



*Americana*

*Bantam*

*Handbook*

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John W. Blehm



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# Foreward

This handbook is intended to serve as a source of specific information as well as a general guide for both novice and advanced breeders of Ameraucana bantams. Part 1 of the handbook deals primarily with club organization, while Part 2 is devoted to the Ameraucana breed. A detailed description of the breed standard is available through the American Bantam Association and their Bantam Standard.

The breed articles in Part 2 were taken from back issues of our quarterly bulletin and are presented in chronological order, so that while dealing with various topics, they also amount to a detailed account of the development of the breed.

We are indebted to both Jerry Segler, of Illinois, who has done much of the original work in developing several varieties of Ameraucana bantams and to Mike Gilbert, of Wisconsin, not only for his skill as a breeder, but for his vital organizational work as well. Without these two, the development of the breed as well as its written account would have been impossible.

I would like to thank Leonora Hering, of Saratoga, California, for her help early on in researching the Ameraucana roots as well as Bill Cawley, of Texas A&M, whose fine work is mentioned elsewhere in these pages, and Dorian Roxburgh, of England, who has brought a new dimension to Araucana history in this country. Thanks are in order, too, for the support of the American Bantam Association and its officers, Secretary Fred P. Jeffrey and Standard Committee Chairman Frank L. Gary, whose advice and counsel has proven so valuable and Judge Bill Holland, whose positive recommendation weighed so heavily upon the decision by the ABA to accept the Ameraucana bantam. Thanks also to Editor Bob DeLancey, of Poultry Press, who has printed our news items from the beginning in spite of much controversy and whose outstanding publication was the main vehicle for organizing and sustaining our club.

Finally, my thanks to the Board of Directors and other members of the Ameraucana Bantam Club as well as those outside of the club whose generous financial support made this handbook possible.

Don Cable  
Orangevale, California  
Thanksgiving Day, 1982



# History

William O. Cawley's position paper, "poultrydom's Mystery Chicken- The Araucana", sets the facts out rather succinctly regarding the history of the breed. It was found that there were actually three types of Chilean chickens. First, there was the common fowl which did not differ physically from European breeds but which was frequently found to lay blue eggs. Second, the rumpless chicken (Collonca), which nearly always laid blue eggs, and finally, the Quetero, with ear tufts and normal body shape, which rarely laid blue eggs.

Investigation found that seldom if ever did all three traits (rumpless, tufts and blue eggs), appear in an individual native bird, and the appearance of these three traits in the same individual was a very abnormal condition. The variety now recognized by the American Poultry Association-tufted rumpless- was the product of years of selective breeding.

What then of the bearded, muffed and tailed Araucana? Is it possible that this could be the native fowl of Chile which did not differ physically from European breeds but was frequently found to lay blue eggs? It is common knowledge that Araucanas brought to this country were often crossed with other breeds, which may well account for the beard and muff so prevalent today. The real question is, did any Chilean fowl have beard and muffs?

Dorian Roxburgh, Secretary of the British Araucana Club reports that a Chilean nitrate ship foundered off the coast of Scotland in the thirties and descendants of bearded and muffed, tailed Araucanas that were aboard, are now found scattered among the Inner Hebrides. Bearded, muffed and tailed Araucanas became the principal variety bred in the British Isles and a bantam Araucana with beard, muffs and tail was created by George Malcolm, of Scotland.

Bearded and Muffed tailed Araucanas have not fared as well, at least officially, in this country. Never-the-less, they are widely bred and fanciers being what they are, it was just a matter of time before they were bantamized as well. These bantams were advertised in Poultry Press some twenty years ago, but were not bred in sufficient numbers, nor indeed very widespread until the last decade.

By the late seventies there were several breeders in various parts of the country producing their own strains of bearded and muffed "Araucana" bantams. However, they were for the most part working independently of one another and consequently the breed at that time lacked uniformity in type, color, and other significant points. The only common thread was that the majority of these bantams were bearded, muffed and tailed and produced eggs of various shades of blue.

In the summer of 1978 an effort was made to finally organize the breeders of these bantams in order to standardize the breed and gain recognition officially from the American Bantam Association. In the fall of that year, members of the new organization chose by majority vote, the various major points of the standard and the name Ameraucana. These breeders were the nucleus which became the Ameraucana Bantam Club and chose as their president, Mike Gilbert, of Wisconsin, and Don Cable, of California, as their secretary.

Early in 1979 a standard was developed for the Ameraucana bantam, with the varieties wheaten and white as the first two to be proposed for adoption by the American Bantam Association. In November of that year an ABA qualifying meet was held with the Golden Gate Bantam Club in Pleasanton, California. ABA Judge Bill Holland, of Idaho judged the meet, and along with the late Jack Bulette, who was ABA Director, recommended that the breed be accepted into Bantam Standard.

At the semi-annual meet of the ABA in May of 1980, in Michigan, the Board of Directors of the American Bantam Association voted unanimously to accept the Ameraucana bantam. The fifth edition of Bantam Standard, published in 1981, carries the complete standard for the Ameraucana bantam, including variety descriptions for wheaten and white. Major goals for the decade of the eighties were acceptance of our breed and standard by the American Poultry Association, admission of other varieties of Ameraucana bantams by the ABA and publication of an Ameraucana Handbook as a service to our members.

# *Part 1*

## *The club*

### OFFICERS OF THE AMERAUCANA BANTAM CLUB

#### President

Michael K. Gilbert, Holmen, Wisconsin

#### Secretary-Treasurer

Don Cable, Orangevale, California

#### Eastern District Director

Ken Carpenter, Ossining, New York

#### Southern District Director

John Fugate, Athens, Tennessee

#### Central District Director

Jerry A. Segler, Sr., Sparland, Illinois

#### Western District Director

Marie Rayher, Tracy, California

#### Election Commissioner

Bernard Kellogg, Viroqua, Wisconsin



ABC MEMBERSHIP ROSTER - 1982

\* Charter members

Askew, Marc 1850 Kubel Circle, Sacramento, CA 95825  
Blair, Scott Rt. 1, Box 1634, Rineyville, KY 40162  
Blehm, John 4599 Lange Rd., Birch Run, MI 48415  
Brooksher, Jane 25333 S. Lammers Rd., Tracy, CA 95376  
\*Cable, Don 6442 Chestnut Ave., Orangevale, CA 95662  
\*Carpenter, Ken Star's Haven Ranch, 50 Hoag Cross Rd.,  
Ossining, NY 10562  
Clifton, Larry 17217 Van Ogles Ford Elhi Rd., Sumner,  
WA 98390  
\*Cook, Harry Water St., RD#1, Box 130, Eatontown, NJ 07724  
Dancer, David 5757 Olive Ranch Rd., Roseville, CA 95678  
Donaho, C.L. 4401 Wilson Lane, Fort Worth, TX 76133  
Dutton, Bob 25 Northgate Rd., Walnut Creek, CA 94598  
Edwards, William 1437 Lakeside Dr., Garland, TX 75042  
Frank, Jeanette P.O. Box 824, Great Falls, MT 59403  
Fugate, John 304 W. Washington, Athens, TN 37303  
Gard, Jack L. 8787 Oroville Hwy., Marysville, CA 95901  
\*Gary, Frank L. 5 Barbara Drive, Crosswicks, NJ 08515  
\*Gilbert, Mike W. 5171 Baker Rd., Holmen, WI 54636  
Grinnell, Dr. L.J. 606 Ridge St., Shelbina, MO 63468  
Holland, Bill 421 W. 5th Ave., Jerome, ID 83338  
Huffstutter, Ken 2239 Lobert St., Castro Valley, CA 94546

\*Ikeda, Jaime 10411 Byrne Ave., Cupertino, CA 95014  
\*Keeney, D.L., Jr. 2211 Commerce St., Dallas, TX 75201  
\*Kellogg, Bernard P.O. Box 62, Viroqua, WI 54665  
\*Klemmedson, Ron Rt. 1, Box 325, Blair, WI 54616  
McAbee, Norbert Rt. 4, Box 37, Crivitz, WI 54114  
Meredith, Wayne 1319 N. Jackson #107, Milwaukee, WI 53202  
Purcell, Carole Rt. 1, Box 2762, Laurel, MT 59044  
Rayher, Marie 19822 W. Grant Line Rd., Tracy, CA 95376  
Reuter, Dr. F. Turner Glenstone, Aldie, VA 22001  
Reuter, F. Turner, Jr. Box 1182, Middleburg, VA 22117  
\*Roxburgh, Dorian Greystone Cottage, Colemore Lane, King-  
wood Common, Henley on Thames, Oxford-  
shire RG9 5NA, England  
\*Segler, Jerry A., Sr. Box 23, Sparland, IL 61565  
Tuckwood, James Rt. 3, Box 21, Boscobel, WI 53805  
Tutaj, Duane 17 W. 661 Lorraine Ave., Addison, IL 60101  
Van Kampen, Mary Holliman Rt. 1, Box 370, Long Beach,  
MS 39560  
Ziegler, Mr. & Mrs. W.C. 10411 Byrne Ave., Cupertino,  
CA 95014

AMERAUCANA BANTAM CLUB  
CONSTITUTION

Article I - Name

This organization shall be known as the Ameraucana Bantam Club.

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this club is to encourage the continued improvement of Ameraucana bantams through breeding, exhibition, and dissemination of information relative to their progress.

Article III - Membership

Any person or organization with a sincere interest in the purpose of the Ameraucana Bantam Club may become a member upon payment of the annual dues. However, a member may be expelled by a majority vote of the Board of Directors for acts deemed harmful to the Ameraucana breed and/or this organization.

Article IV - Dues

Annual dues shall be set by the Board of Directors and shall be payable on January 1 for each calendar year.

Article V - Organization

Section 1. The officers comprising the Board of Directors shall consist of the following:

President  
Secretary-Treasurer  
District Directors

Section 2. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the membership to a term of two years beginning on the first day of January following the election. Any officer may be a candidate for reelection.

Section 3. Open positions on the Board of Directors shall be filled by a person selected and voted upon by a majority of the Board.

Article VI - Districts

Section 1. The United States shall be divided into districts each having a director, elected by majority vote of the membership within such district, who shall serve as an officer on the Board of Directors.

Section 2. The Board of Directors by majority vote may increase, decrease, or rearrange the number of districts as they deem necessary.

Section 3. Members residing in, or citizens of, countries other than the United States of America shall be deemed members of their district of closest geographical proximity.

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BYLAWS OF THE AMERAUCANA BANTAM CLUB

Article I - President

The president shall assume the duties of Chairman of the Board of Directors. He shall be responsible for the execution of the Constitution and Bylaws and shall receive and process all proposals for their amendment.

The president shall preside at all club meetings, call special meetings if requested by a majority of the Board, and appoint an Election Commissioner for the biennial election. He shall endeavor to see that all officers properly discharge their duties, take an active part in publicity, public relations, and other activities deemed necessary for the betterment of the club.

Article II - Secretary-Treasurer

The secretary-treasurer shall conduct club correspondence, collect and receive all monies due the club, pay all bills undertaken by it, and keep a record of these transactions. The secretary-treasurer shall make an annual financial report to the membership via the club bulletin and interim financial reports at meetings at which a quorum of club officers are present. For this purpose a majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

The secretary-treasurer shall be custodian of all club records and be responsible for issuing a quarterly bulletin to all club members detailing current and forthcoming club activities. All club meets shall be processed by the secretary-treasurer to ensure the proper paper work, reports, and awards.

The secretary-treasurer shall surrender all files, monies, and other club property to the new secretary-treasurer at the expiration of his or her term of office.

Article III - District Directors

The district directors shall be responsible for actively promoting the club and its activities, including the placing of an annual district meet within their individual districts. They shall also represent the club and assist in planning and carrying out details for the national meet when held within their districts.

Each district director shall serve as an officer on the Board of Directors, have a vote in determining club policy, assist with club meets within the district, and take an active part in recruitment of new members.

Article IV - Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall control the affairs of the club at all times and remove from office any officer, upon majority vote of the Board, for misconduct or failure to adequately perform the duties of his or her office.

Article V - Election Commissioner

An election commissioner shall be appointed by the president. The commissioner shall receive all ballots directly from the membership, tally them, and promptly forward the results and ballots to the secretary-treasurer.



#### Article VI - Club Meetings

An annual meeting shall take place each year in conjunction with the national meet whenever feasible.

#### Article VII - Election of Officers

Any member in good standing may send in a nomination for candidates for the various offices. All nominees must be members of the Ameraucana Bantam Club at the time of nomination. Officers shall be elected every two years by means of a mail ballot sent to each member. Such ballots shall be mailed by the secretary-treasurer via the club bulletin in the fall of the election year. All ballots must be marked and returned within ten days after receipt of same directly to the election commissioner. The election shall be completed and the new officers declared by mid-December and the new officers shall assume office on January 1.

#### Article VIII - Club Meets

The Ameraucana Bantam Club shall hold an annual National Meet to be rotated each year among the club districts. Site of the national meet shall be determined by majority vote of the Board of Directors. Should a district be unable to host the national meet in its allotted turn the meet shall pass on to the next district in rotation. The placing of the annual District Meet shall be the prerogative of the district director, who shall assume responsibility for its planning and execution and who shall coordinate these activities with the secretary-treasurer. The district director shall be responsible for a detailed report of results and awards to be sent to the secretary-treasurer promptly at the termination of the meet. State and Regional Meets shall be placed at the request of any member in cooperation with the district director and coordinated with the secretary-treasurer. Members requesting such meets shall assume the responsibilities as outlined for district directors if the director is not in attendance.

#### Article IX - Interpretation

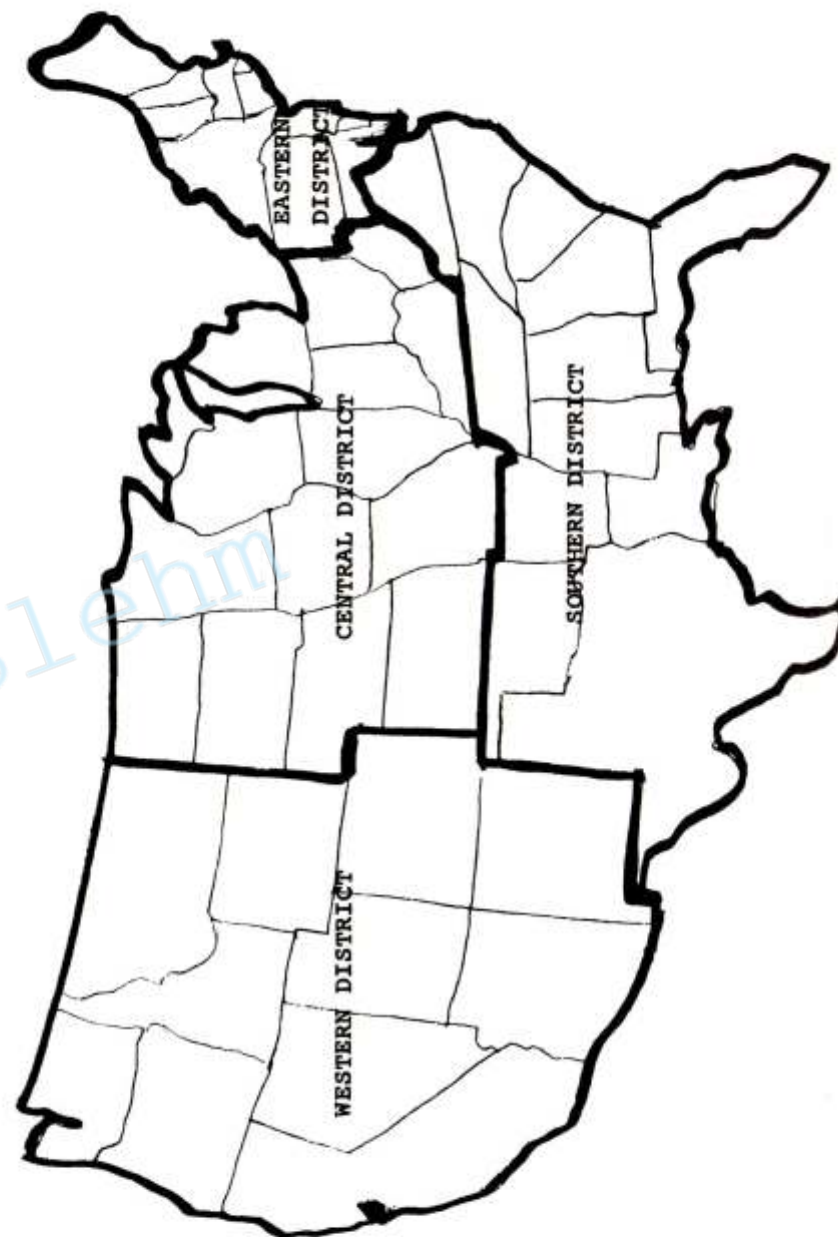
In all cases of dispute arising from interpretation of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Ameraucana Bantam Club, and on all other matters not covered herein, a majority vote of the Board of Directors shall decide the issue. Such decisions shall be declared final.

#### Article X - Amendments

Any proposal to amend or alter the Constitution and Bylaws of the Ameraucana Bantam Club shall be submitted to the president in writing. He will in turn submit the proposal to the Board of Directors who will decide by majority vote whether to place the proposal before the membership for a vote. Proposals passed favorably by the Board of Directors shall be included on the ballot with the biennial election of officers to be voted upon by the membership at large. If adopted by a majority of voting members the amendment shall be made effective on January 1 following the election. The new amendment shall be mailed to each member as a supplement to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Club.

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#### AMERAUCAANA BANTAM CLUB DISTRICTS





FRANK L. GARY  
5 BARBARA DRIVE  
CROSSWICKS, N. J. 08515  
AREA CODE (609) 298-7762

CHAIRMAN  
STANDARD COMMITTEE  
AMERICAN BANTAM ASSOCIATION

FRANK L. GARY MEMORIAL FUND

My association with poultry and poultry organizations has extended over eight decades of this 20th Century. The long experience while meeting fellow fanciers, raising production poultry, breeding and exhibiting large fowl and bantams, serving the American Bantam Association in every office except Secretary, and creating the American Game bantam and its nine varieties enabled me to appreciate every fancier's need for investigation into the history of fowl and the acquisition of knowledge from fanciers of the past. I grasped every opportunity particularly while travelling to haunt the bookshops and procure old and rare volumes about poultry together with the then current works on breeding. And so, I was able to accumulate a rather extensive library on our fancy.

As my eyesight has become progressively limited, I pondered on the way in which these volumes would best benefit the poultry fancier - particularly the bantam fancier. I considered donation to libraries or organizations but concluded that little use, other than research effort, would come from that route. I then determined that the proceeds from the sale of the volumes placed in trust would provide a substantial, annual premium that could be directed toward enhancement of the rarer American breeds and should provide a stimulus for breeders. The trust has been established. The breeds selected to receive the first premiums are my own American Game bantam and the Ameraucana bantam. The latter is the most recent breed of bantam developed in the United States to be admitted to the Bantam Standard.

Awards will be made to Best of Breed and to Best Opposite Sex for exhibition at the American Bantam Association's Annual Meet to members of the American Bantam Association (for at least one year prior to the meet). The cash premium will be \$100.00 divided between Best of Breed and Best Opposite Sex; premiums will be paid by the Trustee upon certification of winner's names and addresses by the Secretary, American Bantam Association. No award will be made unless two or more breeders compete showing a minimum of ten (10) specimens.

It is my hope that Ameraucana Bantam breeders will enter into spirited competition in the development of further varieties and perfection of the breed now described in Bantam Standard; that Ameraucana breeders will keep accurate records of their efforts and will share such knowledge with fellow breeders.

Frank L. Gary Memorial Fund  
Page 2.

In conclusion, I hope that many of you will be or become so interested in the Bantam Fancy that you will seek ways and means of establishing ongoing awards to breeders of the future and that the American Bantam Association will always remain responsive to the efforts of the breeder and his club so that promotion of new poultry development in these United States as well as establishment of standards to which all can strive to attain perfection continues real and viable.

*Frank L. Gary*

*My Complements*

*Frank L. Gary*

5 Barbara Drive, Crosswicks, NJ 08515  
(609) 298-7762



# Part 2

## The breed

### Dwarfing the Ameraucana Bantam

By Jerry Segler

My first Araucana bantam was a brown-red hen with white ear lobes, white legs, and a single comb that laid flat on her head. This hen was purchased among some mixed breed bantams. She was non-bearded and weighed about 1 3/4 lbs.

I tried to locate a bantam Araucana cock, but after a time, decided to get a standard Araucana cock. I found a very nice silver cock at a swap meet that was well bearded and whose single comb had a trace of an extra row on each side. This cock weighed about five pounds. I mated him to my brown-red hen and got a very rich colored brown-red cockerel and two brown-red, one birchen, and two brown pullets. Some were not bearded and none were over two pounds. The next season I hatched every egg that I could get from this mating and the results were encouraging. None were much over two pounds and the majority were brown-red. I saved a pea combed, well bearded cockerel with a heavily laced breast. At this point I was selecting for a red lobe, but most lobes were red and white mottled. From this mating I also selected the two best pullets in terms of color, size, comb and beard.

The next spring I mated these together and had several chicks started, but lost many to an outbreak of coccidiosis. I did manage to secure a cockerel with pea comb, beard, yellow legs and very rich deep red markings, rather than the lighter red more commonly produced. The only pullet that survived was non-bearded, white lobed and had black legs. I intend to mate this pullet to a white cock to improve comb, beard, leg and lobe color and then select the best pullets to mate back to the brown-red cockerel.

I found that through all of this that none of the birds were ever much over two pounds. I decided that there must be something to crossing a large cock onto a bantam hen that keeps the offspring small. The offspring from bantam cocks mated to large hens that I have observed are usually about midway in size between the two parents. I believe that it must be the small egg of the bantam hen that influences size in this cross between bantam hens and large males.

I used this idea when producing my blacks. I crossed a black game bantam hen with a white Ameraucana cock and saved two blue pullets and one black. These were all bearded and laid blue eggs. I mated these to a very small standard black Araucana cock from a fairly well established line of blacks. This gave me black on both sides of the cross and the offspring were almost all well under two pounds. This mating produced blacks, blues, splashes and barred, but I saved only pullets in black or blue that were bearded. The best cockerel from this mating has some white in hackle and saddle, but should produce some good blacks and blues this year.



### White And Silver Ameraucana Bantams

By Jerry Segler

The whites are the foundation of my flock, and I couldn't have come this far with my other colors without them. Both colors were purchased from J. Ralph Brazelton, of Axtel, Kansas. I received fourteen started chicks of mixed colors in which I had hoped to receive some browns. He had sold all of his browns except for a couple of hens and put them in with some silver hens, and I believe, a white cock. Most of the chicks were a white X silver cross, and uniform in size and would prove to be uniform in egg color as well. You could see the work that Ralph Brazelton had put into them. The first chicks that I raised from these were silvers, mixed silvers with white, and white. To improve comb, I then purchased a pair of whites again from Mr. Brazelton. I liked the male from this pair so well, that I line bred him and although the original birds had yellow legs, I started to get willow legs from this mating.

Last year I purchased a white cock with white shanks. I had thought willow to be a combination of yellow and slate and reasoned that white would lighten the yellow pigment and allow the slate to show through. It worked and that is how I got slate legs on the white birds. This was a big plus for me because the whites have good beards and combs and are a recessive white, unlike Leghorns. This enables me to use whites on my colors to improve beard and comb without getting yellow legs into these bloodlines.

I had gotten rid of all of my silvers except one of the original hens from Brazelton that laid such large eggs for a bantam that I wanted to keep her. I mated this hen to the white cock and from this mating produced two good silver pullets, which were bred back to him the next year. I got a number of faded colors, but kept the best colored pullets and a well colored silver cockerel. He has slate legs, while the pullets have willow, so I should get some chicks from this mating with slate legs.

I would also like to touch on getting good combs. I have found that tall, floppy combs usually carry some single comb genes, but can be bred back to good type with proper selection. Whatever the reason for floppy combs, if you select for low combs with a good base at the skull, it will help. You need a broad base from skull to comb and if this area is narrow, combs will flop over at maturity. It would be wise to check hens and pullets for this defect as well, since they are half of your bloodlines.

*Greetings from*

*"The Dark Horse  
Entourage"*

*Ken Carpenter*

Star's Haven Ranch, 50 Hoag Cross Rd., Ossining, NY 10562

## Muff & Beard Genetics and Application

By M.K. Gilbert

It is necessary to understand the genetics of muff and beard trait in order to establish a strain of Ameraucana bantams which is pure, i.e., a strain which never produces clean-faced birds. It is hoped the following information will help club members avoid improper selection of breeders, saving them valuable time and resources. The writer has only come to appreciate these elementary principles of genetics after years of trial and error and much frustration and wasted effort.

Each bantam offspring inherits one genetic blueprint from each parent for any given characteristic, such as facial furnishings. The characteristics of muff and beard (M) is dominant over the trait of clean faced (c). The facial furnishings which Ameraucanas and/or Araucanas may inherit are: 1.beard and muffs (M), 2.clean faced (c), and 3.ear tufts (T). Since ear tufts are peculiar to the Araucana breed, and we as Ameraucana breeders are to strive for beard and muffs in our bantams, no further mention will be made here of ear tufts other than to say the relationship between M and c and the relationship between T and c is the same. From the above facts we may surmise the following:

1. A bird which is genetically pure (homozygous) for beard and muffs has inherited the trait from both its parents, not just one. He (or she) may be symbolized as MM. Such a fowl will usually be visually apparent to the practised eye due to the relatively greater size of its beard and muffs in comparison with a bird which is Mc (heterozygous).
2. Mc in this article symbolizes genetically impure birds, those which have inherited the genetic factor or makeup for beard and muffs from one parent, and the genetic factor for being clean faced from the other parent. Such a bird always has beard and muffs due to the dominance of M over c. Its facial furnishings will usually be a little smaller than those of MM Ameraucanas.
3. The symbol used here to designate birds which are genetically pure for being clean faced, (lacking beard and muffs altogether), is cc. Fowl which are cc carry no genetic ability to produce bearded and muffed offspring when mated among themselves. The mating of cc birds with bearded and muffed birds will result in some bearded and muffed offspring, however. All such bearded and muffed offspring will be Mc, genetically impure.

<p>WHEATEN AMERAUCANA BANTAMS</p> <p>*</p> <p>BERNARD L. KELLOGG</p> <p>P.O. Box 62 Viroqua, WI 54665</p>	<p>D.L. KEENEY, JR.</p> <p>Ameraucana Bantam Club Charter Member</p> <p>*</p> <p>221 Commerce St. Dallas, TX 75201</p>
<p>BLACK, WHITE and BLUE AMERAUCANA BANTAMS</p> <p>*</p> <p>JIM TUCKWOOD</p> <p>RR#3, Box 21 Boscobel, WI 53805 (608) 375-5295</p>	<p>WHEATEN AMERAUCANA BANTAMS</p> <p>*</p> <p>C.L. DONAHO</p> <p>4401 Wilson Lane Fort Worth, TX 76133</p>



### Shank Color in Ameraucana Bantams

By M.K. Gilbert

In the preceding article we discussed the genetics of the beard and muff trait in our breed of bantams. In this article we will discuss the more complex subject of obtaining proper leg and toe color. You should be aware by now that our standard calls for only blue/slate shanks in each variety. This was decided by majority vote.

To review a basic principle of genetics, each offspring inherits a genetic factor or blueprint for a given characteristic from each parent. Exceptions to this general rule are sex-linked traits, which we will touch upon later.

We also established the principles of genetic dominance and recessiveness in the previous article. Since genes are inherited from both parents, they exist in pairs for each given trait. Thus a bird may carry the genetic factors for both red eyes and brown eyes, (one from each parent), but if red is dominant, the bird will have red eyes. The brown will not be evident, yet may be passed on to offspring and will manifest itself in progeny which are pure (homozygous), for brown eyes, i.e., those which have inherited brown eyes from both parents, the red factor being absent in such offspring. Leg coloration derives from two independent factors. These are the color of the outer layer of the leg skin (including scales), which is called the epidermis, and the color of the under layer, which is called the dermis. These may both be easily observed when dressing out a bird by cutting through the joint at the junction of thigh and shank and peeling back the outer layer of skin on the upper part of the shank.

Shank color is caused by the presence of various pigments or absence of pigment in both the dermis and epidermis. The following are some common combinations:

<u>Shank Color</u>	<u>Color of Epidermis</u>	<u>Color of Dermis</u>
blue/slate	none	dark
white	none	none
yellow	yellow	none
willow (green)	yellow	dark
black	dark	dark

Since the gene for white is dominant it can mask the presence of the genetic factor for yellow or dark pigment. Hence, white shanked birds can be (but not necessarily must be), carriers of these colors and produce a percentage of yellow, willow, and/or slate-legged offspring when mated with the right breeder bird.

Willow legs have the advantage of two recessive genes, yellow in the epidermis, dark in the dermis. That is why two such birds will always breed true, not producing other shank colors in their progeny.

Blue legs, which is what we are after, are made up of the recessive dark under layer and a white (actually a clear or translucent epidermis), outer layer. Hence, all offspring from two such birds will have the dark inner layer of leg skin. But, if they are carriers of the recessive yellow in the epidermis, they can also produce offspring which will have willow legs. Since yellow epidermis must be pure to manifest itself, try never to breed from yellow or willow-shanked breeders. To do so is asking for trouble. To test your good blue-shanked breeders for the yellow epidermis factor, simply mate them with a yellow or willow-shanked bird and observe the results. If any of the progeny exhibit a yellow leg epidermis, the breeder you have tested is a carrier. You know this because if it were pure for (dominant) clear, or white, if you prefer, epidermis, the dominant factor would mask the yellow in all offspring. A word of caution is in order at this point. Leg color takes time to develop in young birds. A bird which appears to have willow legs at four weeks of age may end up with blue legs at the time of sexual maturity, which is the optimum time to classify this trait. Moreover, yellow pigment can and will fade in mature birds. Factors influencing the presence of yellow pigment include egg production, diet and health. As the yellow fades, a bird which has willow legs may fade to blue. Since this fading does not affect the genetic makeup of a bird, be careful when purchasing older birds.

Finally, we would mention that a certain gene exists in some strains of birds which inhibits the development of pigment in the under layer of shank skin. This dominant gene is sex-linked, which means that dermal pigment is prevented from developing in one sex of a generation of birds, even though it carries the genetic factor for doing so. Since this is a dominant factor, birds with a dark dermis are not carriers. Needless to say, this can throw a monkey wrench into the whole business. Follow some sound advice: breed only from blue-shanked birds whenever possible. You will be happier and much more satisfied with the results.



# *Ameraucana Bantams*

*in*

*Blue Wheaten*

*Wheaten and*

*White*

*Mike Gilbert*

W. 5171 Baker Rd., Holmen, WI 54636

Wheaten is the most widely bred variety of Ameraucana bantams presently found in the United States. Mike Gilbert is primarily responsible for their present high state of development and foundation stock from his breeding pens may be found scattered not only throughout the Midwest, but have established a secure foothold on the West Coast as well, particularly in California.

The wheaten variety provides a special challenge in that it is like breeding two varieties in one. The males have the familiar black-breasted red pattern, though somewhat lighter in color in certain sections, while the female is totally different in plumage color, being basically a light, creamy wheaten with black restricted to wings and tail. The standard calls for male hackles and saddles of bright orange red of blazing brilliance, toning off to flashing gold at their extremities, free from dark striping, which is a common defect. This flashy orange red and gold contrasted with lustrous black in breast, wings and tail make for an eye-catching, attractive combination. Females, though certainly less flashy, have a special appeal of their own. The rich wheaten hackles blend softly into a creamy wheaten overall color contrasting sharply with the black in wings and tail. Beard and muffs call for black in males and a very light creamy wheaten in females, which add a certain charm to this variety.

As can be expected, there is some variation in the basic wheaten color pattern, but is most apparent in the female line. Color will run from rich, dark wheaten to an extremely light creamy wheaten, approaching white. The light, creamy wheaten is preferred, assuming the contrasting black in wings and tail remains sound. This required black in wings and tail tends to diminish with age, and birds which retain black make valuable breeders. A light phase occasionally produced by wheaten throws white males irregularly marked with red about the head and/or throat and back, and white females with lemon hackles. These females are quite attractive. Producing uniform color as required by the standard is an ongoing challenge to the breeder of this distinctive variety and the vivid color contrast between the sexes adds both interest and appeal to the wheaten Ameraucana bantam.

When hatched, wheaten chicks are a creamy white and virtually indistinguishable from other bantam breeds, save for the profuse chick down around the face which will develop into beard and muffs. Chicks feather rapidly and may be readily sexed by color at about three weeks of age. Pullets as expected, are much lighter in color, being a mixture of brown, buff and white, whereas the cockerels, in addition



to these colors, contain varying degrees of black. Sexual maturity is rapid and it is not uncommon to have half a dozen early hatched cockerels squeaking away as they attempt to crow not long after they are out of the brooder. It is not until young birds achieve their adult plumage that they may be evaluated by color, so patience is required, particularly for cockerels, whose beard and muffs are the last section to assume the required black color and frontal head feathering is rid of white.

When pullets come into lay their shells are a rich, sky-blue which begins to fade only after a sustained lay of several months. In as much as the blue egg shell is a fundamental breed characteristic of the Ameraucana bantam, any deviation from blue must be eliminated by immediate culling. It has been my practice to let each hen set and bring off a hatch of chicks at the termination of the breeding season. Ameraucana bantams are patient setters and can be trusted to raise a brood of half dozen or so chicks with ease. In order to get by high temperatures in late spring and summer which can be rough on chicks in a brooder, I let each hen bring off a late hatch, which is easier on the chicks and provides me with a great deal of personal pleasure just to have them about. The payoff comes when you ease back in your lawn chair with a cool one and enjoy the antics of these little families on a pleasant summer evening. Take a little time to enjoy your bantams.

## *Ameraucanas ...*

In Black, Blue, Brown, Brown Red, Silver,  
Wheaten and White.

*Jerry A. Segler, Sr*

Box 23, Sparland, IL 61565

## Ameraucana Type

By M.K. Gilbert

The Ameraucana is a dual purpose breed of bantams which is useful for both meat and egg production. Their type, being a study in moderation, is ideally suited for this duality. Standard weights are the same as for Wyandotte bantams, but here all similarity with the Wyandotte ends, as the feathering of Ameraucanas makes them appear a little larger and altogether different in type. Feather quality should be similar to that of Plymouth Rocks, being neither as "hard" as in games or Leghorns nor as soft as in Cochins or in Orpingtons.

The natural stance of the females results in body carriage nearly horizontal. The back should be only slightly sloping from front to rear, however male backs have slightly more slope than those of females. The body is quite long with a definite but not abrupt "break" between slope of back and rise of tail. The male tail is 45 degrees above the horizontal while that of the female is about 35 to 40 degrees. Breasts should be deep and round, hackles moderately long and flowing, and main tails of but medium length. Tail coverts are comparatively long, which results in not too much of the main tail showing. Overall appearance should not be one of extreme heaviness, but neither should it be racy or gamey.

The Ameraucana head is medium broad and somewhat flat, giving a deceptively fierce look to the best specimens. These birds are normally quite docile and tame, not flighty as some breeds tend to be. Ear lobes are red, but also very small and pale in the best females. This paleness should not be mistaken for white coloration; it often takes an experienced eye to tell the difference.

All Ameraucanas have blue or slate blue shanks. Avoid legginess, poorly formed pea combs, and skimpy beards and muffs. Old males tend to experience prolonged molts of the beard and muffs, a real challenge in conditioning for exhibition. Avoid long beaks and narrow heads also.

The hens are excellent producers of medium sky-blue eggs. Having made it a practice never to butcher hens in production, the writer has often waited more than a year to dispose of otherwise "cull" hens. The wheaten variety especially, has been selected over the years for egg production, health and vitality. Varieties such as white, blue wheaten, and buff carry the blood of the original wheatens. The Ameraucana standard calls for a uniform light creamy shade of wheaten which affords great contrast between the sexes. This extreme sexual dimorphism is one of the attributes which makes the wheaten Ameraucana a unique and very attractive fowl.



*Ameraucana*  
*Bantams*  
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304 W. Washington, Athens, TN 37303

The Blue Egg

By Don Cable

The Ameraucana is the only breed of bearded bantam recognized by the American Bantam Association that lays a blue egg. Our standard requires a blue egg and 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 O. Cawley's excellent position paper on the Araucana. It is pointed out that those Chilean fowls most commonly producing blue eggs were not tufted and rumpless birds, but the common fowls not unlike European breeds. After importation these Chilean fowls were crossed with domestic breeds and of course, in time bantamized to produce the Ameraucana. The egg produced by the Ameraucana bantam, like its South American 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 somewhat 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 of the health food business as well as some 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 the white eggs in your local supermarket with 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 certainly 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.



# Blue Wheaten and White Ameraucanas

By M.K. Gilbert

<p>BROOKSHER &amp; RAYHER</p> <p>WHEATEN</p> <p>AMERAUCANA BANTAMS</p> <p>*</p> <p>Jane Brooksher 25333 South Lammers Rd. Marie Rayher 19822 W. Grant Line Rd. Tracy, CA 95376</p>	<p>AMERAUCANA BANTAMS</p> <p>in</p> <p>Wheaten and White</p> <p>*</p> <p>JAIME IKEDA</p> <p>10411 Byrne Ave. Cupertino, CA 95014</p>
<p>Wheaten &amp; White</p> <p>AMERAUCANA BANTAMS</p> <p>*</p> <p>KEN HUFFSTUTTER</p> <p>2239 Lobert St. Castro Valley, CA 94546</p>	<p>WHEATEN</p> <p>AMERAUCANA BANTAMS</p> <p>*</p> <p>JACK L. GARD</p> <p>8787 Oroville Hwy. Marysville, CA 95901</p>

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 colorization 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% 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% 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. White Ameraucanas, the second variety currently recognized by the ABA as standard, seem to be improving with each new generation. They have more than held their own with wheaten in the showroom, though part of this may be attributed to the judges' lack of experience with true Ameraucana type. Chicks range from yellowish-white to smokey-gray and differ from wheaten 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. They also produce some willow shanks, but enough birds are being produced to see progressive improvement. It would be a mistake not to mention here the contribution Jerry Segler has made in developing the white Ameraucana. His strain has proper size, combs, and good eye and plumage coloration. My first whites came from Jerry's flock several years ago.

# *Wheaten Ameraucana Bantams*



*Don Cable*

6442 Chestnut Ave., Orangevale, CA 95662

## Developing Head Points

By Don Cable

In breeding for head points, the key is in creating balance among the various components. An oversized, beefy comb, skimpy beard and muffs, or a long, narrow head and beak can upset the balance sought in distinguishing true breed character. It is necessary to have a head of sufficient width and depth to support a fully developed beard and muffs without appearing to be overwhelmed by them. No combination of head points however, can overcome a crow head.

Beak length can be critical in its effect upon head point balance. A short, stout beak enhances all but extremely sparse beard development while a long, narrow beak must have a very full beard to compensate for its excessive length, particularly if the bird lacks in frontal. A shorter faced bird has a natural advantage in any bird requiring beard and muffs and we would be wise to select for this trait.

A relatively wide base is required for proper development of pea comb, especially in males. We have all seen tall, narrow pea combs with a tendency to lop to one side, but the proper type of pea comb is both described and illustrated in Bantam Standard and there can be no mistake regarding what is desired. It has been my experience that the small pea comb required on males can be achieved by breeding from females with extremely small combs- so small in fact, that the serrations peculiar to pea comb are barely discernible.

Male lobes are more prominent not only because of their larger size, but because muff development is frequently less profuse than in females. Moreover, the standard wisely allows for a lobe that is often quite pale in females and thus blends more readily in the abundant facial feathering. Lobes should be concealed, but not so the eyes, which should be large, bold, and well placed.

It is the beard and muffs that when properly expressed, add the final touch and bring all points together in the well balanced head. The beard should be full, yet well tucked under the lower mandible, not pendulous as in certain large fowl. Muffs fully developed and profuse, are turned backward from the face, revealing the bright, expressive eyes, then sweep outward from either side of the head to form a triangular effect in combination with the beard. The well balanced head is difficult to describe and virtually impossible to define, yet any experienced judge or breeder worth his salt, knows it when he sees it. It is this charming little owl-like face combined with a sprightly manner that give the Ameraucana breed its appeal and is the essence of its true character and worth.

Just how important are head points? My personal feeling is that they are expressive of breed characteristics far beyond



the number that they are allowed on the standard general scale of points and that they provide an impression perhaps second only to overall breed type in judging bantams. As in anything else, a desire to maximize certain head points without regard to maintaining balance may be self-defeating, and in the long run, do mischief to the breed. The late Lynn Brenneman cautioned breeders of Polish bantams to remember that they were breeding crested bantams, not crests that incidentally, had bantams under them! It is difficult not to first examine the head and face when taking a bantam in hand and it is not just the close proximity, but rather we are apparently conditioned to do so. To quote Dr. Will Wise in Fred Jeffrey's "Bantam Chickens", "Personally, I look for pretty heads, as near the ideal for the breed as described in the standard as I can find...It is pretty common knowledge that when people talk to each other, most look into the other's eyes. I think nearly all judges do this first and last in judging poultry, much the same as they would a Miss America contest. All other factors considered equal, they will pick the girl (or bantam) with the prettiest face."

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## *Greetings from England*



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Greystone Cottage, Colemore Lane, Kingwood Common  
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## Muffs And Beard

By

F.P. Jeffrey, Secretary, American Bantam Association

Muffs and beard come about by feathers on both sides of the face as well as below the beak growing longer than usual. The whole area is under control of one major gene and one does not find muffs without beard nor beard without muffs. In some instances presence or absence of muffs and beard determines the breed. This is true with booted (no muffs and beard) as compared with Bearded Belgian d'Uccle (presence of beard and muffs). Booted and Bearded Belgian d'Uccle are recognized as separate breeds in the U.S.A., but not in Germany. In several breeds, Polish and Silkie, there are bearded and non-bearded varieties with some of the colors. It is a bit difficult for the beginner to understand the reasoning of presence or absence of beard and muffs determining a breed in one instance and a variety in another, but that's the way it is.

One of the breed characteristics of the Ameraucana is presence of muffs and beard and the challenge to the fancier is to produce these so that the total effect is one of beauty. Muffs and beard will respond to selection so the breeder can fashion just what the Standard calls for.

Muffs and beard is caused by a single incompletely dominant gene. This means that mating muffs and beard (Mb) with a bird lacking in muffs and beard (mb) will produce progeny with muffs and beard but that usually there is some variation in its expression. Some may show a respectable muffs and beard but others will be scanty in the area. I have seen, in shows, evidence of a breeder crossing Booted with Bearded Belgian d'Uccle by noting birds with scanty muffs and beard- particularly beard. There is no reason to be crossing Ameraucana with any other breed so the judge should cut heavily any bird with poorly developed muffs and beard.

It is appropriate in this short article to emphasize an important principle of genetics, namely the difference between a dominant trait (muffs and beard) and a recessive trait (blue legs). Mating recessive X recessive (blue leg X blue leg) always gives blue leg- one can count on it. Mating dominant X dominant (muffs and beard X muffs and beard) will not always give muffs and beard if one is working with a population where some crossing with non-muffs and beard has been going on.

This point is well illustrated in the previous example where muffs and beard (Mb) was crossed with non-muffs and beard (mb). The first generation will carry muffs and beard although not all to the same extent. Mating two of the first generation birds together to produce a second generation (Mbmb X Mbmb) will produce one fourth pure muffs and beard (MbMb), one half impure muffs and beard (Mbmb) and one fourth no muffs and beard (mbmb). As a matter of fact if a breeder is careless in not selecting for good quality muffs and beard it is possible to have birds show up either with no muffs and beard or poorly developed ones.



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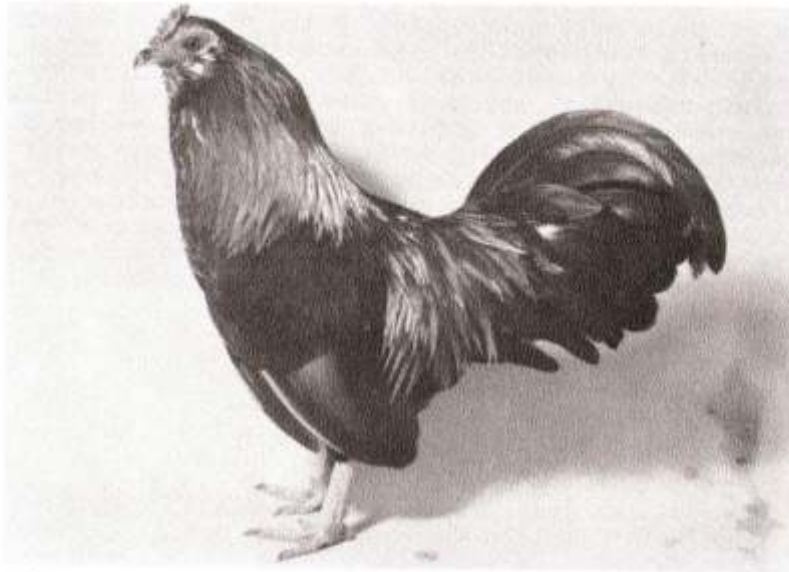
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## The Wheaten Variety

By Don Cable



1st Wheaten Cockerel, Champion Ameraucana bantam, ABA Semi-Annual Meet at San Jose, CA, June 1981.



1st Wheaten Hen, Champion Ameraucana bantam, ABC National Meet at Santa Rosa, CA, February, 1982.

The past five years have shown a steady rise in the popularity of the wheaten variety of the Ameraucana bantam. This increase in numbers can be a benefit to the breed if those who have taken up this challenging variety continue to select wisely and make the viability of the Ameraucana bantam their first priority. At present the wheaten variety has sufficient vigor to sustain itself indefinitely if we do not paint ourselves into a corner by neglecting the reproductive aspects of this bantam. Assuming that we have met this basic principle, we can then concern ourselves with secondary goals such as improving color and type, including maintaining proper size.

In as much as we are dealing with a bantam, due attention should be paid to maintaining Standard weights and overall size. Our weights of 30 oz. for cocks and 26 oz. for cockerels are both reasonable and attainable, particularly if we select for fine bone and eliminate coarser, heavier specimens. Likewise, weights of 26 oz. for hens and 24 oz. for pullets can be achieved and maintained without impairing productivity. A wheaten pullet reaching point of lay should not have a shank very much greater in diameter than a common number 2 pencil, so let the shank be the key in selecting for fine bone.

Head points in males are more difficult to attain in the wheaten variety for several reasons. The black color required by the Standard for beard and muffs contrasts sharply with the red-orange head of males, making shortcomings in facial furnishings stand out. Moreover, male beards are frequently plagued by the appearance of varying degrees of white, a common and irritating fault. And to make matters worse, females are often fond of feather pulling in the beards of their hapless mates. For this reason, it is wise to isolate your best male wheaten show prospects well ahead of the show season.

The bright orange hackle of the wheaten male tones off to flashing gold at its extremity, and it is here that another common fault, black striping, may occur. Some authorities caution about sun fading plumage color but I have found this to be an advantage as wheaten color is often too dark initially and a bit of fading is of little concern and may even be something of a boon.

However, care must be taken in selecting for the proper wheaten color in males. Cockerels with light, flashy hackles and saddles often tend to lacing and mooning in the breast, where you want a sound, lustrous black. On the other hand, darker males, some approaching a dark red, even mahogany, will often throw pullets with dark chestnut hackles and overall wheaten ground color that is

much darker than we desire and not called for by the Standard. As a rule of thumb, lighter is generally better than darker, assuming black sections remain sound.

There is a wide range in expression of wheaten color in females as well, but light creamy wheaten females are preferred, again assuming that the black - here in wings and tail- remains sound. Color tends to diminish with age but the degree varies with the individual. I have two four-year-old hens that are nestmates; one has retained wing, tail and hackle color as well as most yearling hens, while the other is virtually self white.

The photographs of the wheaten male and female appearing elsewhere in these pages were taken by my friend Garth Martin, of Carmichael, California, and are fairly typical and representative of the wheaten variety at this point. The poses of the birds are obviously not natural, particularly the cockerel, who does not normally carry his wings so low, nor does the hen carry her tail that high, but they at least provide representative specimens of the wheaten Ameraucana variety that I am currently breeding.

Bantam Standard details wheaten color rather well and this important volume should be referred to as the last word on wheaten and other varieties of the Ameraucana bantam.

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