

True Blue Genes

By Dennis Hawkins

Blue is a color that seldom breeds true. Blue Andalusians are never true blue and are the result of crossing true white with true black. The result is a cross that somewhat resembles blue, but is not. Blue birds that are the result of this cross are referred to as 'Andalusian Blue'. Andalusians are not the only breed that can be crossed to produce this type of blue. Many other breeds will produce birds with 'Andalusian Blue' plumage when the parents are crossed in this manner. Such breeds include Cochins, Araucanas, and many others.

There is, however, another kind of blue called 'True Blue' or 'Self Blue'. Unlike Andalusian Blue, True Blue chickens breed true. That is, you can take two blue parents and produce 100% blue offspring. They are produced by genetic selection over time and not by cross breeding. By contrast, Andalusian Blue birds will not produce 100% blue offspring when bred together. Instead, they produce a mixture containing, at best, 50% Blues according to Mendelian Genetic Law.

The blue color of Self Blues is also more vibrant than that of Andalusian Blues. The feathers of True Blue chickens actually contain blue pigment. This is unlike the feathers of Andalusian Blue birds which contain no blue pigment. The blue appearance in the latter is actually an optical illusion caused by the way the black and white pigmentation is laid down on their feathers. Some Andalusian Blue birds look more gray than blue.

To breed True Blue chickens, the easiest way is to start with True Blue breeding stock. Since True Blue is relatively rare, it may not be easy to find someone willing to sell them. To breed your own, you will need to select birds that have at least some blue pigmentation (not Andalusian Blues) in either their feathers, down, or legs. One idea might be to carefully inspect any chicks that you might get that have a blue tinge to them. Over time, when you breed the 'almost' and 'sort-of' Blues together, they will become more vibrant and easier to select. This process takes about 20 years to complete so don't expect to get them by next spring. The blue genes are out there, you just have to find them.

Chicken Medications

by Dr. James Barton and Clarence Gillihan

Worms:

Piperazine is only effective against roundworms, the big ones that you see sometimes in their stool. This is the reason I tell everyone to use Wormal, because it is much more encompassing.

Coccidiosis:

Some people use acidified copper sulfate for treatment, but Amprolium (Amprol is the trade name) is the best medication for a coccidiosis outbreak. There are a number of feed ingredients that prevent coccidiosis, but few are approved as "organic," if that's a concern. You can find these products in most farm stores on the medical supply shelf.

Coccidiosis Vaccines:

There are many vaccines for use in chickens and turkeys. Mallinckrodt Veterinary (formally Sterwin-a division of Pittman Moore) makes Coccivac D, for broiler type chickens, Coccivac B for breeder chickens, and Coccivac T for turkeys. I think Pittman Moore (or one of their divisions) makes a product called Paracox. It is marketed by ID Russel company in Colorado.

Bacterial Diseases:

Purchase a bottle of Tylan 50 and several 3cc syringes with 25 to 30 gauge 1/2" needles. Give your hen 1 to 1 1/2 cc. of Tylan under the skin of the neck and I will guarantee her recovery - unless, of course, she dies. Continue daily injections for three days but not more than five. Withdrawal time is one month. Tylan does not have much activity against coccidia, but it is very good against Mycoplasma bacteria which is responsible for some respiratory diseases.

To inject Tylan 50, pull the hens feathers back to reveal the skin on base of the the neck on her back. Lift the skin up and insert the needle gently but firmly into the skin just far enough to allow the Tylan to be injected. You will be able to feel it. Be careful that you do not inject yourself. Make certain that you do not push the needle through the skin and out again not injecting at all. It is best to do your injections at night and use a small flashlight that you can hold in your mouth or under your chin.

Because Tylan is so powerful, it is recommended that you purchase some Beneficial Bird Bacteria and feed it to your chicken after she recovers. Tylan wipes out all the beneficial bacteria that is normally present in a chickens digestive system. Also, Tylan can kill skin cells near the site of the injection so you should not use anything stronger than Tylan 50 - a stronger variety, Tylan-200 is also available at your local feed store, but this will likely do more harm than good.

When purchasing syringes, get them from a local drug store. The 'human' grade needles are a little sharper than the veterinary grade. The cost is about the same and your hen will thank you.

Microscopes Available

To borrow one, contact Arvis Okerson at 795-3333.

New Newsletter Format

by Dennis Hawkins

In case you haven't noticed yet, this month's edition of the newsletter looks a little different than before. It was produced by a computer program called a desktop publisher. This allows us to produce the newsletter with a professional typeset look. The typefaces used are easier to read and take less space than the previous format. This means that the newsletter will have more information and take fewer pages to print resulting in a savings for the club. Also, the address section of the newsletter contains a postal bar code to the left of the stamp. This allows the post office to more easily and quickly deliver this newsletter. I hope you will agree that the new format is beneficial as well as eye appealing.

Annual Picnic a Success!

Well, those of you who missed the picnic on Sunday July 23rd at Dreher Park really missed out. Everybody brought all kinds of delicious things to eat and we all had a really good time. Mr. Greggs worked the barbeque and we got to have our choice of several different kinds of meat - direct from pit to plate. There was roasted corn on the cob, watermelon, and all different kinds of soft drinks - not to mention all the other good food that was there.

With near perfect weather, we got to play volleyball and also roam the park. Quite a few members were present. One of the guests was a live chicken. Yes, we all got to meet Cotton the rooster and his girlfriend. They critiqued all the scraps that people would give them and commented that they liked the watermelon the best although they were also fond of the potato chips. When asked what he thought of roasted chicken being served at the picnic, Cotton had no comment.

Net Pecking

If you don't already have an Internet Account you can call Seflin at 233-2600 and request a free one. There are also many commercial Internet Service Providers that provide better service for a fee. These include Prodigy, America Online, and Compuserve in addition to several independent local providers. However, if you are just starting out with the Internet, the free account from Seflin is the best.

Once you have logged on to Seflin (Internet) for the first time, type 'poultry' at the main menu and you will be taken to the clubs poultry menu. From non-Seflin Internet accounts, you can get there by going to our poultry web page at the following address:

<http://www.afn.org/~poultry>

To access the poultry newsgroup just enter 'poultry' at the main menu of your Seflin account. For non-Seflin accounts, you will have to access it by using your newsreader to subscribe to the newsgroup: **sci.agriculture.poultry**.

To access Seflin or other Internet Service Providers, you will need a computer, a modem, and a suitable communications program. If this is all greek to you, then it might be best to just visit the library where they have them already set up and ready to go. Every branch of the PBC library system has at least one computer available on a first-come first-served basis.

Mega-Jumbo Egg

By Dennis Hawkins

Wouldn't it be something if you went out into the henhouse to gather the eggs only to find a huge quarter pounder egg! Well that is exactly what happened to Mr. John Azzara of Long Island New York on June 7, 1996.

When he first saw it in the nest, he thought it was a large rock. As he got closer and picked it up, he saw that it was a huge brown chicken egg. Being curious as to the record for the largest egg ever laid by a chicken, Mr. Azzara contacted Dr. Keshavarz of Cornell University. Dr. Keshavarz told Mr. Azzara that the average size of unusual eggs is about 3 ounces and that he should have it weighed and call him back. Eggs are considered to be Jumbo size if they are at least 2.5 ounces.

Since most egg scales do not weigh eggs more than Jumbo size, Mr. Azzara had to find somebody with a scale of the proper range. He first tried a jewelry store, but the egg was too large for their scale. Then he tried a pharmacy and again, the egg was too large. Finally, he thought of the U.S. Post Office. "The clerks thought I was nuts at first until they saw the size of the egg," said Mr. Azzara, "It weighed 3.9 ounces - almost a quarter pound!"

Mr. Azzara called the Doctor back who told him that it sounded like a new world's record. Then Mr. Azzara called the local ABC news affiliate who came and did several live reports on the egg, Mr. Azzara, and the hen who laid it. The news department did some research and discovered that the egg was not a world record, but was still the largest egg recorded in 35 years.

The hen that laid the egg is a sex link and is a cross between a Rhode Island Red and a White Leghorn. "This hen's eggs will not fit in a jumbo egg carton most of the time!," said Mr. Azzara. Mr. Azzara plans to donate the egg to the Poultry Science department at Cornell University and has been raising chickens in his back yard for over 40 years.

Club Officers Nominated

At our meeting on August 23, 1996, we nominated Lee Salmon for President, Richard Okerson for Vice-president, Arvis Okerson for Secretary, and Rose Greggs as Treasurer. Nominations will also be accepted at the September meeting. At that meeting, we will all vote. Try to attend that meeting.

Our two newsletter officials resigned and the position has now been filled by Dennis Hawkins. Mrs. Schwartz and Miss Davidson have been doing the newsletter for several years. The club will certainly miss their special touch.

Arvis also announced the addition of four new books to our library. One of the books was donated by Dr. Harrison who wrote it. The book is valued at over \$150 and deals exhaustively with avian medical technology. Arvis brought this book to the August meeting and it was very impressive.

The Vulgar Parrot

There's this fellow with a parrot. And this parrot swears like a sailor, I mean he's a pistol. He can swear for five minutes straight without repeating himself. Trouble is, the guy who owns him is a quiet, conservative type, and this bird's foul mouth is driving him crazy.

One day, it gets to be too much, so the guy grabs the bird by the throat, shakes him really hard, and yells, "QUIT IT!" But this just makes the bird mad and he swears more than ever.

Then the guy gets mad and says, "OK for you," and locks the bird in a kitchen cabinet.

This really aggravates the bird and he claws and scratches, and when the guy finally lets him out, the bird cuts loose with a stream of expletives that would make a veteran sailor blush.

At that point, the guy is so mad that he throws the bird into the freezer.

For the first few seconds there is a terrible fuss. The bird kicks and claws and thrashes. Then it suddenly gets VERY quiet.

At first the guy just waits, but then he starts to think that the bird may be hurt. After a couple of minutes of silence, he's so worried that he opens up the freezer door.

The bird calmly climbs onto the man's outstretched arm and says, "Awfully sorry about the trouble I gave you. I'll do my best to improve my vocabulary from now on."

The man is astounded. He can't understand the transformation that has come over the parrot.

Then the parrot says, "By the way, what did the chicken do?"

APA Affiliation Renewed

At the August 23, 1996 meeting, the members present voted to renew the club's affiliation with the APA (American Poultry Association). Affiliation is necessary for the club to initiate APA sanctioned events. The cost of the renewal was \$20 and well worth it.

Newsletter Articles Wanted

Wouldn't it be something if you opened your PBCPFA newsletter just to find that all the pages were blank? Well it could happen if nobody contributes any articles to print. So the next time you find an interesting story about chickens, drop me a line here at the newsletter headquarters. You just might be reading your own story in the next edition of the PBCPFA newsletter.

Classified

FOR SALE:

PBCPFA T-Shirts, excellent quality, beautiful logo. Small, Medium, Large, and X-Large sizes are available for \$10.00 (members), \$12.00 (non-members). Contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157. Don't be chicken, get yours today.

Baseball caps with our PBCPFA logo on them. They look fantastic and sell for a low \$5.00! Contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157.

FOR LOAN OR RENT:

Don't let your flock fall victim to predators! The poultry club owns a trap that members may use free of charge. Your neighbors may rent the trap for a small fee. To reserve your time to use the trap, contact Richard Greggs (561) 433-8157.

Mini Membership Application

Send your name, address, telephone number, and dues to:

Rose Greggs, PBCPFA Treasurer
8643 El Paso Dr.
Lake Worth, FL 33467-1109

The dues for the PBCPFA club are \$12 for families and \$8 for individuals and run from January 1 to December 31. New members joining after June 31 are eligible for a special half price rate. For existing members, all renewals are due December 31 and are for one year.

Refreshments served and a raffle at every meeting!