

Poultry of the Civil War

by J.L.S. Skinner

The poultry breeds, as we know them today, were largely developed from about 1875 to 1925. At the time of the Civil War, little organized breeding of poultry was occurring. Chickens were largely a localized undertaking, and often survival played a larger role than specific breeding programs. The exception to this would be the Game chickens (fighting cocks). In the case of Games, chickens were selectively bred along the lines of performance, much in the way racehorses are bred. In this case, performance in the "pit" was far more important than exact feather color. Some things are fairly well-known about poultry during the Civil war:

1. At the time of the Civil War, there were almost no pure white chickens. White was more subject to predation than darker colors.
2. The common color pattern was Black Breasted Red. This approximates the color of Brown Leghorns.
3. The gray barred pattern of the Dominique was emerging, but was probably more numerous in the North than in the South.
4. Black chickens were present and known earlier as "The Fowls of Castile", and today are called White Faced Black Spanish.
5. Most of the chickens in the South were medium to small in size, rather tight feathered (as opposed to loosely-held feathers or fluffy) and their combs and wattles were relatively larger than those raised in the North. This was due to the effects of temperature.

Egg Color

by Dr. Richard Balander, Michigan State University

The general rule of thumb is that chicken breeds with white earlobes lay white eggs and birds with red earlobes lay brown eggs. Egg color is genetically determined and not affected by the diet of the bird. The brown color is a porphyrin compound derived from old hemoglobin and is put on the shell the last two to three hours that the shell is in the shell gland. Birds that lay white eggs lack the cells or cell types to deposit the brown pigment. In birds that lay brown eggs, there are several genes that affect the color of the egg directly and sometimes you have modifier genes that affect the color genes. If you look at brown eggs, they vary from very light tan to dark brown and every shade in between which would lead one to deduct that brown color is a multigenic trait. The blue color in Araucana eggs is due to a different pigment all together, not porphyrin.

Washing and Oiling Eggs

Eggs must be refrigerated after collection between 35°F and 45°F to prevent microbial growth. The main concern here, of course, is Salmonella. It is also important that the eggs be kept in closed egg cases or other closed containers to minimize moisture and carbon dioxide loss from the egg. When you get ready to wash the eggs, you need to let them warm up to room temperature before you expose them to the hot washing solution. Otherwise, the thermal shock could cause cracking.

Eggs should be washed in a sanitizing solution containing a food grade detergent and a disinfectant. Frequently, borax or chlorine based solutions are used for this. Commercially made egg washing soap is available from Murray McMurray.

When you wash the egg, you remove part of the cuticle that covers the shell. The cuticle is important for impeding moisture loss during storage (through the pores of the shell) and also for helping prevent the entry of bacteria through the shell. It is important that the temperature of the wash water be approximately 20°F higher than that of the egg. This keeps the egg from being cooled. Cooling could result in the egg sucking in microorganisms in the wash water through the shell.

After eggs are washed in commercial processing plants, they are usually sprayed, not dipped, with a light food-grade quality mineral oil. This is especially important in retarding moisture loss during storage. It is also important in decreasing loss of carbon dioxide from the egg, which is an important factor in maintaining albumen quality. Both factors are important for maintaining the quality grade (AA or A) of the egg.

Oiling eggs after washing extends the egg quality during storage. Eggs should still be refrigerated as they are perishable. For best results, be sure that the eggs are coated on all sides. This is most useful if the eggs are to be stored for a week or more. Only approved egg oil should be used that is free from microorganisms.

A company called Val-A Company (700 West Root St., Chicago, IL, 60609; phone 313/927-9442; fax 312/927-6832) that sells all kinds of poultry equipment. They sell an aerosol can of mineral oil (STA-GOOD EGG SPRAY). Regular mineral oil can also be used if you can get it thin enough to go through a hand sprayer.

Is This Your Last Issue?

To find out, check your name in the address portion of this newsletter. If you see a dollar sign ('\$') by your name, then Rose has not yet received your renewal dues for 1997. If you have a dollar sign by your name, then you need to contact Rose immediately. Don't let your membership lapse. The club needs you.

The Far Side by Gary Larson



"Quit complaining and eat it! ... Number one, chicken soup is good for the flu ---- and number two it's nobody we know"

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Poultry Tent Declared a Success!

For those of you who missed the February meeting, you missed hearing all the particulars about our success at the poultry tent. The news that Rose had for us was quite good. "This was our best year ever," said Lee Salmon, our club president. Our profits from the poultry tent were nearly double what they were last year. While we sold fewer chicks and ducks this year, we got them from a different source than we have in the past. Multiple sources, in fact. This way, it was rare to be out of chicks or ducks to sell. Most of the babies we sold were older or sexed pullets, and these were much more popular than what we sold in the past.

This year, for the first time, we sold commercial hybrid sex-links. These baby chicks are a different color depending on whether they are cockerels or pullets. They are called Brown Nicks from H&N International and are genetically engineered to consistently lay a jumbo brown egg yet eat like a Leghorn. These pullets turned out to be the fastest selling chicks that we have ever sold at the fair. If you bought one, you made a good choice.

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

Include the names and ages of your children (if any). 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 an initial 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!**

Chickens that Smell

by Dr. Jacqueline Jacob, UFL Poultry Specialist

While olfaction is not as important for chickens as it is in animals, they can smell. They do have a moderately developed olfactory system. Chickens can be trained to respond selectively to particular scents, such as oil of citron. Some birds have keen senses of smell. The flightless kiwi, for example, is nocturnal and feeds largely on earthworms and other hidden food, yet its vision is poor. It is the only bird with nostrils at the tip of the beak, and it sniffs while foraging. It can detect food hidden or in the dark.

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.

Rhode Island Red chicks. Available in ages from one day to several months old. Contact Richard Greggs at (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.

WANTED:

Newsletter articles for the PBCPFA newsletter. The deadline is the fourth Friday of the previous month. Submit articles to the editor by mail, email, or in person at the meeting.

Message From The President

by Lee Salmon

A great big thanks to everyone who worked so hard in the Poultry tent at the South Florida Fair;

Tom Salmon for helping set it all up and for holding down the fort at home so I could spend so many hours out there.

Richard Greggs for all the hatching eggs and great little Rhode Island Red babies.

Rose Greggs for doing all our bookkeeping and helping the judges.

Dennis Hawkins for going to the Internet to find us some baby chicks and ducks to sell, and for bringing them out to us.

Maryann and Katelin Van Heusen for the beautiful dove and pigeon display and for all that feeding and watering.

Richard Wright for finding us the best mulch of any tent at the fair.

Linda Wright for all her cute little rare chick babies; and thanks to Wade Taylor for helping the vet and selling our chicks and ducks.

Kim Belvin, our founding Father, who came out and cooked up some really good barbecue.

Ashley Robinson for doing such a great job in pulling our Turkey in the Parade.

Mike and Jeanette Robinson for all the cute chicks and hatching eggs and a special hats off to Mike and Peter for setting up all those floor cages.

Rick Okerson for getting our incubators up and running the best they ever have.

Arvis Okerson for lining up *Brenda's Bloomers* to decorate the tent. They did a wonderful job. And as always, Arvis did a swell job on the photo contest.

Wakeeta Schwartz for letting us use her Turkeys for the parade and for helping sell, sell, sell our babies.

New members, Frank and Diane Merriam, were out to help set up and do a lot of feeding and watering. We look forward to having them in our club.

Don and Trav Myerscough for helping me set up all those cages.

Pat, Katherine and Ashley for all that watering and feeding and especially, selling, and holding up all those babies to be petted.

Diane Carta who came out on short days to help feed and water so I could have a little time off.

Gail Juliano who was out there every day to help me open up and get ready for business and also do a lot of feeding.

Todd Gring was there every day and helped us muck out half the way through. A tough job but he did it cheerfully.

Peter, Karen, and Casey Brynes who helped with the Big job of set-up and then came every day to help where they could.

Bob Brown, our friend from Miami, who is always such a big help when he comes up.

Debbie Dixon and Cathy Baker who pitch in whenever they get off work and can come out to help.

Karin Estrada for all those cute little balloon animals that the kids really love.

Kayla and Monica from the Moody family who are always happy to help whenever they can.

Margherita Snyder who really helped upgrade our show with the great Dark Brahmas and for coming out to work when she could.

Kathy Talbot for helping get out celebrity exhibitor, Catherine Laughlin, and for filling in with some ducks when we were low.

Bill, Marge, and Ben Hoover who have been helping us for such a long time. Bill really keeps an eye on the kids who visit the tent.

Last, but certainly not least, those wonderful 4-H Clubs without whose help this big job could never be done.

Art, Carol, and Reba Davidson of Heritage Farms and the great crew of kids and parents they have. They are so cheerful and refreshing that it is a pleasure to work with them. They are there whenever you need them and get the job done. Most of the Heritage Farms are old hands in the Poultry tent and this year their new members pitched in like little troopers.

Ruth Barhite and the Fancy Feathers 4-H club, who have spent the last year rebuilding, were also there to lend a big hand. She has a lot of new members and some great supportive parents. They were fast learners and a very helpful group. Ruth tells me that some are now motivated to do poultry projects and we are glad we inspired them. We look forward to their help in the future.

Wakeeta Schwartz and the Buzy Bees were also present to do a lot of work. Kevvy and her mom sold a lot of ducks and we appreciate the people friendly turkeys. A thanks to Harvey for helping break down. I know that Carla Sweeney wasn't feeling up to par this year so we thank her for coming out to help when she could, and hope she's feeling better soon.

If I have forgotten anyone, please forgive me. All in all it was a big success and we pulled together for a job well done. Thanks to you all!!!

Name the Turkey Contest

Homer, our club mascot, passed away a while back and was not able to be with us at the fair this year. The club has acquired a new white turkey and now needs a name for him. Therefore, we are having a contest to pick the best name for our mascot. To enter, write your name and the turkey's name on a piece of paper and bring it to the next meeting. If your name is selected, you will receive free raffle tickets.