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Poultrynz

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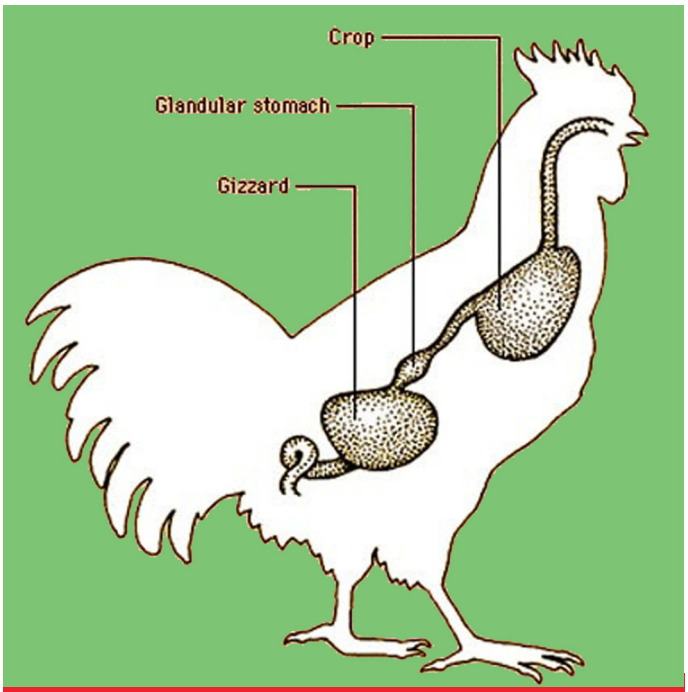

Poultrynz Editorial

The breeding season sure is underway. My grandkids came around the other day and announced that they were getting four day old chicks to rear for "Pet Day". So off we went and built a brooder with a light so that they could rear their entries for the big day out. Real exciting stuff for them and for other kids at the school. Pleasing too, was the fact that this sort of thing is not lost on our society and that schools are still teaching these things. Interesting times too for all of us to see the progress made with our grandchildren's progress through life. Until next issue.
Regards,
Ian Selby.

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CREAMY RICE & VANILLA PUDDING

INGREDIENTS

Serves 4. Gluten free.
3 cups milk
¼ cup sugar
1 x 5cm strip lemon zest
1 vanilla bean, scraped, or 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
¾ cup arborio rice
1 egg yolk

METHOD

- Place the milk, sugar, lemon zest and vanilla bean or essence in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat.
- Add the rice to the saucepan and cook for approximately
- 25-30 minutes over a medium to low heat, or until the rice is cooked. Stir occasionally and add a little more milk if necessary.
- Remove the pan from the heat and allow the rice pudding to cool slightly before stirring in the egg yolk. Remove the vanilla bean and lemon zest before serving.

TIP

This pudding is delicious served with poached fruit.

GENETICS HAS ITS LIMITATIONS

A Grey Japanese Bantam Pullet

by John K.Palin. UK.

Much has been accomplished in the field of genetics from the time Gregor Mendel discovered them to the present D.N.A. genetic fingerprinting. Those who are interested in the breeding of livestock should endeavour to understand the subject, but few really do. However, for anyone who desires to reach the ultimate in exhibition, where all points of excellence are required to achieve this, the use of genetics is limited.

In over sixty-five years of association with all kinds of livestock, I have never known anyone ascend to the top in exhibition (excluding utility classes) and stay there by genetics alone.

If only colour was the consideration then genetics should be practised. The Grass Parakeet, the budgerigar is a fine example of what can be done by applying genetics for a particular purpose. But I repeat, genetics is limited, one must understand it cannot work miracles, no one has bred a red or black coloured budgerigar to date. On the other hand, if one wishes to form a strain of poultry for the production of eggs or for table qualities then genetics are a must.

In the case of poultry bred for exhibition where more than two or three properties are required the use of genetics is not practical. For those breeds of poultry that can win in open competition by one or two points of the standard then genetics could help. For the purist who believes all points are important, the advice is to forget genetics. It is possible to work on two or maybe three points genetically and fixed in the time required, i.e., two or three years. However, having fixed the improvement to one's satisfaction, by the time one has fixed the next batch of characteristics, one has lost the improvement previously gained.

I believe there is only one way to breed for perfection in livestock: that is by constant observation and the selection of all points equally.

Any bird or animal that doesn't equal or better its sire or dam should not be used for future breeding, any fault likewise should be excluded from further use. The only road to success and to stay there is by following the of nature, not Mendel.

The majority of poultry fanciers today follow neither genetics or nature. Buying and selling is the name of the game. Many fanciers don't stay around long enough to form a strain and many that do stick at it just 'bung' the stock together, and hope for the best. If things don't work to plan, back to the sales.

Buff Japanese Bantam

On the other hand, if one is interested in genetics and the competition of exhibitions, it can be a most enjoyable project to indulge in. I bred mice for many years in the study of genetics. With mice it is possible to achieve in one year what would take six years in poultry–I discovered much in the process. For instance, if a pure strain of mice usually gave birth to a litter of twelve or fourteen young and the litters were culled to half the number, the same mice changed to produce litters of five or six young.

Here is another interesting fact of nature for the geneticists to puzzle over; a small Finch, the Seychelles Warbler, that breeds in Cousin island, that can select the sex of its offspring to suit the environment. Testing the eggs during incubation has proved that the chicks change sex. If the season is favourable all the young will be females, if a poor season all the young will hatch out males. This in spite of the fact that in the initial stages the eggs contained embryos of both sexes.

But it is still not known how they do it. Re the appearance of unusual characteristics in closed lines of exhibition poultry the answer is quite feasible.

The closer the breeding, the greater the similarity and purity of the genes. The stock will still retain some genes of past ancestry,

Close-up of a Frizzle Japanese Bantam feathering

but these will be so remote that the chances of these meeting a similar gene is very unlikely.

However, it does happen occasionally and in the event some unusual 'throwbacks' emerge much to one's surprise. Japanese Bantams, a breed of fowl l am usually associated with is 'dogged' by the laws of Mendel. The long and short length of leg in this breed is another example of the laws of genetics.

I had a close stud of Buff Japanese over twenty five years that were normal plumaged birds. No one could be more surprised than I (though I understood) when one hen produced a clutch of seven chicks all frizzle feathered. It's impossible to say how long these frizzle genes had been lying dormant or floating around. This was long before Frizzle and Silkie Japanese were introduced into this country. The most amazing part was that all the chicks were frizzled, the gene influenced the whole clutch. I let them go to a canary fancier I knew. They were pretty, but not for me.

I objected to the introduction of these peculiar plumaged Japanese being accepted; we already had recognised frizzle fowl but only the late H Easom Smith and myself voted against it. My contention was that it takes one all the time to breed the plain feathered varieties, plus the fact

that one introduction of silkie or frizzle into a normal plumaged stud could undo a lifetime's work.

I sold my strain of Grey Japanese as a complete stud, and they also retained the odd gene from the make-up of those fifty years previous. Every ten or twelve years or so a blacktail white or lavender coloured bird would appear in a clutch. These 'sports' were always of grand type providing the initial stock were the right kind. These were always snapped up by exhibition fanciers who weren't interested how they were bred.

Mutations are always exciting in any form of livestock. Mutants or 'sports' occur as a result of a change in the genes that produce new characteristics.

When a mutant appears that is far removed from the norm, bearing in mind that most mutants are recessive, to those conversant with the theory of genetics the establishing of the mutant and its offspring can be very exciting.

However, I still believe that nature's way of selection of the fittest, plus a breeder's skill of manipulating type and colour is the only way to perfection.

Not many have the ability to improve on nature, but those that can have their just rewards. Many instances where man interferes end in disaster. One instance is the feeding of our native wild birds during winter. This only encourages and allows specimens to survive that would naturally succumb to the rigours of a period intended to make them do just that. Nature makes sure that only the strongest survive to continue the next generation the following spring.

To conclude, genetics can be useful and in some cases very rewarding, but one should not overestimate its possibilities.

This article is not intended to explain genetics, or reveal what they do or can do. I leave that for the geneticists. It is just a preliminary for anyone who thinks genetics solve everything. The first priority is to understand livestock.

White Silkie Japanese Bantams

FEEDS AND FEEDING CHICKENS

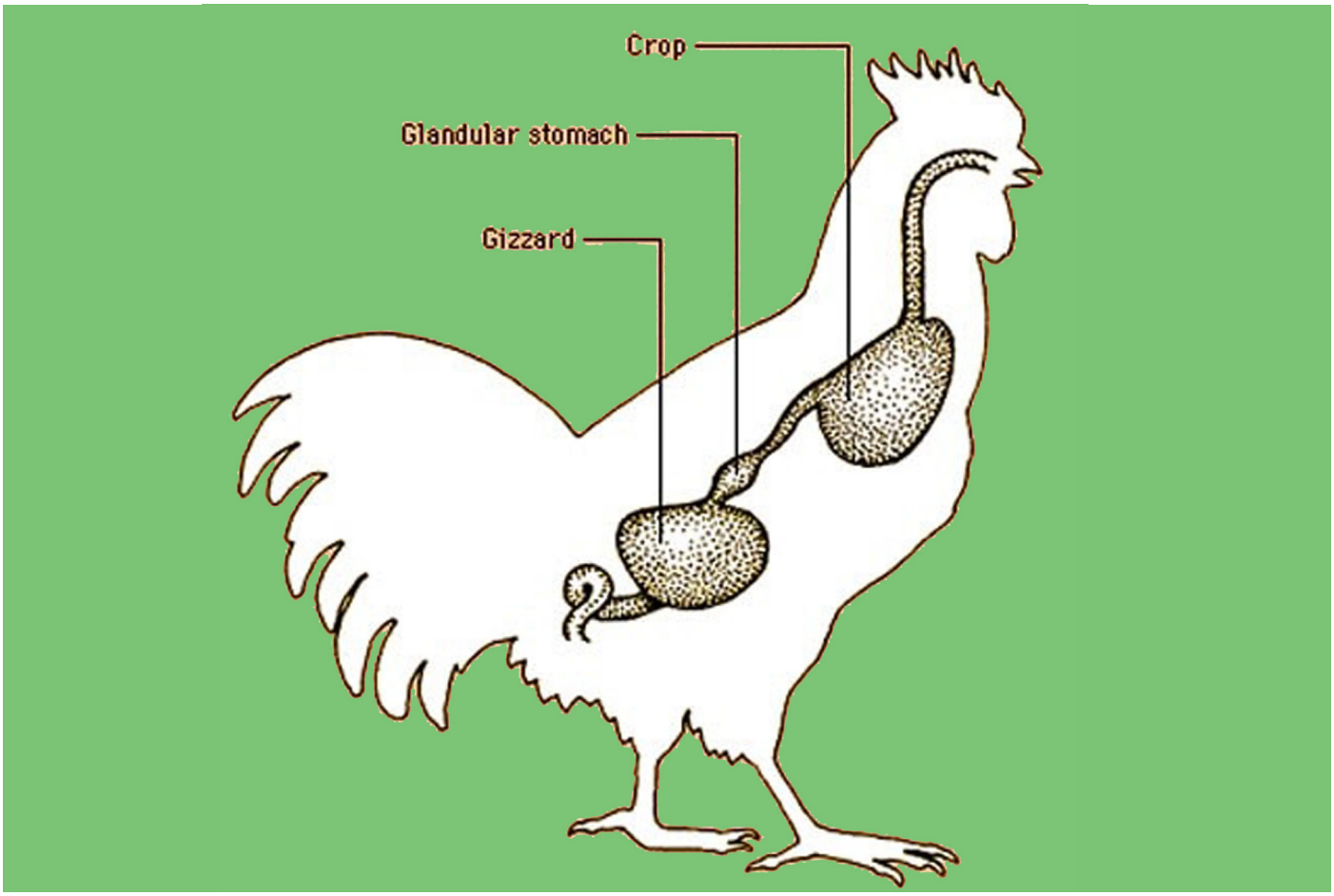

Illustration showing the location of a Fowl's Gizzard

by Stanley B. Sydnes

INTRODUCTION

It is interesting how the digestive tract functions in the bird family. The gizzard, where their feed is digested, is much smaller than the stomach of animals according to their sizes. Therefore, the bird family have crops (the nickname is craw) to store their feed in. This crop is located at the upper part of their breast and is about the size of a man's thumb in an adult standard chicken when empty. It will expand to a cup or more of feed in the standard chicken.

The nature of the bird family at the crack of dawn is to start hustling for feed and hopefully by dusk or roosting time, they will have their crops full of feed.

The digestive tract starts to function before the chick is hatched, getting its nourishment from the yoke of the egg, and like the heart, will not stop working until the chicken dies.

As the feed is in the stomach, there are more gastric juices that are absorbed, aiding in the digestion before passing into the gizzard. The lining of the gizzard is made up of a tough substance to withstand the churning motion that is done by the contraction of the large strong muscles of the gizzard which contains the sharp grit (hen's teeth). After digestion the feed passes into the intestines, retaining the grit, where further digestion of fats and oils is aided by the bile which is provided by the liver which flows through the bile duct from the gall bladder into the intestines. This breakdown of digestion of the proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and vitamins is called Molecules. These molecules are excreted from the waste matter and are absorbed through the tiny lymph vessels in the walls of the intestines into the blood. The blood streams carry nourishment to all parts of the body and the waste matter is expelled in the droppings.

FEEDS AND FEEDING

The chicken is the same as other birds and animals: it has a determination to live; and if given half a chance, it will make it. If they have a large grassy range area to run in, they can be fed nothing but ear corn; and it may surprise one how many eggs they will lay during the spring and summer months. They are up early in the morning looking for worms, eat a lot of grass during the day and looking for bugs in the evening. Also they are scratching for small stones for their grit and shelling their corn to eat. I have seen this on farms back in the mid and late 1930's.

When we house the chickens into small divided pens

or have them in coops outside with small bare runways, they are helpless and depend upon us to take care of them. So they need a diet with a ration made up of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and vitamins. The easiest way to do this is to provide them with a 16 percent all mash commercial feed. When we have them penned up, as I said, they are determined to live so will eat it if given nothing else to eat. Surprisingly, they will do well on it too.

I am a lover of both animals and poultry. Chickens prefer cracked corn, whole oats, barley and wheat grain in preference to finely ground feeds. Therefore, I feed them grain mixed with a concentrate feed which I mix myself. I have no idea the percent of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, vitamins, fibre, etc., that the contents have. All I know is they like it and have done well on it for years.

There are several successful methods of concentrate commercial feeds that are being used. A number of years ago, some farmers and some poultry fanciers fed a high 30 to 32 percent protein concentrate feed in one feeder and scratch grain in another feeder and let the hens balance their own ration.

Fine oyster shell grit ideal for all Poultry

One method is to feed a 26 to 28 percent concentrate feed in feeders, then at evening time, give them as much scratch grain as they will clean up in a short period of time. This can either be fed in hoppers or scattered in their litter on the floor. The latter also gives the hens some exercise scratching for their grain and keeps the litter loose, reducing moisture. Then, too, they go to roost with their crops full. However, the pens need to be cleaned more often with this type of feeding.

Another method is mixing two parts scratch grain and one part of 26 to 28 percent protein concentrate feed and feed in feeders twice a day. They will eat the scratch grain first so the amount fed will have to be governed by the amount of concentrate feed that is left in the feeders at each feeding time - which should not be more than half full.

A good scratch grain can be made up with equal parts of cracked corn, whole oats (the oats should be 35 pounds or more test weight per bushel), and wheat. The corn is rich in carbohydrates supplying sugars, starches, oils, and energy. Also poultry strains with yellow legs, when fed corn, gives them a rich yellow colour. Oats is one of the leading livestock grains - very rich in body building, has more protein than any other grain, is rich in carbohydrates with less heat than corn, and also is a good source of Vitamin B. Oats

Wheat is one of the most palatable grains for chickens

induces lots of vim and vigour. Wheat is one of the most palatable grains for chickens. With 70 percent carbohydrates, and almost as rich in protein as oats, it is low in fat - only 2 percent but has a good source of Vitamin E in the germ oil. Wheat can be fed as a sole grain along with a good concentrate feed to chickens, and they do very well on it. The only problem: strains of chickens with yellow legs will turn pale - almost white, and their egg yokes will be a pale yellow instead of the rich orange when fed corn.

We like to crack our own corn so we know they are getting the whole kernel. Additionally we like the whole oats in their scratch grain.

Both all mash and concentrate feeds have a greater palatability for chickens in pellet or crumble form than the fine ground type. These processed feeds have also largely replaced the old type mash formulas.

A special treat for chickens is table scraps, old bread, potato peelings, lettuce, and cabbage leaves, partially spoiled tomatoes from the garden, etc.

If your commercial feed does not have ground oyster shells and limestone in it, the layers should have hen size oyster shells available for them at all times since the eggshells are largely made up of calcium carbonate. The intake of the oyster shells will vary from time to time so the feeders need to be watched for refilling. Male birds that are cooped separately should have a small portion of the grit placed in their coop cups once a week or so. Regardless of what type of feed is being fed, they should all have grit. The No. 1 grit is for chicks up until they are eight weeks old; then changed over to the No. 2 grit.

All the pens should have adequate feeder space and water fountains or troughs. These should be constructed so the chickens cannot get into them. They can be set up on wooden blocks along the wall using turn buttons to hold them in place. Care must be taken when emptying the water troughs for fresh water by not getting the litter wet.

Chickens are wasteful with their feed so the top of their feeders should be placed about the height of their backs and only filled two thirds full. The water fountains or troughs should also be the same height. This also helps to keep them from scratching contaminated litter into their feed and water. Fresh water should be given daily and their feed kept fresh. It is best not to stock more than they will eat in two weeks.

If a drop in their feed consumption is noticed, there is a reason for it and indicates trouble. Check the feeders to see if they have been contaminated some way or if the feed is musty or mouldy. If so, clean out the feeders, refilling with clean feed. They could be going into a moult, or an outbreak of some disease or parasites.

Do your best in taking care of all your fowl and watch them do their best for you in the show coop, laying eggs, and fertilizing for strong healthy youngsters.

TWO VICES IN POULTRY:
THEIR PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Hens dining out on broken eggs

A vice is a bad habit which, unfortunately increases in intensity so that the evildoers show no desire to stop it. It often breaks out unsuspected by the Poultry keeper and spreads so rapidly that severe losses may occur before one can arrest it, which by that time is difficult.

General causes are enforced idleness, lack of interest in life, overcrowding, bad housing, improper feeding and careless management. Damage done includes loss of eggs, injuries to the fowls themselves and maybe cannibalism: The vices are Egg Eating and Feather Picking.

EGG EATING

LOSS:- This is the worst vice, because eggs (i.e. the actual finished product) are deliberately destroyed and because it can be "enjoyed" for weeks without the Poultry keeper knowing about it other than appreciating a gradual but severe reduction in the number of eggs collected.

CAUSES:- Giving the birds an opportunity to break eggs and to discover the attractive taste. This is brought about by providing too few or too small or too uncomfortable nest boxes; or feeding wrong so that a number of the eggs laid are with soft shells which break when trodden upon in the nest; or by overcrowding or mismanagement, which makes the Fowls uneasy or mischievous.

FIRST SYMPTOMS:- If the egg supply fall for no apparent reason, suspect egg eating. Night visit the Fowls on the peach with a flashlight and examine the beaks for signs of congealed egg yolk. If possible watch them when egg laying is at its height between 8am and 10am.

TO CHECK:- First of all improve the conditions which were the predisposing factors, i.e. give deep light litter, good nests, ample green food and by digging up the outside the run.

The best scheme for stopping the malady is to place several china nest eggs about the house so that the birds easily see them and make an attack. Place the china nest eggs in each nest, several on the floor of the house and two or three in the outside run and one or two on the roosting board. When china nest eggs cannot

Over-crowding causes feather pecking

be obtained blow out the contents of some eggs of the required number wanted and fill with 'plaster of paris' and let harden.

FEATHER PICKING

LOSS:- Damage to the Fowls bodies with subsequent pain and discomfort, upset of the nervous system, retarding of digestion and thus loss of hatching eggs. Left unchecked, it may develop into cannibalism and lead to death.

CAUSES:- Usually overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, infestations with body pests, and some say a lack of protein in the feeding menu.

FIRST SYMPTOMS.- One usually appreciates the trouble first by seeing a bird (usually the male) running around the house with bare areas on its body. When this is noticed it is the advanced stage. Early symptoms can often be detected when you see a bird with a feather in its beak or eating a feather or in some instances, picking a feather from the body of a pen mate or from its own body.

TO CHECK:- Remove the causes first, i.e., give more room in the house and run; clean up filth, dust, dirt and wet litter; check for Red Mite and Lice and dust all birds with insect powder; feed properly.

ROYAL CHESHIRE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP EGG SHOW 2025

The egg marquee at Royal Cheshire

Report and photos by Chris Parker.

Whilst I am still missing the poultry sections at our shows I am so thankful for our fanciers who organise egg shows, giving us some events to meet up and enjoy poultry chat. Royal Cheshire is a fine example of such an event and John Tickle has over the years built up a great team of volunteers who all contributed to a wonderful egg show this year. With an entry around the 960 mark in 80 classes there were some very large classes indeed and the display of eggs, set amongst a floral landscape, must be the greatest spectacle of eggs in the land.

Five judges were invited to sort out this massive entry and the task kept us busy for over four hours. Margaret Bell, Roger Furse, Paul Kerfoot and myself, together with championship judge Simon Windle who judged the contents classes and then made the final choices on a resplendent championship row display. By his own admission Simon was the first to say that his choice of single eggs for both champion and reserve champion was controversial. Writing on Facebook later he commented that they were both perfect. There is not room here for all my thoughts on my interpretation of the egg standard scoring but I have talked about this in detail in the famous Bird Boys podcast with our editor, Jed Dwight.

The winners of the show championship were naturally delighted with their success gained with a turkey egg. However Andy and Sue Gamon missed the presentation so I was grateful to Andrew Parkinson who captured the celebrations of the couple on championship row.

The champion eggs at Royal Cheshire. On the left is Jim Smith's single white bantam egg which was reserve champion in the show whilst on the right is the single Turkey egg which took the overall championship.

Andy and Sue Gamon who won the championship at the Royal Cheshire Egg Show

Congratulations also go to Jim Smith who won the reserve show championship with a single white bantam egg. Other major winners were Phil Bentham of D. Bentham and Son whose Welsummer eggs won the award for best large fowl eggs and best bantam eggs went to Andrew Martin's lovely plate of three white. Best single large fowl egg was won by John Lobb's Araucana egg and best waterfowl eggs was awarded to Morys Jones's plate of three goose eggs. Richard Sadler took the award for best single waterfowl egg and John Tickle showed a fine plate of six turkey eggs to take the award for best plate of turkey eggs. Finally Michael Rainey won best contents from an enormous large fowl contents class with fifty two entries and Anne Williamson took the trophy for the best decorated

Elif and Michael, visitors from Turkey, with Chris Parker

or painted egg. That just leaves the award for the juvenile champion exhibit which went to Peggy, Jed and Mabel from Hesketh Bank showing under the title of P.J.& M. and following in the footsteps of their well known grandfather, Harry Caunce.

As well as judging the bantam egg section I also had the privilege of judging the large photograph class which is held each year in memory of the late Mick Corrigan. I was delighted to find an outstanding photograph of a Silver Sebright which I placed first, but more importantly a good sum of money was raised for the Christie's Hospital in Manchester. Mick Corrigan took wonderful poultry photographs at many shows over the years and is well remembered for his work on the Poultry Club of Great Britain poster.

As well as exhibitors from all over the country I was delighted to welcome visitors from Turkey to the egg marquee and Elif Yildizap Serbest and Michael Baytug thoroughly enjoyed their day at the show. Elif is very keen to learn all about our egg showing in this country and it was a great privilege for me to have Elif stewarding for me as I judged the bantam egg section.

My congratulations go to every exhibitor and John Tickle and his great team who staged such a memorable and colourful event.

Philip Bentham's plate of six Welsummer eggs which were awarded best large fowl eggs.

The Royal Cheshire team with John Tickle on the right.