

AMERAUCANA BANTAM BULLETIN

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

Spring, 1981

Vol. III, No. 1

President's Message

By the time this is read many of you will have hatched this year's crop of Ameraucana chicks. I have a few from my earliest hatch, but almost everything since has been spoken for. This speaks well for the upsurge in interest around the country for Ameraucana bantams, due in large measure to the fine job Don Cable has done to obtain publicity for us.

Ameraucanas should continue to gain popularity over the next several years; no doubt many of you will have requests for stock and eggs. It is important, therefore, to conscientiously sell only the highest quality stock to new breeders, else the quality will backslide taking Ameraucana popularity with it.

The temptation is great to keep 2nd and 3rd rate breeders in order to meet demand. However, heavy culling is a must to ensure the breed's prosperity. It takes just as much floor space, feed, time, and expense to keep a poor or average bird as it does to keep a good one. Moreover, 2nd quality birds do compete with good ones and can result in overcrowding and poor flock performance.

When selecting breeders, keep in mind health, vigor, production, type, and genetic background. Some birds are naturally more resistant to colds and other diseases than others. This quality tends to be inheritable, so select breeders for bred-in vigor and production. Ameraucanas are to be more than a showpiece, but good year-around producers as well.

Ameraucanas should also, of course, exhibit proper type- good sized muffs, nicely shaped pea combs, etc. - READ YOUR STANDARD. Knowledge of the genetic background of your bantams will help you select breeders that produce fewer cull offspring- those with nonstandard traits or obvious defects. It is important in a developing breed not to perpetuate these. It sometimes takes a strict approach toward culling, but if we all work together to perfect Ameraucanas to the standard we will be better off for it in the end. As the BOOK says, "...whatsoever things are true, .. just, .. pure, .. lovely, .. of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8)

Mike Gilbert

	An X in the box indicates that our records show that we have not received your dues for 1981. Please send your check for \$5. to the address above soon. Many thanks.
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The Blue Egg

By Don Cable

The Ameraucana is the only bearded breed of bantam recognized by the American Bantam Association that lays a blue egg. Our standard requires a blue egg; other than blue is a disqualification. It is essential then, to cull severely for this important breed characteristic and keep in mind that if it doesn't lay a blue egg, it is not an Ameraucana bantam.

The origin of the blue egg is of course, the Chilean fowl that came to be called Araucana and those interested in a concise history of the breed should consult Dr. William Cawley's excellent position paper on the Araucana. It is pointed out that those Chilean fowls most commonly producing blue eggs were not tufted or rumpless birds, but the common fowls not unlike European breeds. After importation, these Chilean fowls were crossed with domestic breeds and of course, bantamized to produce the Ameraucana.

The egg produced by the Ameraucana bantam, like its Araucana progenitor, has its blue pigment distributed throughout the shell as opposed to the pigment on brown eggs, which lies on the outer surface of the shell only. Although blue shell color is inherited on a single gene dominant basis, it is affected by the introduction of other egg shell colors in cross breeding. Thus, when a blue egg breed is crossed with a breed producing brown eggs, the resulting crosses produce green or olive shelled eggs. When crossed with white egg breeds, the blue dominates, but is diluted.

Commercial hatcheries have exploited these crosses for some time, calling any fowl producing an off colored egg an Araucana or as their ads proclaim, an "Easter egg chicken". Some of the hatcheries continue to make claims that have long since been disproven—namely that Araucana eggs are both higher in protein and lower in cholesterol. In addition, certain elements in the health food business as well as natural food faddists have managed to create a certain mystique surrounding eggs with colored shells, which they infer are nutritionally superior to white eggs. If you are skeptical about this, compare the price of white eggs in your supermarket with the brown eggs in a health food store. Unfortunately, all of these forces have created and sustained a circus atmosphere which have combined to give the Araucana breed something of a shady reputation that it does not deserve.

The blue egg produced by the Ameraucana bantam is typically sky blue in color as our standard demands with a fine, smooth, shell texture and sufficient strength to withstand normal handling with ease. The rich blue color of early spring will fade somewhat after a long period of sustained lay, but to the end they remain a delight to the eye as well as the taste buds and if they are no more nutritious than other eggs, so what? They produce a superior bantam!

Welcome To Our New Members! ! !

The following are new or reinstated members since our last Bulletin. Welcome folks and a special welcome to our first Canadian member!

Allan Mower Staatsburg, NY 12580
Evelyn Ostrander 612 Dwight St., Boscobel, WI 53805
N. Gareffa 331 Iberville, Sept-Iles, Que., Canada G4r-2C9
Wayne Meredith 1319 N. Jackson #107, Milwaukee, WI 53202
Gail Boettcher 1129 Elberta Ave., Bensalem, PA 19020
Charles Hylton 600 So. Rancho Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89106
Marc Askew 1850 Kubel Circle, Sacramento, CA 95825
Larry Clifton 1623 Harrington Ave., S.E., Renton, WA 98055
Harold Smerdu 1310 Knowles Ave., Carlsbad, CA 92008
Eugene Field P.O. Box 1023, Patterson, CA 95363
Mrs. J.M. Bowman Rt. 2, Box 63, Stonewall, OK 74871
Gloria Mathies 1245 S.W. 84th Ave., Portland, OR 97225
Duane Tutaj 17W. 661 Lorraine Ave., Addison, IL 60101
W.E. Miller Box 15, Plymouth, CA 95669
Dud Thomas Rt. 3, Box 36, Collinsville, OK 74021

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Meets and Awards

In as much as we have several new members it might be wise to go over our meets and awards policy prior to the upcoming show season. First, the Ameraucana Bantam Club holds a national meet each year at a site selected by the board of directors and is rotated among our three districts. This year our national meet will be held in the western district at the California National Show.

A district meet is held annually in each district and is placed by the district director. Our Eastern Director is Ken Carpenter, 50 Hoag Cross Rd., Ossining, NY 10562, Central Director is Jerry Segler, Box 23, Sparland, IL 61565 and our Western Director is Marie Rayher, 19822 W. Grant Line Rd., Tracy, CA 95376. Contact these people if you would like a Club Meet in your state.

Each state may have one state meet per year and may be placed at the request of any club member. Our policy is simple: we require that there be a minimum of at least two Club members to compete for our awards, which are beautiful Club Rosettes for Champion Ameraucana Bantam and Reserve Champion. These basic club awards are generally supplemented by cash donations by competing members plus the various awards offered by the show hosting our Club Meet.

Under the Mulberry Tree

While sending in my APA dues last fall I included a request to rebut the remarks made by Donald Krahe in the Fall APA News & Views and was delighted to receive a phone call from Secretary Bertha Traver with a personal invitation to do so. That my friends, is a classy lady and I won't forget her kindness and sense of fair play. Incidentally, I received a letter from Mr. Krahe after publication of my letter in the Winter APA News & Views in which he said that he did not have us in mind when name calling.

Charter member Frank Gary, Chairman of the ABA Standard Committee wrote to confirm the fact that the Ameraucana standard will indeed appear in the new edition of ABA Standard now being printed. If you do not have an ABA Standard, the forthcoming edition will be the one to have. ABA Secretary Fred Jeffrey, who incidentally, has as good a grasp of poultry genetics as anyone in the fancy, will be working with the light phase of wheaten in Ameraucana bantams and I will be looking forward to reporting his work in future issues of the Club Bulletin. . . if the postal service didn't scramble the eggs I sent! While attending the California National Show in Sacramento in January, I had the good fortune to finally meet Waterfowl Judge Lou Horton, of Wheaton, Illinois, after over a decade of corresponding with him. His "Waterfowl World" is a regular feature in Poultry Press and I am looking forward to participation in the Call Duck Club and working with waterfowl after so many years. Also in attendance was author and artist Dennis Nolan, of Redwood City, Ca, autographing copies of his new book, "The Joy of Chickens", which has some really fine watercolors of various breeds and is published by Prentice-Hall at \$12.95.. sorry, no Ameraucanas.

Speaking of the California National, this show will be hosting our National Meet in January and I am confident that the members in the Western District will go all out to make the meet a success. Likewise the Western District Meet at San Jose in June to be held with the ABA Semi-Annual Meet hosted by the Golden Gate Bantam Club. See Poultry Press for details on this.

President Mike Gilbert is currently working with APA Standard Revision Chairman John Skinner on the possibility of submitting our Ameraucana Standard for acceptance by the APA for their Standard of Perfection. This would be the frosting on the cake after acceptance by the American Bantam Association. Time will tell.

Our member from Britain, Dorian Roxburgh, Secretary of the British Araucana Club, and I swapped rosettes for our respective National Meets, so I have two beautiful rosettes for Champion and Reserve from the British Araucana Club to supplement our own awards. They will be unique and a real collector's item. Thanks, Dorian!

This fall will be the biennial election of officers. If you would like to nominate any member for any of the various offices, please submit his/her name soon so that I can write for permission to place the name on the ballot. Ballots will be with the Fall Bulletin. On the last page of the Bulletin is a form for the annual Breeder's List and membership roster. This will be out in the next issue of the Bulletin, so I must have it by June 15. Thanks and good hatching!

California State Meet

The California State Meet was hosted by the Pacific Poultry Breeders Association at their California National Show in Sacramento on January 31-February 1. Ameraucana Bantam Club awards are as follows: Jack Gard, 1C, 1BOB H, 2K, 2P, Don Cable, 2H, 1 BB K, 1P, Marie Rayher, 2C, 3H.

Jack Gard's hen was Reserve Champion Ameraucana- not bad for his very first show! We hope to triple the entries next year. The Huffstutter's could not attend due to illness, but we'll see you all next year!

Forthcoming Meets

Western District Meet June 6-7, at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds in San Jose, CA. ABA Semi-Annual Meet hosted by the Golden Gate Bantam Club. For a premium list contact Pat Coker at 10750 Calvine Rd., Elk Grove, CA 95624.

Wisconsin State Meet The Dairyland Classic sponsored by the Badger Poultry Club in June at Richland Center, Wisconsin. Watch Poultry Press for details on this meet.
