

AMERAUCANA BANTAM BULLETIN

Ameraucana Bantam Club - 6442 Chestnut Ave., Orangevale, CA 95662

Fall, 1981

Vol. III, No. 3

President's Message

Through shows and sale transactions I've had the privilege this summer to correspond, speak with on the phone, and personally visit with many of our members. Wayne Meredith of Milwaukee and I exchanged visits - Wayne's enthusiasm and dedication to the breed are commendable, a real asset to this organization. He has a good start in wheaten and in white, and also raises the large fowl muffed blue-egg laying chickens.

Central District Director Jerry Segler and family visited us last spring and was kind enough to pick up some birds for new member John Fugate of Tennessee. John phones other members quite regularly to talk about our mutual interest and will be running for director of the newly created Southern District in the upcoming club election. Jerry also attended the Wisconsin State Meet at Richland Center the last weekend of June, so we had a good visit there.

Space prevents mentioning all the other names here, so I'll just say that I've been impressed and encouraged with the overall quality and sincerity of the people our club seems to be attracting. Since an organization has the potential to be as good as the membership that constitutes it, a rosy future appears to be in store for Ameraucana bantams and the Ameraucana Bantam Club.

"Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established..." Proverbs 24:3 (KJV)

Mike Gilbert

Election of Officers

On the final page of the Bulletin you will find a ballot for our biennial election of officers. Please mark your ballots and send them promptly to our election commissioner, Bernard Kellogg, whose address appears at the bottom of the ballot. Please vote for your choice for president, secretary-treasurer, and district director residing within your district. Space for write-in candidates are provided.

To be valid, all ballots must be mailed in time to reach Bernard by Saturday, October 10. Results of the election will appear in the next issue of the Bulletin. All new officers shall assume office on Jan. 1.

Blue Wheaten and White Ameraucanas

By Mike Gilbert

Blue wheaten is nearly identical genetically to wheaten, the difference being the blue factor which causes blue to replace the black sections in both sexes. For blue coloration to be manifested it must be found in the impure, or heterozygous, state. Pure blue (in the homozygous condition) is the splash variety. Therefore a "pure" blue wheaten is actually a splash wheaten, something resembling a low-grade red pyle. For this reason I have never mated blue wheaten to blue wheaten. Theoretically, however, a splash wheaten mated with a wheaten would produce 100 percent blue wheaten offspring. The mating of a wheaten with a blue wheaten should produce offspring in the long run average ratio of 1:1, or 50 percent of each variety. Such matings allow two varieties to be bred in the normal space it takes for one, an extra bonus.

While blue wheaten is relatively new on the scene, their development has been quite rapid due to the reintroduction of the standard wheaten blood each new generation. The males are quite striking in appearance with their contrasting blue and orange-red plumage; indeed they appear to be blue-reds and could be shown as such. The females, though, look very much like wheaten females, and one must sometimes examine the wing and tail feathers to see if these sections contain blue or black coloration. Females with "pinched" tails (and folded wings) of these two varieties are nearly impossible to differentiate except upon the bird being picked up; this is one reason I like to see well spread tails and a good amount of black or blue in the female main tail and primary and secondary wing feathers.

Chicks of this variety are whitish, like wheaten chicks. Some exhibit a small amount of black or red on the head and/or back, but this may be due to impurity and possibly may be bred out within a few more generations. Chicks hatch with light colored shanks which turn dark with maturity, the same as wheatens.

White Ameraucanas, the second variety currently recognized by the A.B.A. as standard, seem to be improving with each new generation. They have more than held their own with wheatens in the showroom, though part of this may be attributed to judges' lack of experience in recognizing true Ameraucana type. Chicks range from yellowish-white to smokey-gray and differ from wheatens in that shanks are dark right away, making it easy to distinguish the varieties. Common faults are dark brown or black eyes rather than the required reddish-bay, white in lobes, and a tendency to gaminess in type. They also produce some willow shanks as the yellow factor has not yet been eliminated genetically from the skin epidermis, but enough good birds are being produced to generate progressive improvement.

It would be a mistake not to mention here the contribution Jerry Segler has made in developing the white Ameraucana bantam. His strain has proper size, small combs, and good eye and plumage coloration. My first whites came from Jerry's flock several years ago.

Welcome To Our New Members!!!

The following are new members since our last Bulletin:

Luther Franks 603 W. Yale St., Ontario, CA 91762 CUCKOO

Dr. L.J. Grinnell Box 613, Shelbina, MO 63468

David Dancer 5757 Olive Ranch Rd., Roseville, CA 95678 WHEATEN

Report of Wisconsin State Meet

The Wisconsin State Meet was hosted by the Badger Poultry Club at Richland Center in June. Top awards went to Mike Gilbert who had Champion Ameraucana on a wheaten pullet, Jerry Segler with Reserve Champion on a white hen and Bernard Kellogg with best non-standard Ameraucana on a blue pullet. Classes were as follows:

Wheaten: Eleanor Poole, 1 H, Melissa Gilbert, 2 P, Mike Gilbert, 1 K, 1(BB) P.

White: Jerry Segler, 1-2 H(Res. Champ.), Mike Gilbert, 1 P.

Black: Jerry Segler, 1(BOB) C, 1(BV) 2 P.

Blue: Bernard Kellogg, 1 K, 1 P.

Brown-red: Jerry Segler, 1 H.

Mottled: Jerry Segler, 1 H.

Forthcoming Meets

California State Meet Golden Gate Bantam Club Fall Show, November 14-15, Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton, CA. Contact Pat Coker, 10750 Calvine Rd., Elk Grove, CA 95624 for premium list.

Central District Meet Eastern Iowa Poultry Association, Nov. 26-27-28, Bluegrass, Iowa. For premium list, contact Herbert Holtz, Rt. 2, Muscatine, Iowa 52761. Awards list closes Oct. 1. Contact Jerry Segler, Quick!

ABC National Meet Pacific Poultry Breeder's Association California National Show, Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Santa Rosa. Last weekend in January, details to follow. Western District members- plan to attend & show!

Classified

Black Ameraucanas - a few trios for sale. Prefer to sell to Club members who will keep in touch and work with me to improve this variety. For more information write to Jerry A. Segler, Sr., Box 23, Sparland, IL 61565.

Ameraucana Bantams in wheaten, blue wheaten and white. Started birds and adult breeding stock only. No shipping, but will deliver to several midwestern shows, or pick up at farm. Contact Mike Gilbert, Rt. 1, Baker Rd., Holmen, WI 54636. (608) 784-8048.

Self-selective Breeding

By John Fugate

Part I

Briefly, self-selective breeding is a breeding program wherein the subjects select their own mates. It applies equally well to two or two thousand birds; it requires no record keeping or trapnesting and it will produce the best utility strains of poultry.

It works like this: One uses the egg as the index of selection! Only the eggs which are laid during the least productive times of the year or laying cycle are used to reproduce the flock. The theory being that during the so-called laying season even the sparrow is laying but during these off periods only the most fecund layers are in production. The poor producer is therefore automatically selected out and has less and less influence on the flock as the system continues to be applied. It must be borne in mind however that the system works best if the subject birds are hatch-mates. If this is the case, then one can select on the basis of beginning and end of lay. The theory is that those that lay first, lay longest.

Once the chicks are hatched, the second stage of selection begins in that one selects for those desirable traits: livability, vigor and conformation. When the chicks are eight weeks old, I introduce them into the adult flock; those that survive are the fittest-most do survive. The purist would rule out selecting for color and one friend actually selects his replacements in the dark!

Self selection has the added advantage of allowing one to keep more chickens in that they run together in a large pen or lot and depending on the size of the pen or lot, one can keep up to three or four times more fowl in a given area. (The exception being when one segregates clutch-mates to apply the early/late lay principle) In this manner one maintains a very large gene pool and a very low index of inbreeding. I use 8' by 10' covered pens and can keep 50 small breed bantams in this area. Feeding and watering is reduced to a minimum of time and effort and the pen is infinitely less expensive than the traditional chicken house and/or pens. With this system the experimenter can also play his game. He has a much wider choice from which to make up his experimental matings. Double mating is also an automatic feature of the self-selective breeding pen.

When show time comes around, the self-selective breeder could be in trouble but my experience has been that there is always something in the lot worth showing. The smaller male/female ratio of one male to five females may cause problems in finding enough males which conform to the standard. I personally am little interested in showing except as a point from which to promote a worthwhile breed and feel that those breeds which are popular in the show room are eventually line bred into extinction!

To be continued

Under The Mulberry Tree

It has been my pleasure to judge the 4H poultry at two or three of the nearby county fairs for the past several years and while performing this task at the fairgrounds in Auburn, California in mid-September, I was pleasantly surprised to find a trio of wheaten Ameraucana bantams entered. They were entered by David Dancer, our new junior member from Roseville, CA. It seems that he was given the trio by member Bill Miller, of Plymouth, and I was delighted to see a youngster getting a good start in the breed in this manner. Well done, Bill Miller!

Before the day was over, I had three or four compliments on the article that appeared on page ten of the September issue of Poultry Press. Since I had not received my Press as yet, I was not a little curious about what people were talking about, particularly when I received a letter from Mike Gilbert in which he mentioned enjoying "my" article. When my Press arrived a few days later, I turned to page ten and had a good laugh. As those of you who get the Press now know, it was the President's Message from page one of our Summer issue of the Bulletin. I had failed to put Mike Gilbert's name at the bottom and editor Bob DeLancey naturally assumed that I had written it. My fault- sorry Mike, and Bob, thanks for the publicity- you have certainly given us our share, and then some! Using material from our Bulletin is a high compliment when it appears in Poultry Press and we appreciate it, Bob.

I must echo Mike's remarks about the quality of the people our club has been attracting, including our first member from Missouri, Dr. L.J. Grinnell, a health and food consultant, and Luther Franks, of Ontario, CA, who is developing the cuckoo color pattern as a possible new variety of Ameraucana. Like the Marines, we are looking for a few good men (and women)! We seem to be attracting breeders, not just keepers of poultry, and this is very encouraging. You will find two interesting articles in this issue relating to breeding and we welcome your ideas as well. Mike Gilbert's article deals with the white and blue wheaten varieties, the latter being a first for our Bulletin. I think that you will find John Fugate's approach in producing utility strains of bantams fresh and challenging in his item on self-selective breeding. Why not share your ideas?

The final page of your Bulletin is your ballot for election of officers. Please take the time to vote and remember, the deadline is October 10, so get those ballots off to Bernard Kellogg soon. It would be better for our club if we had more members running for the various offices, and I would like to encourage the participation of all. Perhaps the next election will have two or more candidates for every office and we won't have another "Russian" ballot.

I have a great bit of news. The 1981 Bantam Standard, published by the American Bantam Association is now available and yes, our standard for the Ameraucana bantam is now a part of this important book. If you have been waiting for this edition in order to have a copy with our breed standard, now is the time to purchase one. Both the ABA Quarterly and Poultry Press will no doubt have the details soon, and the Standard is available, at last.

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Ameraucana Bantam Club

Ballot

For President:

- Mike Gilbert, Wisconsin
 Jerry Segler, Sr., Illinois

For Secretary-Treasurer:

- Don Cable, California

For Eastern Director:

- Ken Carpenter, New York

For Central Director:

- Jerry Segler, Sr., Illinois

For Southern Director:

- John Fugate, Tennessee

For Western Director:

- Jack Gard, California
 Marie Rayher, California

Mark your ballots and send them to:

Mr. Bernard Kellogg
P.O. Box 62
Viroqua, WI 54665