

AMERAUCANA BREEDERS CLUB BULLETIN

May, 1998

Vol.XVIII#2

Ameraucana Breeders Club, 4599 Lange, Birch Run, MI 48415

Yearly Membership Dues are \$10.00 / Family, \$7.50 / Individual and \$5.00 / Junior.

Members receive quarterly Bulletins & are eligible for awards offered by the club.

New Members also receive a ABC Handbook.

President.....Mike Gilbert, Holmen, WI
Director/central..... Arne Schmidt, Harris, MN
Director/southern.....(position available)

Secretary/Treasurer. John W. Blehm, Birch Run, MI
Director/eastern.....(position available)
Director/western.....Koralyn Kibbee, Manhattan, MT

WELCOME NEW MEMBER:

Catherine J. Dickey and family, C-Bar Heart Ranch

Greg Dickey, APA & ABA junior & 4-H member

Box 275, Huntley, MT 59037

Have: Bantam Blue Wheaten Ameraucanas, Silkies & Sultans.

The Ameraucana Breeders Club National meet is scheduled for October 9, 10 & 11, at Alma, Michigan (Bay City Poultry Association). For show information contact: Dick Ross, 2180 Froede, Caro, MI 48723. I received a list of Alma area motels and campgrounds from their chamber of commerce. Here are the closest ones: Alma Motel (517) 4631135, Days Inn (517) 463-6131, Comfort Inn (517) 463-4400, Petticoat Inn (517) 681-5728, The Sail Inn (517) 463-1370, Triangle Motel (517) 463-2296, Saravilla Bed & Breakfast (517) 463-4078, Gratiot County Fairgrounds (517) 875-5233. If you would like to donate toward any special awards, please send a check to Mike Gilbert or myself. Also let us know if you plan on showing or just attending. I live about an hour's drive from the show and hopefully will have some young inexpensive Ameraucanas, to share with members that come to the farm. Our annual ABC nationals are the best way to see the breed, varieties, improvements and to meet & fellowship with other members.

Deadline for the next bulletin is August 15.

Please note, our southern and eastern district Directorships are open. If you can help us out by filling in, through the end of the year, contact me. Election time for club officers is this fall.

Some clubs and individuals are still sending correspondences to Jeanette Frank, and then Jeanette forwards them to me. Such is the case with the Sussex County Poultry Fanciers Association that had a show last month in Augusta, NJ They wanted the ABC to place a meet, but I received the request too late for the last bulletin and now 3 months later the show is over. Sorry about that. Remember that meets are placed at the request of our members, not clubs, so we need show information and meet requests far enough in advance to be included in these quarterly bulletins.

March 1998

Dear John

The Badger Poultry Club Inc. will be hosting their 34th annual summer show "The Dairyland Classic" on June 6th, 1998 at the fairgrounds at Richland Center, WI and invite your club to place a meet of some kind with us....

Eleanor Poole, Sec., Muscoda, WI

March, 1998

Jeanette,

I am hoping you can help me. My name is Deb. I live in Portland, OR, and I want to start breeding Ameraucanas. I haven't found the clubs around here to join yet, but I am planning on joining the APA. I have only known the joy of raising poultry since September '97, but I'm completely in love. I have found several helpful people around my area through the Internet, but I've not found anyone who breeds or sells Ameraucanas. I am hoping you can send me some information on where to find these birds and also on how to join your club (if and when I'm able to get going on this breed). Any information you can send my way would be greatly appreciated. Thank you so much, Deb Meisner

13505 NW Thompson Rd., Portland, OR 97229

1-503-645-8940 Email - dirtydeb@hevanet.com

3/1/98

Dear John...

...I am looking for a Black Male Ameraucana Bantam, that is well tempered and fits the Standard of Perfection. My number is (616) 228-5193...

Sincerely, Allison K. Hoving, 3616 M-72 West, Traverse City, MI 49684

3/2/98

Dear Jeannette...

I write with reference to the Americana and its specialty club. Americana poses some intriguing research stemming from its ties to Araucana and its unclear history and lineage.... Thus, any Americana details are of interest, and also your directing me to additional printed sources would be welcome....

Sincerely, Paula Piehl, Biology, Potomac State College of West Virginia University. Home: (304) 289-3086

3/7/98

Dear Sir,

...Some years ago you sent me white bantam chicks, and I still have a dear old hen named "BIP" ("#1 blue color egg of porcelain shell texture") and she's behind the "pearl" bantams I'm now fond of, provided via some stock also provided by Mr. Gilbert. She still provides an occasional breakfast egg for me as well as a fascinating "pet" personality....PS, I'm in my 74th year, hence do not frequent poultry shows while breeding birds for my own pleasure....Alas, I shouldn't even

enough layers to be practical in my laying flock I have only 8 hens and one rooster. I was given a Hava-Bator incubator for my birthday last year so I'm going to sell their chicks locally.

Anyway, on to my problem. I was finally able to save enough money to buy the new Standard and I got my first good look at the Americana breed and I really liked what I saw. Unfortunately my hatchery doesn't have them and I'm in a very economically depressed area and few people have chickens except for the occasional small laying flock.

With only two of us working this Farm I am unable to travel to shows. And economically things are very tough. But I would like the chance to have some Americana's. I especially liked the color of the Blue Wheaten but I expect they are very dear.

Could you tell me of anyone who may have some extra chicks or hatching eggs I could get for a reasonable price? I would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you for your time. Penny Yohe, RR #1, Box 96, Glen Eston, WV 26039

May, 1998

Hi, John-

Here's my 1998 ABC renewal. Sorry for the delay! All the best, Gary (Gray)

5/5/98

Hi John

Just a note to let you know I added another State Meet. State Meets:

1. Janesville, Sept. 26-27
2. Illini Poultry, Sept. 19-20
3. Eastern IA Poultry, Nov. 27-28
4. Ohio Poultry (APA), Nov. 13-15

District Meet: MN Poultry Assoc., Hutchinson, MN, Oct. 23-25

National Meet: Bay City Poultry Assoc., Alma, MI, Oct. 10-11

...Hope to see you in Alma Arne (Schmidt)

I Apologize to Arne for missing his name on the membership list. His dues are up to date.

I plan on having a new ABC Handbook printed in October (no promises). Please do not delay in sending a check and ad layout information, if you would like to help cover printing costs by placing an ad in the handbook. You do not have to send "camera ready" art work. Business card size ads are \$35, half page ads are \$63, and full page ads are \$105. What would you like to see included and/or excluded in the handbook?

This season I hatched about 300 Ameraucana chicks. Many will be culled over the next few months, as we strive for continuous improvement. I had orders for and sent out 4 boxes of day old L.F. chicks. They went to Ginny Traeger (MT), Robert Rennolet (SD), Lenonard Bonter (NJ) and Roger Woodruff (WA).

I'm working on buff and silver bantams along with buff, black, blue and silver large fowl.

consider more birds since I'm still active professionally in music (performer, not composer) art, writing etc. Walter Wheeler,
PO box 812111, Grove Street Branch, Wellesley, MA 02181-0013

3/8/98

Hi John -

...I would like to help fund the new handbook by purchasing a half or a fullpage ad. Please let me know what the appropriate cost would be for either....I have a warning - I have been losing a fair number of younger birds to Marek's,...the chick vaccine is inexpensive - it involves an injection under the skin of the neck - not too hard to do. I hatched a few in January to practice on....

Take Care & God Bless Mike Gilbert

3/18/98

John -

...I was in Salt Lake City, UT last week judging...My new APA standard arrived the day after I got back from Salt Lake City. Still some errors but better than it has been...When are you doing the new handbook and how much \$ do you want from me? Take Care-Ameraucanally yours, Always- Jeannette

March 1998

Lynn Walker, of Tennessee - wants blue wheaten L.F. 1-423-458-2130.
I asked Jeanne Trent to have Rusty Hart contact Lynn, since he has them.

Jay Horn, of California is looking for a blue L.F. cock to put over 3 hens. His died after coming back from a show.

Koralyn Kibbee, our western director would like some small ribbons for her district - for varieties.

I Apologize to Koralyn for dropping the ball by not getting back with her earlier on this request. The club has not had any such ribbons in the past, to the best of my knowledge. Any member wishing to take on this project or contribute to having some made up for the western district, contact Koralyn Kibbee, 9069 Wooden Shoe, Manhattan, MT 59741 or myself.

April, 1998

Dear Mr. Blehm,

My name is Penny and I live and work on a Dairy Farm in West Virginia. As a hobby a few years ago I began with a few laying hens. As egg demands increased so did my laying flock. Then I started raising a few pullets and bantams and sold them as they matured. As long as my egg sales pays for feed I'd like to continue. I have a good relationship with a Dairy Farmer in Missouri who also has a hatchery. He provides me with most chicks I need for very reasonable prices. I fell in love with the Araucana breed [or at least what most hatcheries call Araucana since they have tails.] but since they are not good



Black bantam hen, Mason City, 1993
(J. Blehm)



Mike Gilbert
APA "MASTER EXHIBITOR"
Congratulations Mike!
(Mike is the one without a beard)
Mary even let him bring a wheaten
cock in the house for the photo
session.



Buff bantam pullet, 12/93 (M. Gilbert)



Mary Lou Phelps
Mason City, '93



Bernard "POP"
Kellogg
Mason City, '93



Blue Wheaten bantam cock
1987 (?)



John Blehm, Mike Gilbert & Jerry Segler
Millwaukee



Buff & splash bantams, a few years ago (J. Blehm)



Happy Birthday! Black L.F., 1998 (J. Blehm)

Our checking account balance as of 3/31/98 = \$223.80

A reminder that Koralyn has placed an ABC state meet at the Montana Poultry Fanciers Show, July 17, 18 & 19.

Thanks to all that send in material for the bulletins. Don't be shy, send in a letter about some of your chicken experiences.

Mike Gilbert has some birds for sale. They are listed below.



1,140 PULLETS, 768 EGGS!

H. H. ALP

ON October 18, I visited a farm where a flock of 1,140 pullets were laying at a 67% rate. The day before my visit they had gathered 768 eggs—I guess these pullets hadn't heard of "eggless" Thursday!

In view of this excellent production, I couldn't help but wonder if they would maintain it once cold weather arrived, or if the management was equal to the job ahead, that of preventing a molt or "winter pause" in production. Fortunately these pullets were well bred and should, if given a chance, maintain a high level of production.

An unseasonable molt, or winter pause, is a bitter disappointment to all poultrymen, and in some instances little can be done to prevent it, but a watch should be kept for the warning signals—unusual amount of feathers in litter, "let-up" in feed consumed, and a drop off in production.

Keep in mind when a pullet lays in the fall and winter she is laying out of season. Her ability to lay in this period has been made possible by breeding and environment. Obviously, if pullets are to be kept in production during the fall and winter period, they must have a good background of production breeding, must have the right environment, and must be properly managed.

Environmental pauses are the result of mistakes by the poultryman, accidents, severe weather changes, and major disturbances of the flock, such as culling. Probably fifty per cent of pullet molting comes during an environmental pause or, putting it more frankly, as a result of mismanagement. Never forget that the pullet must have encouragement if she is to lay well during the fall and winter, for deep down in her make-up is the natural urge to wait for spring.

What are some of the common mistakes which cause environmental pauses?

Poor management is the first and most important. Feeding and care of poultry in wet, cold weather is not a job to enliven the spirits, and too often the management goes stale. You lose interest, become a little irregular in your work schedule, and let the house cleaning slip for a week or two. You fail to notice and remove the odd bird or two which are off condition (and half a dozen such birds may, for all we know, pass on their troubles to the others.) You fail to watch the feed hoppers and keep the feed fresh and you neglect the water. You need to neglect the water only once, to cause an environmental pause. You may change feed unnecessarily, although the feed itself rarely causes fall and winter pauses. These mistakes all add up to you.

Any major disturbance is quite likely to cause a molt on birds in full production. For example, a mass

or flock culling will frequently cause it. Why? There are two reasons. They have been severely frightened; and, second, they have undoubtedly been penned up for an hour or so without water—and without water is serious. Never forget that the pullet must have encouragement if she is to continue to lay well during the fall and winter season.

Weather is the next most likely reason for environment pause. Lack of sunshine and extreme humidity make it difficult for the flock owner to keep pullets laying. The good manager will try to offset these conditions. Watch windows, doors, and ventilator openings carefully; keep the temperature of drinking water moderate; and provide dry litter. You may resort to supplemental feeding such as moist mash, extra green feed, or extra vitamin A and D feeds to offset the lack of sunshine. Artificial lights will also have a stimulating effect. These are all tricks of the good poultryman to encourage production.

Accidents occasionally happen and about all that you can do is to keep a sharp lookout for them. Avoid disturbing the flock; do not allow visitors in the pen; watch out for cats and dogs; and if you use an automatic watering system, check the float valves to prevent flooding of the pen.

Broody Pauses. Fortunately, a problem has been on the decline and should not be of major concern to many flock owners. Where it does occur, the simplest and most effective way to handle the problem is to eliminate the bird.

Winter Pauses. The winter pause is the hardest of the three types to combat. The winter vacations which so many pullet flocks take are really a challenge to the flock owner. They are definitely an inherited weakness—just a part of the "cetter." When they exist, all the good management, environment, and feed possible will not stop them. Since this weakness is inherited, the solution lies in breeding from birds in which winter pauses are not characteristic.

Preventing pauses in pullets depends upon the way you manage them laying, and keeping them laying depends upon good management, good breeding, and good feeding.

Save Old Corn for Poultry

There may be a lot of poor quality corn this fall and it would be a wise move to keep a reserve supply of last year's corn for the poultry flock. Eggs are a good price and it will pay to supply the best feed possible.

Silo Simpkins says: Maybe the old hens aren't much for gossip, but a lot of hen houses need airing.

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Or call (608) 857-3386 evenings or weekends. E-mail Ameraucana@aol.com
Not available May 24 through June 2nd, 1998.

END OF SEASON BREEDER SALE:

One pair Blue-wheaten large fowl, Wayne Meredith strain.

One pair Buff bantams – year old cock and older hen.

One pair White bantams – unrelated cock and hen. Hen has just a trace of "smoke" in hackle.

Bantam Black cockerel – a beauty except for white in earlobes. With or without a yearling black hen – a Good producer.

Bantam Brown-red cock with a Brown-red cross yearling hen. Color needs work.

Bantam yearling Wheaten cock. Nice bird except oversized comb. No extra females available now.

A few 1998 hatch started tufted and/or rumpless Araucana bantams. Mostly silver or silver duckwing in Color. Could be used to breed up a strain of Silver Ameraucana bantams.

President's Message

It's a wonderful time of year here in the "coulee country" - the hills and valleys of western Wisconsin. As this is written it's late in April. The blue sky is cloudless, the grass has greened up, trees are budding, and the warm breeze carries just a hint of coming showers that will bring beautiful May flowers. All around new life and regeneration abounds and flourishes. How appropriate this all begins with the Easter season! What a reminder is found in Nature that death holds no power over the believer. If only everyone had the eyes to see the truth this world would be such a better place to live.

With four weekly hatches off (and two to go) the process of raising and culling our 1998 crop of Ameraucanas is well underway. This year we are vaccinating all newly hatched chicks to prevent Marek's disease, as we experienced heavy losses with growing birds and young adults in '97. Lacking experience, we hatched off a small batch in January in order to practice the vaccination process, and to test the vaccine's effectiveness. The results have been very encouraging to date.

For those readers who may not be familiar with this particular malady the following is quoted from a well known hatchery's catalog. "Marek's is a widespread disease affecting domestic chickens in all sections of the world. It is characterized by lesions affecting the nervous system, organs, and other tissues. Young chickens under 16 weeks of age are most susceptible. There is no treatment for Marek's once the birds are infected. Chicks must be vaccinated as close to the time of hatch as possible for the vaccine to be effective. We vaccinate all of our own breeding stock and strongly feel that you should do the same." (end of quote)

Symptoms of Marek's can include loss of muscle control and/or blindness. As mentioned earlier, losses can run high, but vaccination is relatively inexpensive and is said to be about 95 percent effective. Therefore we have every reason to be optimistic.

An alternative to vaccination is breeding for genetic resistance. One must be prepared to sustain losses until genetic resistance is attained, however, so this route may be impractical for breeders in the process of developing new strains and varieties. In those situations specific birds can be irreplaceable, thus we chose to vaccinate.

The Gilberts are looking forward to attending the A.B.C. national meet at Alma, MI, in mid-October, the central district meet at Hutchinson, MN, in late October, and the Wisconsin state meet at Janesville in September. Also, Ron Klemmedson and yours truly have made plans to attend the great combined A.P.A. & A.B.A. national show at Columbus, OH, in November. The latter is expected to draw 12,000 to 15,000 entries.

The last combined national show was also at Columbus - in 1983, the site of our Ameraucana bantam qualifying meet for the A.P.A. and qualifying meet for six additional varieties for the A.B.A.. The American Bantam Association had previously recognized wheaten and white Ameraucana bantams in 1980 if memory serves. The 1983 show, with approximately 10,400 entries and exhibitors from 39 states, Canada, and Bermuda was an event to remember! For myself, it was an opportunity to meet in person for the first time such notables as Don Cable, the late Frank Gary, and recently departed Fred Jeffrey. Each of these men were great contributors to the poultry fancy.

Get those Ameraucanas ready to show this fall! We hope to see many of you at one or more of the exhibitions mentioned above.