannemann	Michigan
Large Fowl	AOV	Hen	1 BV & RB	J. Hannemann	Michigan
Large Fowl	AOV	Hen	2	M. Tufnell	Michigan
Large Fowl	AOV	Cockerel	1	J. Hannemann	Michigan
Large Fowl	AOV	Pullet	1	J. Hannemann	Michigan
Bantam	Blue	Pullet	1 BV & BB	J.W. Blehm	Michigan
Bantam	Black	Cockerel	1 RV	J.W. Blehm	Michigan
Bantam	Black	Pullet	1 BV & RB	J.W. Blehm	Michigan
Bantam	White	cockerel	1 BV	J. Minar	
Bantam	White	Cockerel	1 RV	J. Minar	
Bantam	Buff	Pullet	1 BV	J.W. Blehm	Michigan

PLEASE SEND A COMPLIMENTARY COPY OF OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO THE FOLLOWING SINCE THEY SHOWED AMERAUCANAS AND ARE NOT CLUB MEMBERS.

THANKS, JOHN W. BLEHM

=====

January 4, 1992

Jeannette,

I'm glad to hear the club is doing so well. I hope we can keep it growing and improving.

Sorry I missed seeing you in Minot last year. I was so busy with farm work I didn't even think about taking time off for a fair.

I am a member of the North Dakota Feather and Fur Club. One of the members wrote an interesting article on mouse control, so I thought it would also be interesting for our ABC club newsletter.

I am on my third generation of LF Silver Laced Ameraucanas. So far I have good color, beard, blue legs but have to improve egg color and comb type.

I would be glad to share eggs with anyone interested in this variety, too.

From the last few newsletters it sounds like there are several new varieties being worked on out there in Ameraucana land.

Thank you for working so hard for the club's benefit. Write when you can.

Sincerely, Ron Bugner
HCR #2 Box 32
Reeder, ND 58649



CONTROL OF MICE IN BIRD PENS

by Terry Hunter Minot, N.D.

Over the years we have had, at times, serious problems with mice in our bird pens. The most persistent problem being mice in our outdoor pheasant pens. I have tried cats, mechanical mouse traps, various poisons, even filling their holes with water to drown them. All of these measures have worked to a point. The cats are great on the outside of the pen but most of the mice are on the inside eating all your expensive feed. The repeating traps work O.K. but they never completely eliminate all the mice. Poisons were placed in mouse holes and the holes were covered with a board so the birds could not eat the bait, but the bait would get wet or buried or somehow the birds would get to it, eat some and die.

Well I think we have come up with a remedy that will eliminate nearly all mice and keep them in check. Before we tried the following method I would go out to the pheasant pens at nite and there would be literally hundred and hundreds of mice. I am sure the mice were eating a great deal more feed than the pheasants.

The way we solved the problem was by making a small wooden box about the size of a shoe box with a hinged top. You can use plywood or 1 x 6's work real well. On each side of this box I drilled 2 holes- 1 1/8" in diameter. Inside the box I glue 2 tuna cans to the bottom of the box. Then buy some pellet poison. I like the kinds that affect the nervous system. Put 1 packet of poison in each box in the tuna cans. Put the baited box in your bird pen along a wall and put a brick on the cover so the birds can't get to the bait. Next the MOST IMPORTANT part of this is to cover all your feed dishes at nite only for at least 10 nites in a row. If you do not cover your feed this method will NOT work because the mice will go eat your feed instead of the bait. After 10 days you can leave your feed uncovered at nite. You can leave these boxes in your pens but check them now and then to make sure they have fresh bait. Mice will usually not eat bait that is old and dirty. Pick up and remove the dead mice every day. With these bait boxes we have eliminated our mice problems. We use 1 box for every 150 Sq. feet of pen space. If a mouse population builds up again we just cover the feed at nite for another 7 - 10 days.



CHAPTER IX

Incubation

To the casual observer, an egg consists roughly of three parts, but to the scientific investigator these are capable of several subdivisions. The shell, composed of lime, forms a protection; but it is not an impenetrable cover. It is very porous. It has between the particles of lime an innumerable number of very small holes, which allow the air to pass freely backward and forward during the process of incubation. Next is the white, the albumen. This is not all of one character; one portion is much denser than the other. The watery portion is placed around the outer surface next to the shell.

In the interior is the yolk, which in itself is, as a whole, lighter in density than the white, therefore its tendency is to come to rest upon the surface of the white. But the yolk is also differently constituted, one portion being a little heavier than another, with the consequence that the heavier portion moves downward and the lighter up. There is a good deal of misunderstanding about the very dense jellylike portions of white. Popular conception says the young chick is developed from them, but this is wrong. They simply consist of denser and more gelatinous albumen, and have acquired that twisted, corkscrew appearance and shape by the revolutions of the yolk in traveling down the ovary of the hen. But this twisting assists in keeping the light side up. It also prevents the yolk from being ruptured by sudden jar.

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Write for a list of other publications.

WHY EXERCISE CARE IN HANDLING

Some people test their eggs, particularly white-shelled ones, on the fourth day, though a much better course is to test them on the seventh or eighth day. Perhaps a caution is needed against testing eggs too frequently. It is very hard for a beginner to refrain from handling his eggs, but knowing the delicacy of the blood vessels, which form a perfect maze of tracery over the yolks, and knowing that these and a further set busy absorbing the yolk are very highly sensitive, he will perceive that the less he interferes with the eggs the less likely he is to damage this fragile and delicate interior.

Another reason for not testing frequently is that in so doing the eggs are held up to the light in an unnatural position and some of these organs inside the egg are being twisted. Again, there is the light. To test eggs properly a very clear light is needed to pass through the egg. Therefore eggs should be tested only once, and that about the seventh or eighth day. If very doubtful about them, perhaps a second test might be given on the fourteenth day, not later, because between the tenth and eighteenth days is the most critical period in the life of the embryo.

In selecting eggs for hatching use only those that are of uniform size and color, with smooth, strong shells. Abnormal eggs are likely to produce weak or crippled chicks. The eggs should be stored in a room where the temperature ranges from 50 to 60 degrees. It has been a prevailing idea that eggs for hatching should be turned daily. Several men of authority claim that this is not necessary, but the case is not definitely proved. Eggs kept for a week or more should be turned at least twice a week. It can do no harm and may prove beneficial. Never set dirty eggs; if they are dirty, carefully wipe them with a damp cloth until all spots are removed.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE BIG SKY COUNTRY -

Hopefully this is the first of six newsletters the AMERAUCANA BREEDERS CLUB will get out this year. If we continue to get the cooperation and contributions from the members for the rest of the year like we have for this edition I know we will be successful. Thanks to all who contributed. It is greatly appreciated.

I wish the cover could have been reproduced in color. Black & white just does not do it justice. This is the cover of a comic book by Dell Publishing. In fact #65, May, 1953. It was contributed by my youngest daughter, Cynthia. She works in a comic book store and is always on the lookout for items, books, etc. for me.

Mike Gilbert has an article..written before his busy season. Mike has been very supportive of any and all involved with Ameraucanas. I am counting on more articles from him after his schedule slows down some.

Susan Getyina sent me a card and letter. She has a new address. I hope she doesn't mind me using her letter in this newsletter. Susan is hoping to get to more poultry shows in and about the Central and Southern Districts. Watch for her.

A nice note and ad from John Blehm. Thanks for the promo work in your area, John. And I will be sending those names a copy of this newsletter and the last one.

If you know of anyone who might like a copy of our newsletter please let me know. I usually have a few extras and can send them to prospective members or to you to hand out. If you are going to a show and would like two or three newsletters to hand out let me know a couple of weeks ahead of time so I can send you some.

Received a letter and article from Mary Lou. From what I hear she has been getting the winter we should have had...instead of our mild, dry, sunny winter. She has some chicks hatching - competition for the 1992 ABC National coming up in September. Hope you are getting ready.

Surprise - a letter and article from Ron Bugner. A nice surprise. The kind I really enjoy. Thanks, Ron. Maybe next time I'm in Minot I'll get to see you there. In the meantime keep us in mind whenever you see an article that is useful to all.

Also a letter from Bill Schiess in Idaho. Always a pleasure to hear from Ameraucana people and twice as nice when they throw in information on fishing for me. Bill, I hope all your birds are doing well.

Seems as tho I owe everyone a letter. Be patient. I'll be writing soon.

Jeanne T sent me several articles last November for the newsletters. I will use them in this and following newsletters. Thanks, Jeanne. I promise to get a letter off to you soon.

Don't know if in my older years I'm becoming more efficient or if my system finally "kicked in" but this year the closing out of 1991 was easier and smoother than previous years. And the accountant was finished with the tax work earlier than usual. Hope that is a good sign for the rest of the year.

Almost every year my husband plans our vacation when work is the slowest for him and this year it will be mid-March. Since he has never been east or south we are going to take advantage of my son, Morgan, being stationed in Louisiana. We plan on doing as much fishing as we can and exploring areas away from the usual tourist areas.

In the meantime, hope you are hatching some champions for the 1992 ABC National Show in North Iowa in September. Any of you wishing to contribute an article for the next edition of the newsletter...I need it no later than April 3.

I hope all of you are thinking about who you want to run your club in the next two years - 1993-4. We need nominations for all offices. Election is in early October.

For the record...I did not get any reponses for ads in either the APA or ABA Yearbooks. Does that mean none of you think advertising is worth while?

Until next time.....



Jeanette Frank
P. O. Box 824
Great Falls, MT 59403-0824



Birch Run Hatchery

John W. Blehm
4599 Lange, Birch Run, MI 48415
517-777-9683

1992 Price List

Ameraucana Chicks

Chicks are sold Straight Run and may be ordered in lots of 25, at \$50.00 per lot. An assortment of buff, black, and/or blue chicks will be included, depending on my hatches. Chicks are shipped on Tuesdays and should arrive within 48 hours. I will be hatching chicks in April and May. To order please send me the information requested below, along with your payment for the Chicks. Pay the shipping fee C.O.D.

NOTE: I have always shipped chicks "Priority Mail" and insure them. The reason we ship on Tuesdays is to avoid any weekend or holiday slow ups in the mail.

Years of selective breeding are behind these chicks, but unwanted characteristics may show up. No guarantees will be made. A limited number of chicks will be available so please order early.

I support the Ameraucana Breeders Club, the National Poultry Improvement Plan, the Michigan Poultry Breeders Association, the American Bantam Association, Poultry Press, and John 3:16

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