

*Ameraucana Breeders Club
Handbook*



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Ameraucana Breeders Club Handbook

October 1998



Cover Artwork by Rusty Hart of Michigan

An update and revision of the
Ameraucana Bantam Handbook
(1982)

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Foreword

The Ameraucana Breeder's Club's supply of the first edition of the *Ameraucana Bantam Handbook*, compiled and edited by Don Cable in 1982, has been exhausted. At least a few of our current members consider it a collectors' item, and continue to utilize it as a valued reference and guide. In this replacement volume we will not attempt to duplicate the earlier work, but strive to provide information relative to the more current history of the breed and club. If, through this effort, we are able to ignite a spark of interest in merely a few readers to become long-term Ameraucana breeders and fanciers, then we will consider this work a success.

As we approach the dawn of a new millennium we are reminded of thoughts penned by a renowned Plymouth Rock breeder, the late Ralph Sturgeon, in his book *Start Where You Are With What You Have - A Guide To Poultry Breeding*. His introduction began with the following words. "The animal breeder is just as much an engineer or scientist as is any builder of large structures, machines, rockets, or bridges. They work with inanimate objects; a breeder works with living creatures. It is my belief that these are God's creatures, placed here on earth for the benefit of man. Breeders add to this benefit by improving animals, developing offspring that are better than their parents or grandparents were. As a breeder, I am grateful for the opportunity -- and even feel a responsibility -- to work with the Creator in this way." He went on to say, "There are a good many exhibitors and showmen, but very few real breeders in the poultry field. Breeding is an art and like all successful artists, breeders must be dedicated."

Don Cable resigned his position as secretary-treasurer a year or two after the American Poultry Association recognized all eight varieties of Ameraucana bantams and large fowl. He continues to draw on his rich knowledge and experience to favor us with his thoughts and observations in our newsletter from time to time. It is to Don, and the capable people who followed him as secretary-treasurer of the A.B.C., that we dedicate this volume. People like Jeanne Trent, David Horman, Jeannette Frank, and now John Blehm have served selflessly and tirelessly to continue to promote the world's best breed of poultry. Be sure to let them know you appreciate their efforts through your notes and calls and by contributing regularly to the lifeblood of this organization - our newsletters. Thanks!

Thanks also to our members, officers, and directors - without whose help and financial support this handbook would not have been possible. It truly takes a team effort to sustain the interest of enough fanciers to maintain a viable and useful organization, so our thanks go out to all the dues-paying members whose input of ideas is so very much valued and whose appreciation is manifested in their continued participation year after year.

And, like Ralph Sturgeon we reserve our highest appreciation for the Creator-God who made it all possible and who continues to bless us. "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain." Psalm 127:1

Mike Gilbert, president

STATE OF THE AMERAUCANA BREEDERS CLUB

By M.K. Gilbert, president, January 1998

The domino effect of our former secretary-treasurer's resignation last year has resulted in yours truly reassuming, at least temporarily, the office of A.B.C. president. This is where we began twenty years ago when a small group of fanciers first breathed life into what was then the Ameraucana Bantam Club. While most of those original A.B.C.'ers have since moved on to other interests, their successors and those who did remain have managed to maintain a viable club over the years. While the membership in terms of numbers has been fairly steady, the rate of attrition has been something less than satisfactory in our opinion. Perhaps other breed clubs experience similar turnover in membership, but we hate to lose any member, as we believe ours is the very best.

As we head into another hatching season let's do a little self-examination that could possibly result in some growth and added vitality for our club. Here we go.

A. The Breed: Like nearly all purebred breeds of poultry (including Araucanas) Ameraucanas represent a medley of various strains that were combined to form an ideal combination of traits as set forth in A.B.A.'s Bantam Standard and in the A.P.A.'s Standard Of Perfection. Prior to standard formation and recognition, chaos reigned when it came to judging blue-egg fowl at fairs, shows, or other competitions. In this respect the A.B.C. has provided a genuine and much needed service to the U.S. poultry fancy.

B. Characteristics: As aptly stated in Bantam Standard's preface to the Ameraucana standard, the most useful and desirable traits available to blue-egg fowl were chosen. Hence Ameraucana breeders need not deal with the lethal genetics required for the ear tufts of the Araucana breed or for the creeper gene present in short-legged Japanese bantams. This means that 100 percent hatches are possible under good management conditions instead of expecting a normal 25 percent death rate of unhatched embryos. Further, we have avoided the mechanical reproductive problems associated with the rumplessness of Araucanas and the excessive fluff of Cochins and some other breeds.

Moderately sized pea combs and the absence of wattles negate the effects of sub-zero temperatures of northern climates. Naturally colored blue eggshells help attract the interest of beginners. Muffs and beards add a special attractiveness and present an extra conditioning challenge to the serious exhibitor. Slate shanks avoid discoloration due to fading yellow pigment and prevent dirt from showing under the edges of scales as so often occurs with white or yellow shanked birds. A wide range of color varieties in both bantams and large fowl present both challenges and opportunities for achievement. And since no other recognized breed offers a similar combination of features, it is *unique*!

C. Sources: Currently purebred Ameraucana chicks are available from at least three sources that we are aware of, and there may be others. The Crow Hatchery of Missouri, Urch Poultry Farm of Minnesota, and our secretary John Blehm of Michigan all ship chicks through the post office. Unfortunately some hatcheries continue to dupe the public by selling mongrel colored-egg chickens as either "Araucanas" or "Ameraucanas."

Adult and started birds may be shipped via express mail from coast to coast. For sale and want-ads may be printed free of charge in the A.B.C. newsletter. Conclusion?

There should be no shortage of acceptable stock in the more common varieties for persons who are willing to pay a fair and reasonable price. The rare varieties continue to offer opportunities for those willing to apply their skill, perseverance, and diligence.

D. The Shows: If Poultry Press reports are any indication, few Ameraucanas are shown aside from our annual national meet. Yet, when we do show, an Ameraucana ends up on champion row as often as not. If this breed has everything going for it, why are we not showing more? Perhaps the answer can be found in the memorable words of the comic-strip character Pogo: "We have met the enemy and he is us!" Here are some questions for each of us to ponder as we start out the new year. Have a great one!

1. Have I focused on any specific goals for my flock's improvement?
2. Have I planned how to achieve those goals? And what is "Plan B?"
3. Have my personal ambitions served for the betterment or for the detriment of the Ameraucana breed and my club?
4. Have I helped a fellow fancier by sharing quality stock, chicks, or eggs?
5. Do I really expect to purchase show-quality stock at bargain basement prices?
6. Have I resolved to help improve the image of this breed through hatching as many chicks as are feasible (for my facilities) in order to have quality birds to show and to share?

Quote: *Quality is rarely an accident; it is the result of high intention, diligent effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution. It represents the cumulative results of wise choices from among many alternatives.*
(anonymous)

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.

HISTORY
Don Cable, 1984

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. Secondly, 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 advertized 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.

AMERAUCANA BANTAMS

IN GOLDEN QUAIL & BROWN RED

❖ **HOLLAND LOP RABBITS** ❖

RON KLEMMEDSON

N27113 HWY. 53

BLAIR, WI 54616

(608) 525-7353

AMERAUCANA BREEDERS CLUB CONSTITUTION

Article I - Name

This organization shall be known as the Ameraucana Breeders Club.

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this club is to encourage the continued improvement of Ameraucana bantams and large fowl through breeding, exhibition, and dissemination of relevant information.

Article III - Membership

Any person or organization with a sincere interest in the purpose of the Ameraucana Breeders 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 1st 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 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 by the president and approved by majority vote of the Board of Directors.

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.

BYLAWS OF THE AMERAUCANA BREEDERS 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 I(a) - Vice President(s)

At the discretion of the Board of Directors, no more than two persons may hold the office of honorary lifetime vice president at any one time. Persons so nominated by the Board of Directors must be elected by majority vote of the membership at large. A vice president shall assist the president with his or her duties and conduct club meetings in the president's absence.

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 in a timely fashion.

Article III - District Directors

The district directors shall be responsible for actively promoting the club and its' activities, including the placing of annual district, state, and special meets 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 district. Each district director shall serve as an officer on the Board of Directors, have a vote in determining club policy, assist with coordinating club meets within their district, and take an active part in the 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 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 paid member in good standing may send in a nomination for candidates for the various offices. All nominees must be members of the Ameraucana Breeders 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. Voting may be by mailing a marked ballot or via email within ten days after receipt directly to the election commissioner. When only one member accepts the nomination for any office that person will be elected by acclamation. The election shall be completed and the new officers declared by mid-December and the new officers shall assume office on January 1st.

Article VIII - Club Meets

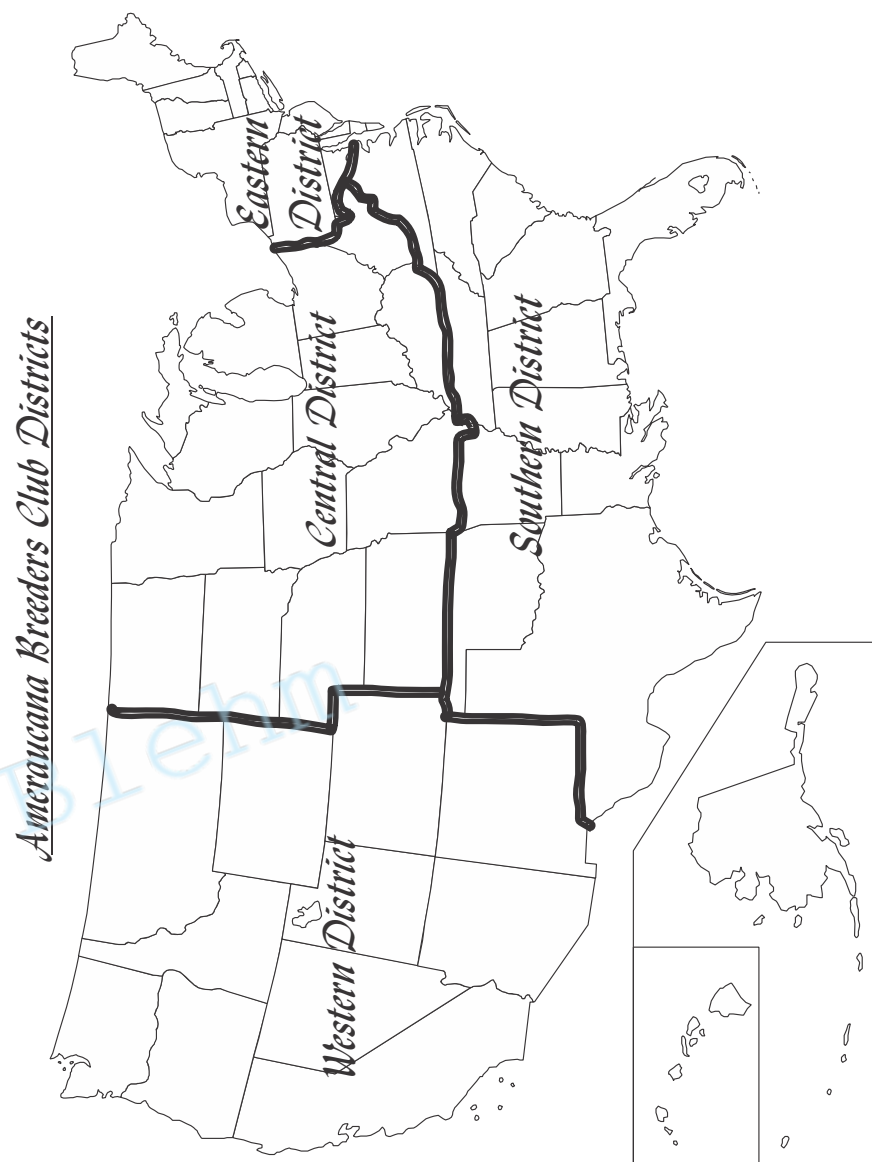
The Ameraucana Breeders Club shall hold an annual National Meet to be rotated clockwise each year among the club districts. The District Director will place the National meet by November 15th for the following year. If it is not placed, with notification to the Board, by that date the Director of the next District in rotation will have 30 days to place the National meet. 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. Annual state meets and special meets shall be placed by the district director at the request of any member 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 Breeders 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/or Bylaws of the Ameraucana Breeders Club shall be submitted to the president in writing. He or she 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 1st following the election. The new amendment shall be mailed to each member as a supplement to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Club.



Ameraucana Breeders Club Membership

** Charter Members, (F) Family membership, (jr) Junior Membership*

John Bashaw (F)	1785 Bush Valley, La Cresent, MN 55947
John W. Blehm	4599 Lange, Birch Run, MI 48415
Randy Buske	N6580 Highmound, Sullivan, WI 53178
Don Cable *	PO Box 2010, Sparks, NV 89432
Zachary Chamberlin (jr)	3030 Trail Creek, Bozeman, MT 59715
Karen M. Defazio	PO Box 277, Sand Lake, NY 12153
Marcia Delaski	PO Box 107, Skandia, MI 49885
Catherine Dickey (F)	PO Box 275, Huntley, MT 59037
Larry Donahue (F)	830 S. Alger, Ithaca, MI 48847
Scott Eutsler	Route 3, Box 373, Stuart, VA 24171
Jim Fegan	278 County Road CNA, Champion, MI 49814
Jeannette Frank	PO Box 824, Great Falls, MT 59403
Mike Gilbert * (F)	W5171 Baker, Holmen, WI 54636
Diane Gilpin (F)	321 2nd St. W., Jordon, MN 55352
Dr. Gary G. Gray	29502 Glidden, Kingston, IL 60145
Vernon Green	417 Bouck, Burley, ID 83318
Katie Helland (jr)	12100 Center, San Martin, CA 95046
Jake Hendzel	W4769 Million Dollar, Menominee, MI 49858
Barbara Hoover (F)	12117 Kapowsin Hwy. E., Graham, WA 98338
Jay Horn	168 Moore Lane, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
Allison Hoving (jr)	3616 M-72, W., Traverse City, MI 49684
Earl Jones	2180 Froede, Caro, MI 49723
Bernard Kellogg *	PO Box 152, Readstown, WI 54652
Koralyn Kibbee (F)	9069 Wooden Shoe, Manhattan, MT 59741
Ron Klemmedson *	N27113, US Hwy. 53, Blair, WI 54616
William R. Lawson MD	693 Montecito, Napa, CA 94559

Rev. William McKinnon	PO Box 9, Flovilla, GA 30216
Wayne Meredith (F)	W312 S5626 Dable, Mukwonago, WI 53149
Rosemary Michalski	6 Orchard St., Box 16, Feura Bush, NY 12067
Darren Mordecai (F)	380 Southview, Lucas, TX 75002
Ron Nelson	E3073 Wesley, Oydensburg, WI 54962
Bruce E. Nothstein	4448 Cedar, Walnutport, PA 18088
Richard Orr (F)	40 Woodlawn, Monroe, CT 06468
Daniel Pasche (F)	4415 S. Lakeshore, Glenwood, MN 56334
George Patterson	4783 County Rd. 19, Kitts Hill, OH 45645
Mary Lou Phelps	3997 N. Farm Rd., 143, Springfield, MO 65803
Bill Phillips	1011 Arcadia Lakes, Columbia, SC 29206
Robert A. Rennolet	28223 432nd. Ave., Menno, SD 57045
Jan Resberg	PO Box 7335, Duluth, MN 55807
Iris Robertson	37 E. Walnut, Apt. 2, Belchertown, MA 01007
Betty Rundquist (F)	4050 E. Iona Rd., Idaho Falls, ID 83401
Arne Schmidt	42460 Blackhawk, Harris, MN 55032
Jerry Segler *	RR 1, Box 235-D, Sparland, IL 61565
Ed Smith (F)	PO Box 801, Shipshewana, IN 46565
Jeoffery Stevens, DVM	6402 E. Boss, Clinton, WI 53525
Ginny Traeger	2458 Hwy. 35, Kalispell, MT 59901
Jeanne Trent	8695 Sunset Hill, Central Lake, MI 49622
James Tuckwood	2778 Neff, Boscobel, WI 53805
Duane Urch (F)	2142 NW 47 th Ave., Owatonna, MN 55060
Robert Walchak (F)	N8698 County Rd. TT, Holmen, WI 54636
Lynn Walker	8492 Robertson Springs, Loudon, TN 37774
Walter Wheeler	PO Box 812111, Wellesley, MA 02181
Ruth Whitney (F)	3694 W. Madison, Alma, MI 48801
L.T. Williams	RR 2, Box 2152, Belfast, ME 04915
Dr. Roger Woodruff (F)	8728 S. Sagewood, Spokane, WA 99223
Carlton Yoder	61405 Cr. 17, Goshen, IN 46526

WHAT IS A POULTRY BREEDER?
By M.K. Gilbert (Revised Sept. 1998)

As applied in the world of exhibition poultry, usage of the term "breeder" seems to have been expanded in recent years to include everyone that raises our feathered friends. Such should not be the case, as it tends to diminish the efforts of those who have exerted themselves to become poultry breeders in the true sense of the word. This is not to discredit the role that fanciers, showmen, and hatcherymen play in our chosen avocation, but, simply stated, the admiration of, propagation, and exhibition of quality poultry do not qualify one to lay a legitimate claim to the title of "breeder." The following are some attributes that, in our opinion, a genuine poultry breeder might possess.

- Possesses a working knowledge of Mendelian genetics - the basic laws of heredity - as applied to the particular species or subspecies he or she is working with.
- Knows the possible genetic makeup(s) of his or her current flock through awareness of the physical and genetic attributes of their forebears. This usually requires good recordkeeping, a system of identifying individual birds, and cognizance of previous mating results.
- Knows and appreciates the difference between genotype & phenotype.
- Has maintained a particular family or line for enough generations to be able to predict, with reasonable accuracy, the end results of given matings - hence, is seldom surprised when recessive traits resurface.
- Has persevered over time to overcome obstacles that could have prevented flock improvements or caused deterioration of its' gene pool.
- Measures progress in terms of achieving goals related to fixation of desirable traits and elimination of undesirable traits - not necessarily related to showroom successes or numbers of awards received.
- Is not overly concerned with various "master breeder" or "master exhibitor" designations conferred by various organizations, realizing these are contingent primarily upon competitive exhibition results . . . knows that successfully hatching, rearing, conditioning, and showing a family of birds does not make one a top breeder, but a top fancier, and that it is possible to be one without being the other.

There are at least a handful of fanciers today who are deserving of "top breeder" status. Certainly people like Graham Oakford (Pastel & other varieties of call ducks), Bill Wulff (Red Pyle Old English), Al Westling (Polish bantams), Jerry Raven (O.E. Game bantams), and others would be included in this group. But there are others, possibly scores of them, who will never achieve much recognition simply because they chose to not show competitively. In their minds, perhaps, the risk of exposing their flocks to life-threatening poultry diseases was deemed to outweigh any possible benefits. Or, they may have other reasons to eschew the show circuit. In our opinion, it requires many years of dedication and experience to become a top poultry breeder; there are no shortcuts. The outward rewards may not be plentiful, so apparently it requires a true love of the hobby to persevere. However, it helps greatly to know and associate with others with which to exchange ideas and information. That is why a breeders' club or association is so very important to many of its' members. A single log doesn't burn very brightly all by itself.

Ameraucana Breeders Club

Officers

President

Michael K. Gilbert, Holmen, Wisconsin

Vice-President, Honorary-Lifetime

Don Cable, on the road

Secretary/Treasurer

John W. Blehm, Birch Run, Michigan

Central District Director

Arne Schmidt, Harris, Minnesota

Eastern District Director

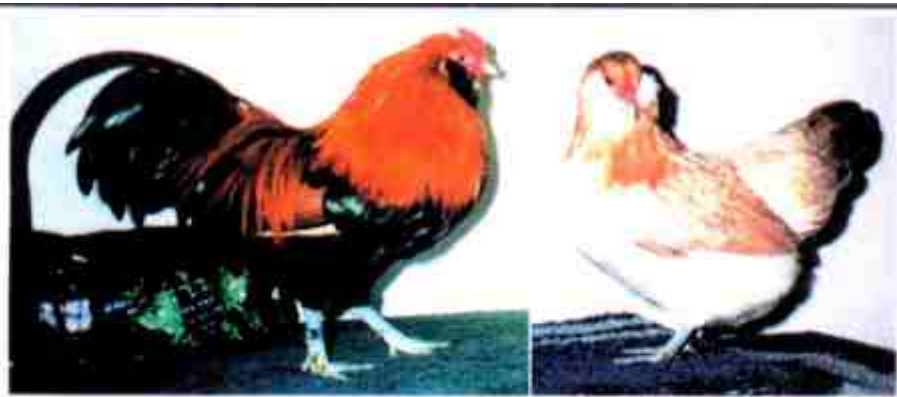
Richard Orr, Monroe, Connecticut

Southern District Director

Scott Eutsler, Stuart, Virginia

Western District Director

Koralyn Kibbee, Manhattan, Montana



Wheaten Bantams



Mike Gilbert and Don Cable, 1997-1987



White Bantams

DIFFERENCES IN THE TWO "BLUE EGG" BREEDS

By Jeannette Frank, November 1993

One of the questions I am asked the most by new members or people inquiring about the club is: "What's the difference between the Araucana and Ameraucana?" I usually reach for my *Standard of Perfection* but if you don't (or they don't) have one handy perhaps this will help. I "borrowed" portions of an article written in 1985 by Mike Gilbert and printed in *Countryside* magazine.

"Having bred various strains of "colored-egg" chickens for a period exceeding ten years, I was disappointed that Professor Skinner's comments did not go nearly far enough. His statement that "this Araucana thing is not really a breed" needs to be qualified and explained. What he is referring to are the crossbred chickens that are commonly sold by commercial hatcheries which are erroneously labeled "Araucanas." The fact that a chicken may lay a colored egg does not automatically make it an Araucana any more than a rose comb makes one a Wyandotte or white feathers a Leghorn.

"The American Bantam Association and the American Poultry Association recognize not one, but two breeds of blue egg laying chickens. The first, Araucana, is a particularly unique bird of relatively small size with peculiar appendages growing from each side of the head called ear tufts. These are ringlet shaped tufts of feathers which grow from a small tab of skin, and are unique in the U.S. to the Araucana breed. Another unusual trait of true Araucanas is rumplessness; that is, they have no tails. It is possible to purchase these chickens, but not from any commercial hatchery that I know of. Interested persons should check the classified ads of *Poultry Press*.

"The second blue egg laying breed is my favorite, the Ameraucana. A less unique but more practical fowl, they have tails, pea combs, and the facial feathering commonly referred to as muffs and beards. They must also have slate colored shanks (legs) and red earlobes. They are somewhat larger than Araucanas and are extremely winter hardy.

"Genetically pure specimens of both breeds lay blue eggs, not green, olive, or some other color. The wild claims found in some commercial hatchery ads about pink, gold, and other colors are nonsense. The latter are nothing more than varied hues of brown eggs. It is time for commercial hatcheries to stop perpetuating myths about colored egg chickens and to stop cashing in on crossbred mongrels by selling them as Araucanas to the uninformed. It may well be that there is a valid market for these "Easter Egg Chickens," as some people may prefer nonuniform plumage coloration, chickens of all shapes and sizes, and the extra production that results from hybrid vigor. After all, "variety is the spice of life." But the deceptive advertising methods practiced by these hatcheries, for the sake of monetary gain, are an abomination and should be stopped."

There was more to the article but I think you get the general idea from this excerpt.
JF

Standard Ameraucanas

☑ *Black*

☑ *White*

☑ *Blue and Others*

Robert and Richard Rennolet

28223 432 Ave.

Menno, SD 57045

(605) 387-2809

**STILL BOOSTING AMERAUCANA
BANTAMS AND THE GREAT
PEOPLE WHO BREED THEM.**



Don Cable

...ON THE ROAD

What's in a Name?

John W. Blehm, 1997

The Ameraucana Breeders Club is a club for people that breed Ameraucanas. That's what the name seems to imply, but don't let it fool you.

Remember we were originally the Ameraucana Bantam Club, but changed Bantam to Breeders, in 1986, to have a name that does not exclude large fowl and is not a radical change from the old name. We still use the initials ABC to designate the organization.

Although the name was changed, the purpose of the organization was not. Article II, of our Constitution reads *"The purpose of this club is to encourage the continued improvement of Ameraucana bantams and large fowl through breeding, exhibition, and dissemination of relative information"*.

Did you notice that? It's not a club for Breeders only. Three means are given to help improve our breed. Breeding is listed first and without it coming first we wouldn't have anything worth exhibiting. I enjoy breeding most, but if you only want to keep and exhibit Ameraucanas that's great! The club needs more exhibitors to show off our breed and help it become even more widely accepted. Perhaps you're not a breeder because you don't think you're qualified or you don't have the time, space or desire. No problem. I don't have much desire to show my birds, although I try to make it to at least one show each year where I can see Ameraucanas exhibited and meet with fellow club members to discuss "information relative to their progress".

Some members don't even own any Ameraucanas at this time, but they are helping to promote our breed by being dues paying members, serving as officers and supporting club activities.

We have a very inclusive organization. Every member is not expected to have all the talents and ambition to do everything. Let's continue to work together to achieve our common goals.

As it is, God arranged the parts, fitting each of them into the body as He wished. If all of it were one part, how could there be a body? As it is, there are many parts but one body. 1 Corinthians 12:18-20

VACCINATIONS

Mary Lou Phelps, 1993

If anyone hasn't seen it, there is an excellent article by Dr. Charles Wabeck in the newest FANCY FEATHERS (APA Quarterly) on "to vaccinate or not to vaccinate." Laryngotracheitis seems to be the biggest bug-a-boo of the fall show circuit. Sooner or later it will get you if you exhibit birds. My experience was to get it in the fall of '86 - now I have to vaccinate every year. After talking to the state vets at Iowa, I now just vaccinate my young birds. It needs to be done before show season. I do mine in late July or early August. Most of the time they sail right through it with just a sore eye for a few days. There are people down here who have shown birds for years and never pick anything up at a show. They are just lucky - most of us aren't that fortunate. Another problem is Fowl Pox - it is much more prevalent in the south, and mosquitoes seem to spread it. But like Laryngo, if you ever get it in your birds you have to vaccinate every year. Pox is a wing web stab and Laryngo is an eye drop. Mareks is another problem - baby chicks one day old are injected with vaccine. But if you hatch under hens it is useless because feather dander has the organism in it.

Mareks vaccine is the most expensive of the lot, and none of them can be saved for later use after they have been used. The vaccine and the sterile dilute come in separate bottles and you mix them together. Most are 1000 dose vials. They are all under \$10.00. Some states back east require exhibition birds to be vaccinated for Laryngo. I know Pennsylvania does.

DETAILS

Don Cable, 1995

The finishing touches on preparing a bird for exhibition can be very important, particularly in a large class of quality entries. Some exhibitors do this just prior to leaving for the show while others do it just prior to cooping at the show. Each has its advantage but the decision is yours.

You will need water and a mild soap, vegetable oil, toothpicks, cotton swabs, a sturdy nail clipper and a couple of old wash cloths and/or a towel. Warm or tepid water would be best, but any clean water will do. A mild soap used for dishwashing works well and if you have a small scrub brush in your show kit, so much the better.

In as much as beard and muffs cover the greater part of the face, they should be free of any dirt, feed or other substance that prevents their full expression. The small pea comb should be washed thoroughly, dried and painted with a small amount of vegetable oil to enhance color. Likewise, the beak, nostrils and face about the eyes need a cleaning. Pay particular attention to the beak - if either mandible needs a trim, use your nail clipper, being careful to do a neat balanced job. A balanced, well trimmed beak can make a vast improvement in the appearance of the head and face.

Shanks, toes and feet need a thorough cleaning as well. After washing and drying these areas, go over them again making certain that stains and rough areas are eliminated. If toenails need a trim, use your clippers to bring them into balance. When satisfied that the shanks, toes and feet are in good shape, coat these areas with oil to bring out their neat, clean appearance. Place a clean numbered band on your bird and make certain the bird arrives at the show in a box with plenty of clean shavings and ample room to move without jamming and breaking a sickle or main tail feathers. Take time and trouble to show your birds at their very best.

Always in Support of the Ameraucana Breed and Club.

Jeannette Frank

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- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| ♦ SILVER AMERAUCANA | ♦ AUSTRALOP |
| ♦ BEARDED BUFF LACED POLISH | ♦ BUFF LEGHORN |
| ♦ AUSTRALORP BANTAM | ♦ BARRED ROCK |
| ♦ ASK ABOUT OTHER BREEDS | |

DWARFING THE AMERAUCANA BANTAM

Jerry Segler, 1984

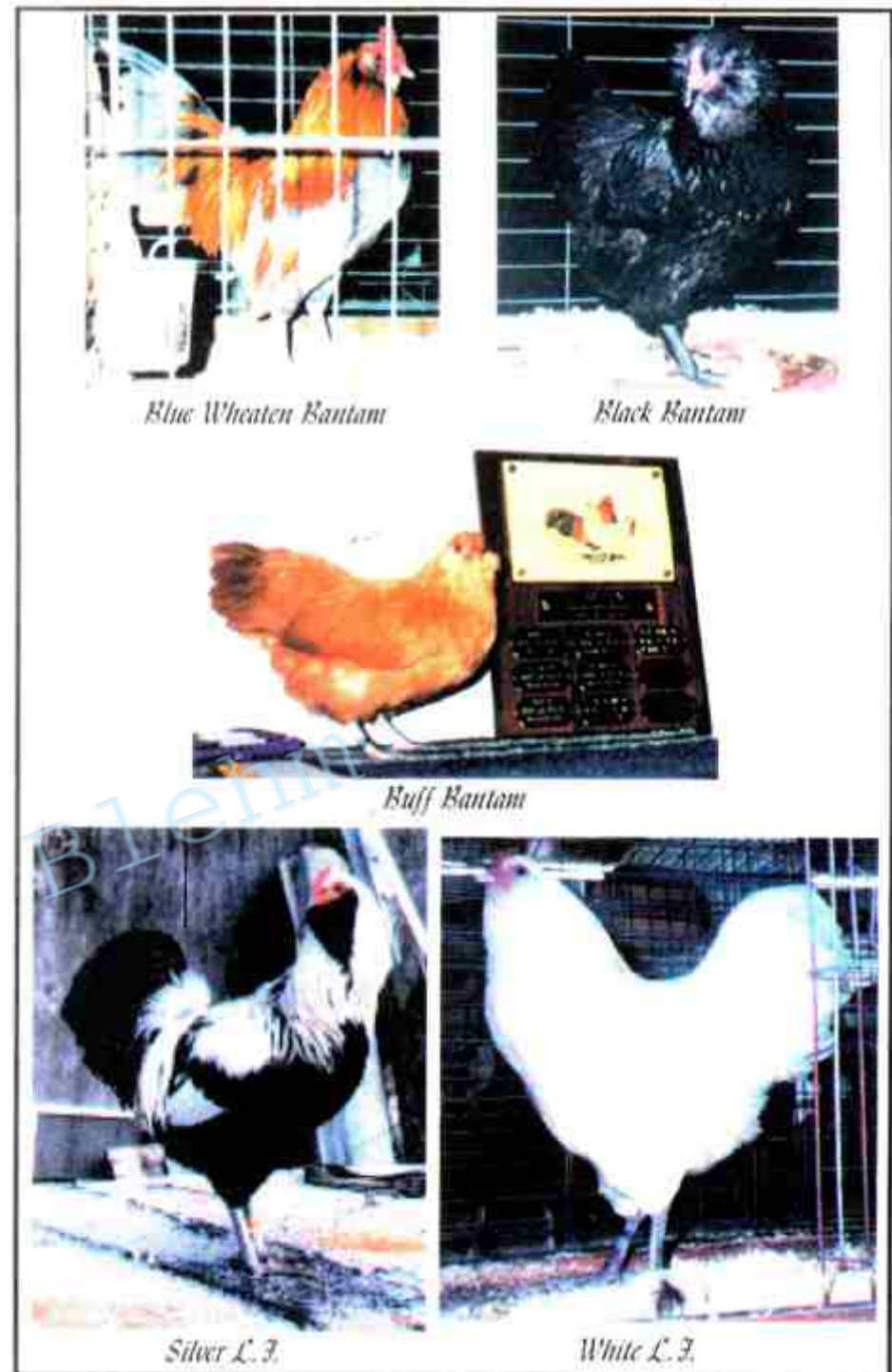
My first Araucana bantam was a brown-red hen with white ear lobes, white legs, and a single comb that laid flat on her head. This hen was purchased among some mixed breed bantams. She was non-bearded and weighed about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.

I tried to locate a bantam 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 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 large 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, blues, splashes and barred, but I saved only pullets in black and 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.



AMERAUCANA COLOR -AN ONGOING PROBLEM

Don Cable, 1994

No serious person would attempt to show Angus cattle with spots or a Hampshire hog without a white body stripe, but they persist on showing Ameraucanas - especially large fowl - in any number of colors and patterns without regard to the requirements of an established standard for the breed and its color varieties. The root of the problem is at least twofold. First, many beginners acquire the stock and proceed without knowledge of a standard and secondly, commercial hatcheries continue to sell multi-colored chicks as the "Easter Egg fowl", a poorly chosen euphemism for Araucana, or more often, Ameraucana, with or without a disclaimer indicating that the stock is non-standard and therefore subject to disqualification if shown in competition.

There is no doubt that certain multi-colored birds can be attractive. If a person decides that the mix of colors appeals to them, fine - they have every right to birds of their choice. The problem begins when these non-standard birds are entered into competition, too often as Ameraucanas. This happens not only at the county fair level, but at major poultry shows as well. It has been well over a decade since definite color varieties were established and are spelled out in detail in the American Poultry Association's Standard of Perfection. If the problem has lessened somewhat, it still continues to exist among certain newcomers to the breed, unaware that a standard for the Ameraucana is even available.

Over the years beginners often write: "My birds are a mix of many colors. How do I breed color varieties that I can show without the judge disqualifying them?" The best answer is to acquire some birds already of standard color. Attempting to work up standard colors from a mixed flock would probably take the better part of a decade if you are skilled, lucky, and have a great deal of energy to devote to such a time-consuming endeavor. If a person is really serious about the Ameraucana breed - large or bantam - and would like to accept the challenge of producing quality stock, get a start from a reputable breeder, buy yourself an APA Standard of Perfection and study it thoroughly. An APA Standard is not cheap, but like a family Bible, you only need one.

Recognized varieties of Ameraucana bantams and large fowl:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ☆ <i>Black</i> | ☆ <i>Blue</i> |
| ☆ <i>Blue Wheaten</i> | ☆ <i>Brown Red</i> |
| ☆ <i>Buff</i> | ☆ <i>Silver</i> |
| ☆ <i>Wheaten</i> | ☆ <i>White</i> |

AMERAUCANA TYPE AND EAR LOBE COLOR

Carl Fosbrink, 1989

...I have only been raising Ameraucana bantams for a few years so I do not claim to be any authority on them by any means, but I do get to several shows a year...and I have raised several Ameraucana bantams with pretty good success. It seems that, due to the leg color, beard and muffs and some similarities in type, many of our breeders have used Antwerp Belgian blood in producing their Ameraucana bantams... It is very important at this stage of the game that the birds we show and the birds the judges are picking are showing true Ameraucana breed type.

Of course, the most obvious difference between the Ameraucana and the Antwerp Belgian is that the Ameraucana lays a blue egg and the Belgian a brown one, ...

One very important difference is the Belgian has a rose comb and the Ameraucana has a pea comb. A good pea comb on your Ameraucanas is very important. A rose comb and a pea comb are both dominate and a cross of the two often produces snarled up comb or a walnut. The Standard says "any other comb than pea is a disqualification".

Another difference in the two breeds is that of tail carriage. The Belgian has a higher tail carriage than the Ameraucana, Belgian male 70° and the females 65° while Ameraucana males are to have a 45° angle on the tail and females 40°.... Also, while the sickles on the females of both breeds are about the same, Ameraucana males should have long sickle feathers that curve well over the end of the tail while the Belgian male's sickles are to be very slightly curved and barely protrude past the end of the tail.

And finally the Ameraucana bantam is a slightly longer bodied bird and a slightly larger bird than the Belgian. The weights are: Ameraucana cock 30 oz., Begian cock 26 oz., Ameraucana hen 26 oz., Belgian hen 22 oz., etc.

I am not advocating that you get rid of your birds because you have Antwerp Belgian blood in them. I am just saying that for the chicks you raise you should keep in mind these breed differences and keep the cockerels and pullets for showing and breeding that have the Ameraucana breed type.

There is one other thing that I would like to bring up and that is the ear lobe color in Ameraucana bantams. The Standard calls for red ear lobe color in both male and female....This has bothered me for quite some time and I have mentioned it to several Ameraucana Breeders.

It is well known that chickens with white ear lobes lay a white shelled egg and those with red ear lobes lay a brown shelled egg. Then why shouldn't the blue egg laying Ameraucana be allowed to have blue in the ear lobe?

It has been my experience in breeding Ameraucan bantams that you sometimes get males with no blue in the ear lobes, but almost all the females that lay a good blue colored egg have blue in their ear lobes.

After noticing this in our own breeding programs I made it a point to start checking all the Ameraucanas at the shows I attended for ear lobe color and I discovered that the same thing held true with Ameraucana bantams at the shows...it is my guess that breeding from males with blue in the lobes makes the blue egg gene more dominate....Perhaps a change in the Standard might even be needed later on!

SHANK COLOR IN THE AMERAUCANA BREED

By M.K. Gilbert (Revised Sept. 1998)

Shank color for Ameraucana bantams was decided by majority vote of the founding members of the Ameraucana Bantam Club in the late 1970's. Slate was the overwhelming choice of these early bantam breeders and, when the American Poultry Association added large fowl to the A.P.A.'s Standard of Perfection in the mid-1980's, their standard committee simply modified the existing bantam standard for weights and reworded certain parts of the A.B.A.'s descriptions. The existing large fowl standard, then, is due to the desire of the A.P.A. to have the written standards for large fowl and bantams conform to each other. It was left up to the breeders to produce large fowl that met standard requirements. This has been accomplished in most of the eight recognized varieties, but a few are still in the process of being developed to an admirable level of completion.

Generally speaking, each hereditary trait is passed on from parents to offspring by means of genes which are found in specific locations on chromosomes. Any one such location is termed a locus. Except for genes carried on the one "sex-linked" chromosome, genes are inherited in pairs, one each from the sperm and the ovum, or egg. If a chicken has a pair of identical genes at one locus, e.g., two genes causing muffs and beard to appear, it is said to be homozygous, which is another way of saying the bird is pure for that particular trait. If only one such gene is inherited instead of two, the chicken is said to be heterozygous, or impure for muffs and beard. In all birds, the male inherits one extra gene-carrying chromosome. All the genetic factors carried on this extra chromosome are said to be sex-linked. Genetic factors carried on non-sexlinked chromosomes are said to be autosomal. Further, each gene found in a specific location on a given chromosome may be "dominant" or "recessive" to an alternate gene which may be inherited at the same locus. For example, since the gene for muffs and beard (Mb) is dominant, heterozygous Ameraucanas will exhibit muffs and beard even though they inherited Mb from only one parent. Put another way, chickens that have no muffs are homozygous for being clean faced, having no genetic ability to pass on muffs and beard to any of their offspring.

Shank and toe coloration in chickens derives from two independently inherited 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 of leg skin which is called the dermis. These may be observed when dressing out a bird by cutting through the joint at the junction of shank and thigh and peeling back the outer layer of skin on the leg. Shank color is caused by the presence or absence of pigment such as melanin (dark) or carotin (yellow) in the dermis and in the epidermis. The following are some common combinations.

<u>Shank Color</u>	<u>Color of Epidermis</u>	<u>Color of Dermis</u>
Slate (or bluish slate)	none	dark
Black	dark	dark
Yellow	yellow	none
Willow (or green)	yellow	dark
White	none	none

In both the epidermis and dermis, the gene for white (no pigment) is dominant to that for dark or yellow. Hence white shanked birds, if heterozygous, can mask the presence of genes that would produce pigment were they present in the homozygous state. Such a bird would have the potential of producing a percentage of yellow, willow, or slate shanked offspring (progeny) depending upon the genetic makeup (genotype) of its mate. Willow has the advantage of two recessive gene pairs, one that produces yellow epidermis and one that produces a dark dermis. The mating of two such birds will always yield willow-shanked progeny - barring the highly unlikely occurrence of a mutation.

Slate shanks, as required within the Ameraucana breed, are produced by a recessive, sex-linked gene for dark dermis and a dominant, autosomal gene (or gene pair) for clear epidermis. (Black may be impossible to keep out of the epidermis entirely in dark colored chickens due to the interaction of other genes responsible for plumage color.) Hence, all offspring of two parent birds with dark dermis will also possess dark dermis. Desired recessive genes are easier than dominant genes to isolate and thereby "purify" in any breeding endeavor. However, if these same breeders each carry one recessive gene for yellow epidermis, they will produce some willow-shanked offspring also. Since yellow epidermis must be homozygous to manifest itself, the reader is advised to avoid using willow-shanked breeders, as they will pass on the gene for yellow epidermis to 100 percent of their offspring. Slate shanked breeders may be tested for the yellow epidermis factor by mating them with willow or yellow shanked birds and observing the offspring. If any of the progeny exhibits willow or yellow shanks at ten weeks or more of age, the slate shanked breeder fails its test, i.e., it is heterozygous for yellow epidermis.

As previously alluded, shank color takes time to develop in some varieties. A bird which exhibits willow shanks at four weeks of age may end up with slate shanks at the age of sexual maturity, the optimum time to make a final determination. As an example, wheaten chicks are hatched with pinkish-yellow shanks which gradually turn slate by about the age of ten weeks or even later.

Yellow epidermis can and often does fade in mature birds. Factors which may cause such fading include egg production, diet, and health. As the fading occurs, a willow shanked bird may eventually appear to have slate shanks. *The genetic makeup does not change, however, so caution should be exercised when purchasing older breeders.*

Finally, a sex-linked gene (ld) exists which prevents the formation of dark pigment in chickens' under layer of shank skin, the dermis. A dominant gene, ld inhibits melanin production even when the genetic factor for dark dermis is present in the homozygous state. Since it is a *dominant* gene, we may safely conclude that dark shanked chickens are not carriers of ld, but white or yellow shanked birds might be. The only practical means of making a final determination is by test mating. Happily, most Ameraucana strains have now been refined to the point that they usually produce only slate shanked progeny.



COLOR PHASES OF THE WHEATEN AMERAUCANA

By M.K. Gilbert (as revised Sept. 1998)

Between the resplendent orange and black plumage of the adult Wheaten Ameraucana bantam cock and his initial appearance as an off white, cute-as-a-button chick lies a continuum of "ugly duckling" color phases. With assorted and mixed feathers of light tan to brown and dull black the adolescent wheaten male shows little promise of the future beauty that will, proper rearing, eventually be his. Having observed the growth and development of bantam wheatens for about 25 years, I'm still in awe of the metamorphosis that occurs over their first six to eight months of life. Sometimes I wonder how many would-be Ameraucana fanciers have given up on this variety prior to observing the final moult of its' first year.

As hatchlings, baby wheatens and blue-wheatens display little evidence of their ultimate coloration. Along with white chick down, the babies' shanks and toes are initially a shade of pinkish-yellow. Usually by ten days to two weeks of age the dark dermal pigment begins to appear. For a time shanks may appear to be willow, but by eight to ten weeks the required bluish-slate color should be evident. Any wheatens that still have willow green shanks at ten weeks may be safely and humanely culled. Serious breeders should try never to breed from willow shanked birds, as the genetic factor for yellow shank epidermis must be genetically pure (homozygous) in order to be manifested. Such birds will pass on a gene for yellow epidermis to 100 percent of their offspring.

Yellow shank epidermis combined with a dark under-layer of skin (the dermis) results in willow (green) shanks, which is an exhibition disqualification for Ameraucanas. When in doubt between slate and willow, one might check the bird's beak coloration. Yellowish beak color, especially at the base of the lower mandible, is a clear sign that genetics for the undesired yellow factor are present.

Another common source of consternation is unwanted black in the hackles of immature males - and sometimes young females as well. This unsightly ticking or striping may remain present until the final moult occurs. If it is still evident in a cockerel by the time his muffs and beard turn fully black he should be eliminated as a show prospect. And, unless needed as a "female line" breeder, he should be culled. The presence of excessive black in the hackle indicates the bird is weak in the area of "columbian restrictor" genetics. However, the unwanted black in males seems genetically linked to, and thus more or less necessary for, the best wheaten female tail and wing coloration.

Personally, I prefer to use perfectly clean-hackled males as breeders, but will tolerate a bit of black ticking in the female hackle if that is what it takes to produce females with exceptional tail and flight feather coloration.

As previously alluded, the wheaten male muffs and beard will usually remain very light colored or mottled until the final moult, although to what degree this is true depends upon the particular strain being bred.

Immature female wheatens and blue-wheatens nearly always have feathering which is darker colored than that of the final adult stage. The back, wing, and body feathers will lighten gradually with each successive moult during the growing-out period. Since all the feathers are not moulted simultaneously, this process often results in an unsightly mottled appearance. Not until all the adult back and body feathers are grown in will the desired uniform shade of wheaten be achieved.

Fanciers take heart! With Wheaten Ameraucanas, as with many other areas of life, perseverance is usually rewarded. Newcomers to this variety are advised to not cull in haste for color traits. After a long and seemingly discouraging period of development, bantam wheatens and blue-wheatens will provide ample rewards to the patient breeder.



BUFF AMERAUCANAS

John W. Blehm, 1990

In the fall bulletin of 1983 Jack Fugate submitted the article - "THE BUFF AMERAUCANA BANTAM". He and Mike Gilbert were "unofficially" working on developing a buff variety. This sounded interesting to me and I liked the buff color so I unofficially joined in. They crossed buff Orpingtons with wheaten Ameraucanas to introduce the color. They are breeders with far more experience than I and their reasons for using Orpingtons made sense to me, so I used them too. From follow up reports and correspondence with Mike I understood that one of their biggest problems was black tailed offspring. Black is a defect in buff. I don't know about Jack, but Mike is now working on black-tailed buffs (along with buff?). I feel some of this history is necessary to understand what I've done and why.

In the spring of 1985 I purchased a buff Orpington cock and bred him to my best looking white Ameraucana bantam hen. My logic to use white, as opposed to wheaten, was that since my goal was to end up with a solid color (buff) I would breed to a solid color (white). Wheaten is multicolored and I thought it was the reason for black tails. Not so. I too had black tailed results which were culled. According to Jeffrey, in BANTAM CHICKENS, the proposed genotype for wheaten is present in buff.

My breeding from 1986 through 1990 was basically the same each year. I culled heavily each generation, bred the buffs amongst themselves, and also bred to a pure white Ameraucana hen or cock. I also culled the old breeders from the previous year. The whites were used to continuously improve traits, especially type and leg color. It seemed that the birds with some black in them had darker legs. Full muffs have not been a problem, but recessive single combs show up. Some pullets looked like wheatens at maturity.

This year I have 1 hen, 4 pullets and 1 cockerel to breed from. I don't plan to breed any whites to the buffs this year. The cockerel has very nice type and buff color, but clear legs. By last year's matings I know he should have the genes in him to produce chicks with dark legs. Four of the females have dark legs. Their color appears good with some being a lighter shade of buff than others. If inspected closely some black in the feathers can be found, but I've seen the same in other buff breeds.

One other problem that I've had is "crazy acting" birds. I've only noticed this with the buffs and always cull them. Some of the hens would throw their heads way back and shake them. This behavior started out early on while they were still in the brooders. Some of the cock birds walked in about one foot diameter circles for five to ten minutes at a time. It must be something in their genes(?).

I have acquired two large buff Orpington pullets this spring and have a breeding plan in mind to develop large buff Ameraucanas with their help. In closing let me add that this is how I've bred to develop a strain of buffs, but it's not the only way and probably not the right way. I would like to hear from anyone that is also breeding buffs, large or bantam.

BREEDING BUFF

Don Cable, 1994

My congratulations to Matt Berg on his champion Ameraucana bantam. It is gratifying to find buff moving into the champion category which has more often gone to wheaten and white. This is particularly impressive because of the relative short length of time that this variety has been in existence. Moreover, the champion bird came out of a class of twenty-two which speaks to the rise in popularity of the buff variety.

In as much as buff, like black and white, is a self color, it is often thought that it is relatively easy to produce since there is only one color to deal with and no intricate pattern to strive for such as lacing. Dealing with one color IS the problem. To achieve a uniform buff color throughout all sections is difficult and an ongoing challenge with this variety. In buff males, problems in color arise when hackles, saddles, and frequently flight and main tail feathers often develop a shade or two darker than other sections. Females can develop the same faults, though more often less obvious. In either case, this destroys the overall uniform buff color desired.

Extremes in color are a problem as well. Some breeders place so much emphasis upon richness of color that they develop a family that moves from true buff, over a period of time, to a shade of buff approaching red. This reddish-buff is most obvious in the main tail and sickle feathers. The reverse is also true. It is also possible to lose color, particularly when white begins to manifest itself into the buff. This problem can be detected by examining the feather shaft in the wings of birds losing the true buff color. White, not buff can be found in the shaft of these feathers and the same may be true of main tail feathers. Shafting may occur in other sections as well. Constant exposure to intense sunlight can also have a bleaching effect upon buff color including split and broken feathers across the back. Finally, smut or black peppering in wing tips and tail may be another problem to have to deal with.

Maintaining an overall uniform buff is the key to success. Some breeders advocate mating extremes in color to achieve a balance in the progeny, but most have success in mating birds of both sexes having the desired color and culling severely in the young produced by this method. Good buff color is not easy to produce and even more difficult to maintain, but when it's right, it's easily one of our most stunning varieties.

My congratulations also to those who took up the development of this variety and who have achieved so much in so little time. I think this a tribute to the quality and skill of the breeders in this club. These people are second to none.

COMPLIMENTS OF M.K. GILBERT

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PROGRESS REPORT ON BROWN-RED FOWL

by M.K. Gilbert (1996 - revised Sept. 1998)

A number of years ago, to satisfy an itching curiosity, I made an experimental cross between silver and white large fowl Ameraucanas. Most of the first generation progeny were nondescript in color, but a couple of them developed into something closely resembling the birchen color pattern. I used these serendipitous fowl in developing an improved strain of whites, but always kept one or two of the better birchens just to have "something different."

Two or three years ago it dawned on me that these nonstandard birchens might be used to develop a strain of the A.P.A.- recognized variety, brown-red. Birchen and brown-red are very similar, genetically, with the primary difference being the presence of the silver (S) gene in the former versus the gold (s) gene in the latter. The same difference exists between Buff and Light Brahmas, Silver Penciled and Partridge Rocks, and Silver and Light Brown Leghorns, to name a few examples.

The genes silver and gold are found at a locus on the sex-linked chromosome. Therefore, with one less chromosome, female chickens can carry only one gene for silver or gold, so they are always pure for one or the other. But males can be pure (homozygous) for silver (two "S" genes), pure for gold (two "s" genes), or they can inherit one of each since they receive one chromosome from each parent. The latter types are impure, or heterozygous. Silver being dominant to gold, a heterozygous male will normally show mostly white, as opposed to red or buff, feathers in most sections of its plumage. The white will most often have trace amounts of buff or red, indicating the impure state of such males.

Female birchens, whether out of a pure birchen or heterozygous sire, will have white lacing on the upper breast area and predominantly white head and hackle feathers. The rest of the plumage is black. In brown-red females the white sections are replaced with feathers a shade of dark red to lemon buff, depending upon the modifying genetic factors present. The standard for Ameraucanas calls for a deep orange-red shade in brown-reds.

When starting out with the brown-red project all my large Ameraucanas were pure for silver. So, I secured a young Ameraucana cockerel from my friend Wayne Meredith in the fall of 1994. This cockerel resembled a light brown (as in Leghorns) so was obviously pure for gold. In 1995 he was mated with two birchen hens. Many color variations resulted from this cross, but it did produce two females with poor but recognizable brown-red markings.

(continued)

They were pure for gold, since they could only inherit the sex-linked chromosome from their sire. All such crosses will result in homozygous females and heterozygous males in the first generation.

The major coloration problems with the two keeper pullets were poor breast lacing - they had a lot of shafting in the breast area - and not enough red color in the hackles which were too black. All other Ameraucana traits were excellent. In 1996, to retain the proper color pattern, I used these two pullets in a mating with a pure birchen male. He was selected because of good breast lacing (with little shafting) and because of sufficient white in the hackles. From this mating I saved two nicely colored birchen pullets and one cockerel which was, of course, heterozygous for silver/gold.

The 1996 cockerel was used back over the two 1995 "brown-red" hens in 1997, and this produced a few brown-red pullets and cockerels, though the color pattern was not all I had hoped for. The best 1997 cockerel was used over the best 1996 birchen hen and the best 1997 brown-red pullets in 1998. The resulting progeny included a few nicely colored brown-red pullets, but the brown red males were still poorly marked. We will keep trying to improve this strain, and hope that another outcross will not prove necessary.

From time to time I've been asked how purebred Ameraucanas were originated. The foregoing provides just one example involving a rather simple color pattern. Years ago when other breeds were being utilized to obtain basic color patterns the complexity of these projects were multiplied exponentially. Ameraucana breeding has required a lot of time, effort, and resources; hopefully future generations of fanciers will come to appreciate what is gradually becoming a splendid breed of fowl.

SINGLE TREE BANTAMS

Buff Brahma
WF Spanish

Brown Red Old English
Blue Wheaten Ameraucana

APA State Representative
Ameraucana Breeders Club-- Western District Director

Larry & Koralyn Kibbee
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MORE ON THE BROWN-RED VARIETY

M.K. Gilbert, August 1998

Brown-red is apparently one of the least popular varieties within the Ameraucana breed judging by the number of fanciers currently raising them. Neither large fowl nor bantam are often shown, advertised for sale, or requested by prospective buyers. It's uncertain what to attribute to this variety's lack of success, because a good brown-red is difficult to surpass for sheer eye appeal. They have been officially recognized since 1984, and it has been our experience that temperament and vices are no worse than those found in other, more popular varieties. Jerry Segler of Illinois was the first to promote brown-red Ameraucanas, but Jerry no longer raised them the last time we checked with him.

A strain of good brown-reds is not easily produced, or at least not in large numbers to this point in time. The ideal combination of properly balanced Ameraucana type and correct brown-red coloring has proven difficult to attain. It has been said that in every problem lies an opportunity. The Ameraucana breed could use a specialist in this variety! As Don Cable so aptly stated years ago in one of our newsletter articles, "the finest show birds always seem to come in clusters of one." A prophetic observation indeed!

The female Brown-red Ameraucana should possess a head of lustrous orange (not lemon), a hackle that is orange with black center stripes, and body, wings, back, and tail a glossy shade of black, preferably with a green sheen. The males' description is similar, except the back will be orange and the saddle will be orange striped with black, matching the hackle. In both sexes the upper breast area should be black finely laced with orange. The orange lacing should extend around the visible perimeter of each upper breast feather, as incomplete lacing results in a spangled appearance and is to be avoided. The lower breast should be solid black.

Sound breast lacing, when accompanied with the desired orange of head and hackle, is difficult to attain without producing shafting in the upper breast area. Shafting may be defined as the undesirable condition of the feather quills being lighter in color than the remaining center of the feather. In brown-reds, this means the quills are orange instead of the desired black, a troublesome coloring defect. To produce birds with great lacing without shafting, with sound head and hackle color, is a challenge. But it's doable; witness the fine brown-red coloring achieved in the modern game and some other breeds.

Different breeds call for different shades of color in the non-black sections of the plumage. Some even require lemon instead of orange, which seems nonsensical to the writer. Proper Ameraucana orange is the same as for bantam brown-red cochins, and is described on page 298 of the 1998 color edition of A.P.A.'s *Standard of Perfection*. The 1998 standard contains color paintings by Diane Jacky of Brown-red Ameraucana large fowl on page 196. She did a fine job depicting the coloring in our opinion. Unfortunately, the Ameraucana written description refers not to the bantam Cochin, but to the Modern Game for color. This is an error and will be corrected in future editions.

As of this writing (August 1998) no bantam or large fowl Brown-Red Ameraucana has placed 'best of breed' at an Ameraucana meet. We are confident, however, a brown-red could finish on top within the next several years. Why not give this variety a try and see if it doesn't soon become your favorite?

HOW CAN I INCREASE THE VITALITY OF MY FLOCK?

John W. Blehm, 1984

The following is a research paper I wrote for an English class. I submit it as a reminder that as we breed and raise chickens we can save time by building on the experiences of others.

What do you get if you cross a white chicken with a dark one? An expert in genetics could give an educated guess as to the result, but for me it is a riddle. As a hobby I've raised chickens for years and done some selective breeding to get the characteristics I wanted in my flock.

In 1982 I concentrated on a recognized breed, Ameraucana bantams, rather than my own backyard variety. Bantam refers to miniature breeds, usually ornamental, which are not profitable for egg or meat production. The Ameraucanas lay blue shelled eggs and their plumage is of different color varieties including white and wheaten.

The nearest person raising Ameraucanas at that time was Mike Gilbert in Wisconsin. He sent me 31 eggs out of which only eight hatched. I culled (eliminated) four because of deformities such as misaligned beaks, crippled toes and deformed leg joints. From the survivors I ended up with three roosters and one hen.

Two breeding seasons have gone and I've got just six hens and four roosters. Figuring that the poor hatchability and deformities are due to too much inbreeding, this spring I mated one of my roosters with a white Leghorn bantam hen from my brother's flock. I thought that this would be a good way to introduce new blood into my flock. I figured that by using a white hen my colors should prevail. There are many differences between the breeds such as leg, eye and lobe colors and the combs. Leghorns have a single comb that stands up straight and narrow while Ameraucanas have a pea comb which is low to the skull. From this mating I got a rooster with a pea comb, blue slate legs and half of the right colors to be an Ameraucana. The coloring that's white should be black, but if black is a dominant trait this can easily be bred out. Questions come to mind such as is black a dominant color? Are some Leghorn traits going to show up in the future generations? After how many generations can I call my stock "pure bred"? My search began by calling Mike Gilbert, President of the Ameraucana Bantam Club. I explained my condition and Mike agreed new blood is needed since my entire flock has been "line-bred" from the same hen. Mike disagreed with my method of crossing with a Leghorn because their yellow legs and white ear lobes would be hard to breed out. His suggestion is to get an Ameraucana rooster from Jeanne Trent, a poultry fancier in Traverse City, to add vigor to my blood line. I haven't met Jeanne, but we have corresponded over the past year since Mike started her with Ameraucanas.

After talking to Mike I knew I didn't know enough about genetics. The book A GUIDE TO BETTER HATCHING backed up Mike's statements. *"Inbreeding and crossbreeding show different results. Close inbreeding of chickens usually results in a decrease in hatchability...Inbreeding or linebreeding are the only breeding systems that will 'set' or establish a trait or characteristic...hatchability is often increased with strain-crossing. If the hatchability of a strain is low, crossing in another strain may increase hatchability."*

In The AMERUCANA BANTAM HANDBOOK, Mike Gilbert has a few articles published on genetics. They are written in layman terms, although I had to look up the word "Progeny" which means offspring.

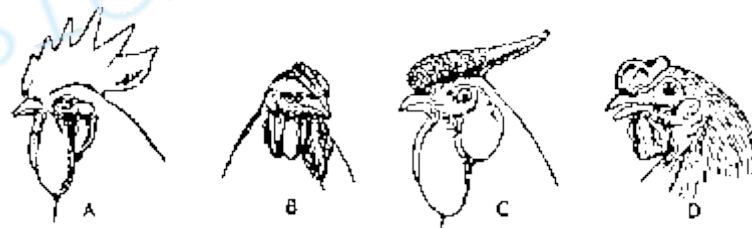
"Each bantam offspring inherits one genetic blueprint from each parent for any given characteristic...A bird which is genetically pure for beard and muffs has inherited the trait from both it's parents, not just one...A bird may carry the genetic factors for both red eyes and brown eyes, (one from each parent), but if red is dominant, the bird will have red eyes. The brown will 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." The next part, about leg color, I should have read before crossing my blue legged Ameraucanas with the yellow legged Leghorns:

"Since yellow epidermis must be pure to manifest itself, try never to breed from yellow or willow-shanked birds. To do so is asking for trouble."

Jerry Segler, of Sparland, Illinois is a respected breeder and like Mike Gilbert, helped develop the Ameraucana breed. Through a phone interview I found that Jerry practices "backyard genetics". Jerry gave some ideas to help my bloodline and many to help develop a new color variety. Some breeders are in the process of developing buff colored Ameraucanas.

"Everytime I need to do something different to another color I use the whites...If you got enough of the genetic traits there all at once you can make tremendous progress...breed from only what is closest to what you want".

By crossing with the white Leghorn I thought I was breeding in something that wouldn't be overbearing on the Ameraucana characteristics. Through this research I found this wasn't a good cross. Some Ameraucana traits are dominant over Leghorn traits, but some of the Leghorn traits would haunt me for years. Ameraucanas are supposed to lay blue shelled eggs and have muffs & beards. Both of these traits are dominant. Surprisingly, white coloring is dominant in some breeds of chickens including Leghorns.



Pea combs (B) and rose combs (C) are both dominant comb types over single combs (A). Interestingly if pea comb is crossed with rose comb, both being dominant, the offspring will have a walnut comb (D). I've learned some basic genetics as they apply to poultry. I wish I'd known this a year ago and preferably years ago. I could have saved a few years of trial and error by building on the experiences of others. Hind sight doesn't help.

I'm going to get rid of my Leghorn X Ameraucana rooster. If I can afford some separate breeding pens this spring I plan on breeding for a buff variety of Ameraucana by buying a buff Orpington to cross with one of my white Ameraucanas. This will take years to perfect, but if I build on the resources available and the Lord keeps me alive, it can be done.

John W. Blehm

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