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Poultrynz

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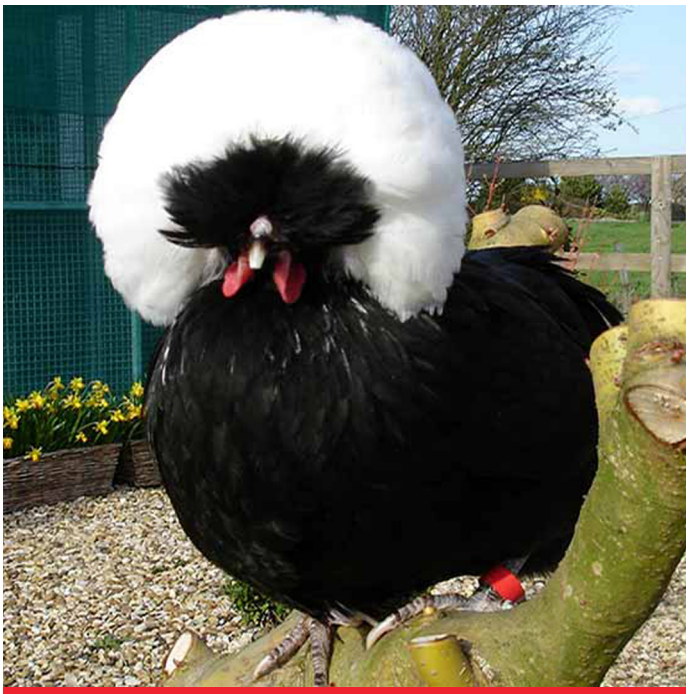

Poultrynz Editorial

The Show season is in full swing. There were plenty of Purebred Fowls, Bantams and Ducks for sale. I did notice a lot of new people buying Heritage Breeds for their backyard too. Sometimes we get Poultry Fanciers from these people but mostly the request is for something different that roam free range on their properties both Town and Country. The Shows were good too, although the cost of travel may have deterred a few the average show numbers were not down that much. There are still a few Shows to go in both Islands. Good luck for the rest of the show season.

Until next issue.

Regards, Ian Selby.

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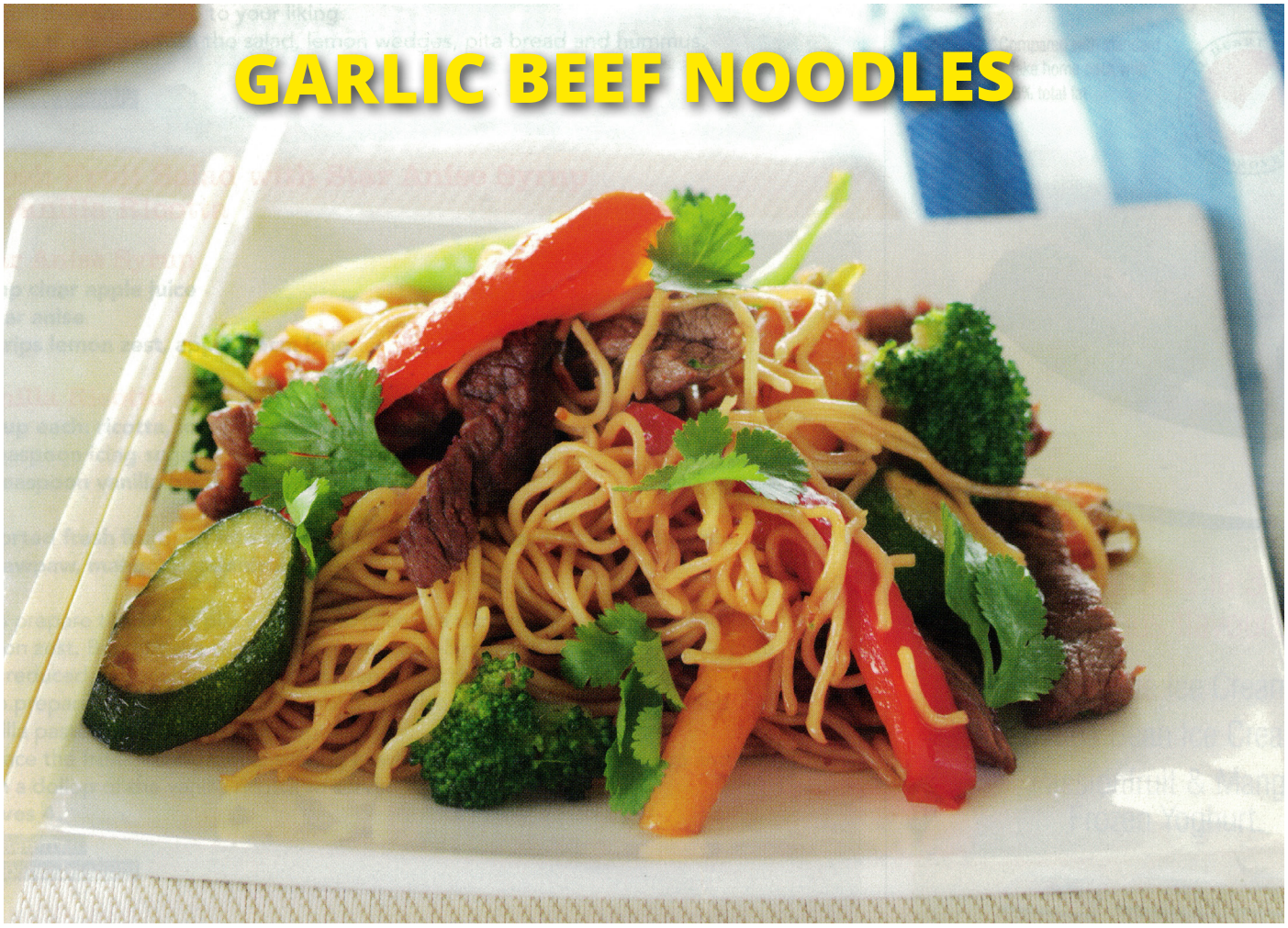
GARLIC BEEF NOODLES



INGREDIENTS

Serves 4.

500g rump steak, fat trimmed, thinly sliced

2 cloves garlic, crushed and chopped

3 tablespoons oil

250g round egg noodles

3 cups chopped vegetables (eg, broccoli, carrots, courgette, capsicum, red onions)

½ cup teriyaki sauce

½ cup roughly chopped coriander leaves

METHOD

1. Place the steak in a bowl, add the garlic and 1 tablespoon of the oil. Toss to combine and set aside for 5-10 minutes.
2. Boil the noodles according to the packet instructions. Drain and rinse them under cold water.
3. Heat the remaining oil in a large frypan or wok. When the oil begins to "smoke", add the beef and stir-fry for 1 minute.
4. Add the vegetables and stir-fry for 3-5 minutes before adding the teriyaki sauce, cooked noodles and coriander. Toss together until heated through.
5. Diabetes friendly

POLANDS AND POLISH FOWL

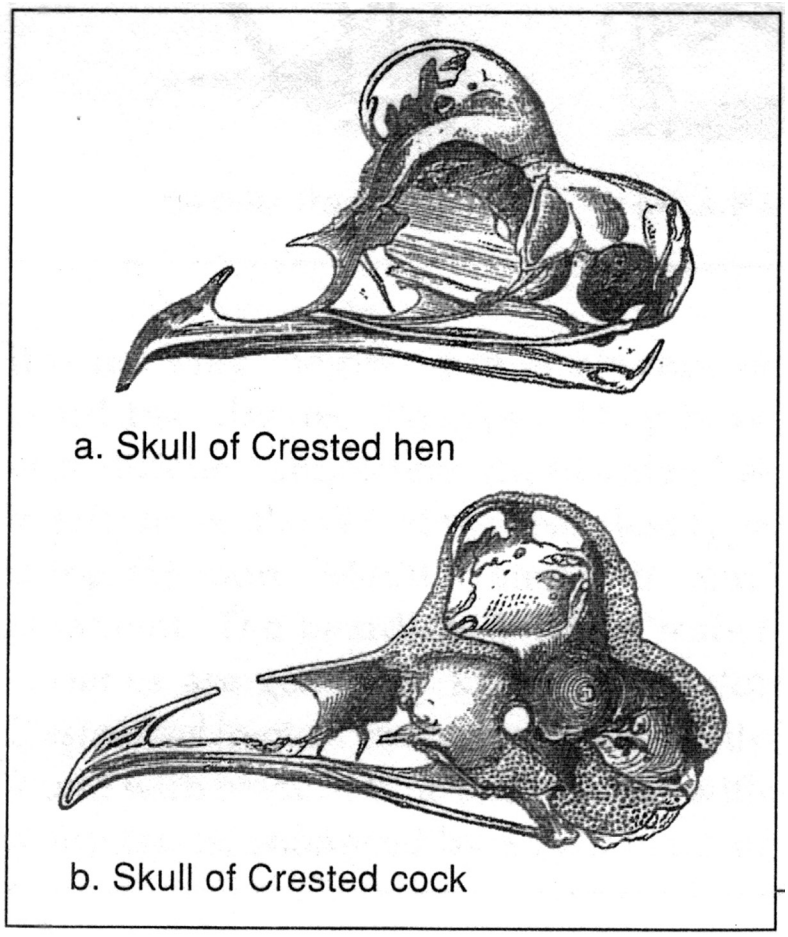
by Fred Hams, UK. From "Country Gardens and Smallholdings" A White Crested Black Poland Hen

When compiling these notes on the pure breeds of poultry, there is often difficulty explaining the relatively poor performance of some of today's Strains of yesterday's commercial breeds. This is because in many cases it was only strains that were developed as exhibition fowl that survived the poultry industry changing to hybrid fowl. However, when one looks at those breeds and breed types that man has developed over the centuries, purely to admire one or more decorative feature, there is no unfulfilled utility expectation to explain. The breed or breeds that we in Britain have come to know as Polands or Polish are a perfect example.

While none of the Roman authors seem to have described any breed with anything like the full crest that we have come to expect of today's Polish type fowl, there are several Roman statuettes showing birds with feathered top-knots. When reading translations of the Roman authors, one should remember that when they refer to crest they usually mean comb. Yet excavations on a Roman site at Uley in Gloucestershire produced an example of a fowl skull showing exactly the cranium formation that always accompanies today's exhibition crest. That it was found on or near an altar on a temple site dating from the early Roman period suggests that the Romans held the fowl in some reverence. Whether it was because they thought it rare or exotic can only be speculated.

This peculiarity of the skull was noticed as early as 1656, being described by Peter Borelli, in his 'Histor et Obserbatrarior' This in turn provided a basis of a chapter in Blumembach 1813.

It was left to Tegetmeier in a paper presented to the Zoological Society in 1856, to fully describe these characteristics. It was accompanied by engravings "1a" and "1b." As can be seen from these, there is a marked difference in the shapes of the skull of the male and female. As he pointed out, this enables the sex of day-old chicks to be differentiated. "The young when first hatched, show the prominence most distinctly, each little chick running about with a head that looks as if half a marble had been thrust under the skin of the skull, and from the size of the tuberosity, even at this early age the birds can be selected that will have the best developed crest."

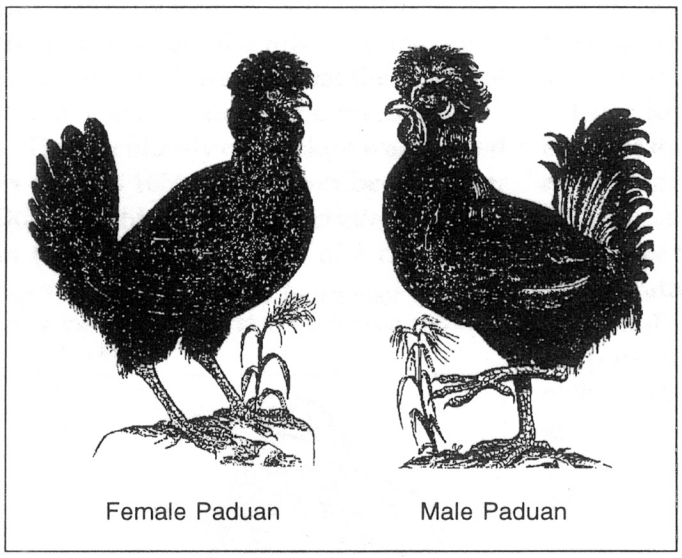


Later, Krautwald (1910) was to show the cause of this abnormality as, "a form of cerebral haemorrhage caused by the accumulation of fluid in the brain."

This rather ugly diagnosis should not put off potential breeders of the crested breeds, as given the care that any ornamental breed deserves, the chicks are as hardy and the adults are as long-lived as any other of the specialised breeds.

Krautwald also found the skin underlying the crest to be thickened and highly vasculized, conditions which could affect the activity of feather follicles.

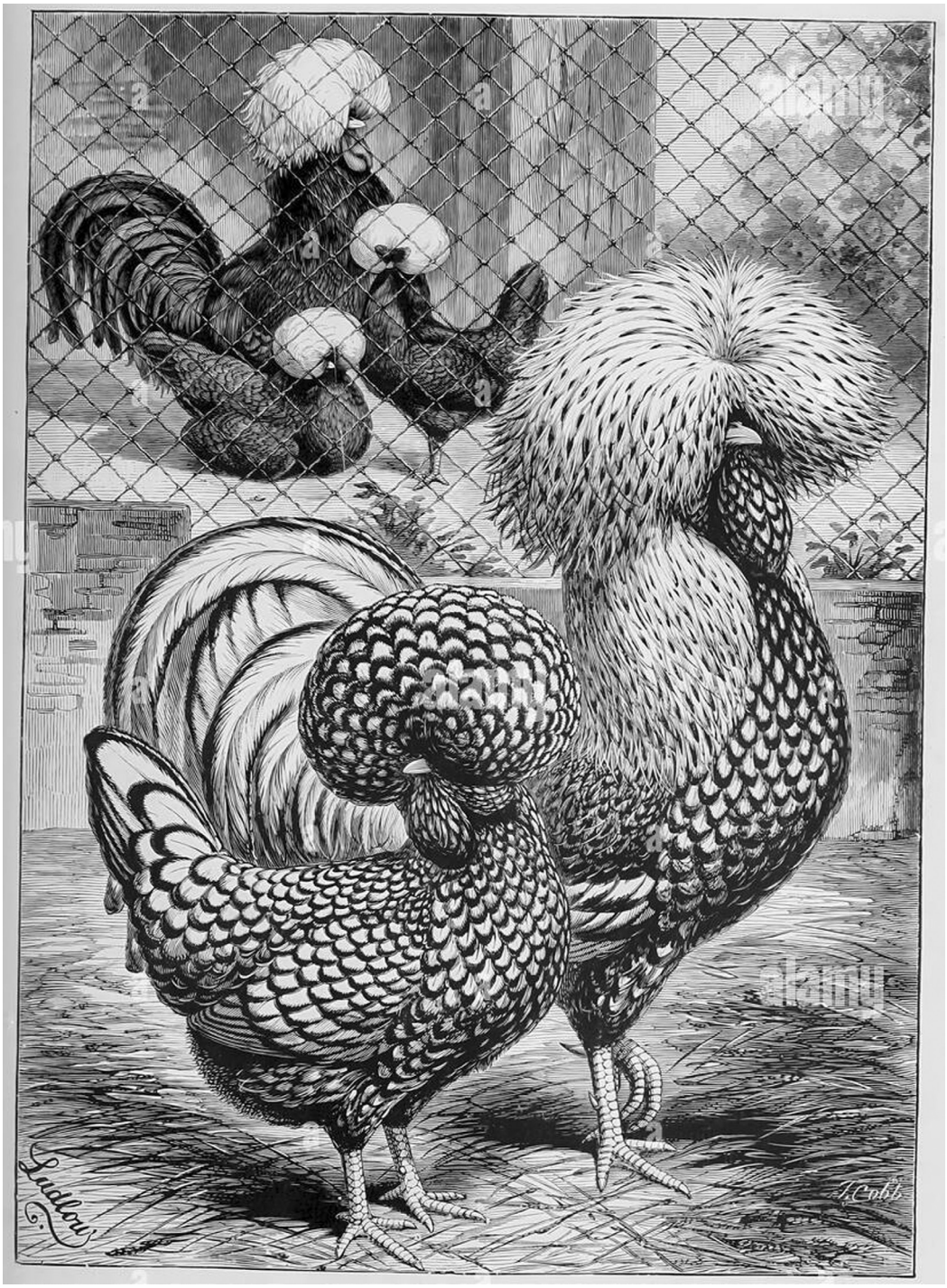
Classification



The names Polish and Poland are misleading, as the fowl have no real connection with Poland, but probably derived from their polled characteristics. Just as polled cattle have no horns, the best crests are found on those birds with no combs.

Many of the birds that were the foundation of the breed here were imported from the Netherlands and were referred to, along with other Dutch breeds, as Polder fowl or Polderlanders. Here, it must be remembered that we are looking at two distinct breeds. While we in Britain have always classified both bearded and non-bearded types as Polands, most of the rest of the world have classified those with beards and muffs as Paduan fowl or Paduas.

Aidrovandi illustrated and described Paduan fowl in his Ornithology of 1600. Here, while his hens shows a distinct bearded and some muffing, the male appears to be beardless. This translation of the original text makes no reference to beards or muffs. "There are some larger chickens among our birds which are commonly called Paduan. I show the pictures of the male and female.



Silver Laced and White Crested Black Polands

The male is very beautiful and adorned with five colours. Black, white, green, red, and yellow. The body is entirely black. The neck is covered with very white feathers and the wings and back are partly black, partly green. The tail, likewise, is of the same colour, but the roots of the feathers are white. Some wing feathers are also white. The head has a beautiful set of curly ringlets; their roots are white. Red spots encircle the eyes. The crest is small; the beak and claws, yellow. There is no white anywhere except that the skin near the foramina of the ears, but it is entirely shaded from black to green. The feet are yellowish; the crest, quite small, also of barley red colour. A naked or plain stalk of oats is pictured by the male and a shoot of canary grass beside the female."

It is not only the presence or absence of beard that divides the types. They have very different characters; the bearded being the more placid and the beardless type being far more 'Mediterranean' in temperament. The beardless White Crested varieties are generally known as Dutch Crested fowl in most countries, and are only found with black or blue body colour with white crests, enhanced by a neat band of blue or black feathers just above the eyes. The muffed and bearded varieties are generally known as Paduas in most countries, but the Dutch insist they, too, are a Dutch variety. These are standardized in self-Black, Blue and White and several Laced forms.

A Pair of Muffed Poland Bantams

Keeping Polish

All the crested varieties require a high standard of stockmanship to be seen at their ornamental best. Obviously, the crest needs special attention, if they are to remain in good condition. Here, a covered area of run is a near essential. Many breeders find that trimming the crest feathers of those birds in the breeding pen is an aid to fertility. Polands and similar breeds may well be birds for the enthusiast, but this need not mean that anyone fascinated by the unique features should not take them up. Given good housing and attention to detail, they can be as hardy as any other breed. However, they do need a decent standard of looking after, and one often sees pens of Polands obviously kept by those who would be better not keeping poultry of any sort.

Today, like most breeds, it is the bantam or miniature version that is kept in the greatest numbers. Some of these, particularly in the White Crested varieties, tend to be too big. Here both judges and breeders can be faulted for not looking beyond the crest. A big crest is obviously an exhibition point and a big bird if more likely to have the big crest. Large Polands, like so many old breeds, struggle to be big enough. At one Polands Club Show, held at Bethnal Green some years ago, the winning White Crested Black female bantam was found to be bigger than its large fowl counterpart. For most people wishing to keep a breed that requires breeding a fair number year on year, in order to select the best for exhibition or further breeding, the bantam or miniature version will be the most practical option.

Sadly, the large version that many will see as the true descendants of the fowl and that have intrigued man for centuries, are now, at least in this country in very few hands. For the last few decades, it has fallen to Eric Parker to ensure the large versions have been bred in anything like the numbers necessary to ensure their survival. Over the years, Eric has shown every colour to the highest standard, and there is room here for dedicated new breeders.

Obviously, the main motive for breeding Polands over the centuries has been their ornamental features and anyone breeding them now will not be looking for much by way of utility properties. If every spare egg is treated as a bonus, one could well be surprised just how many bonuses are received. In fact, Large Polands, given the good management and the attention they deserve can be surprisingly good layers of reasonable quality eggs.

Poland type birds were used to produce both the French Houdans and Creve Coeurs breeds, both once important dual purpose fowl, producing quality medium size table fowl. They, in turn, have become almost wholly ornamental fowl, but a commercial flock of crested and muffed Houdans were kept in Kent until the 1950's.

THE ULTIMATE BROODY

by D.B.Plummer, UK.

A Silkie Hen with Chicks

In early April Chris arrived with a Silkie hen nursing a brood of seven Silkie chicks and two mongrel Light Sussex chicks that had been hatched to make up the number.

My knowledge of these quaint Japanese fowl was slight and my only contact with them had been when I visited local game keepers who had used these fluffy white chickens to hatch partridge and pheasant eggs, and with two falconers who had used two Silkie hens to hatch two clutches of Harris Hawks (strange foster parents for Harris hawks can be wicked poultry killers).

My first impression of the hen and her brood of day old chicks was that yet another rather useless toy had joined my already overcrowded menagerie; a toy that would be relatively inexpensive to keep, but of little use and totally out of place amongst the predatory horde that inhabits my premises.

The hen was inordinately tame and fed from my hand as soon as she and her chicks had settled in, but mantled her brood with the ferocity of a goshawk when one of my dogs approached her.

I paid little attention to either the hen or her brood as the Summer progressed, for life at these latitudes is hard and tough. Fields have to be ploughed and planted and my fishing nets have to be drawn twice daily. However, some six weeks after her arrival the hen began to lay, although there was no cock bird to ensure the fertility of the eggs.

I separated the brood from their mother, noting that the hatch had produced six tiny pullets and a cock bird, and two Light Sussex mongrel cock birds which we fattened for the table. I then scoured the country for a cock bird.

To my surprise I discovered that one of Scotland's top poultry breeders, Trapper Falconer (noone seems to know his Christian name) lives a dozen miles from me. With a generosity which I have

An Ideal Silkie Cross used as a Broody.

come to expect from him, he gave me the use of his best Silkie cock bird, a Heaton bred beauty that was not only a top show winner, but a producer of equally fine offspring - a novelty amongst poultry, I am led to believe.

The eggs were fertile

Ten days after his arrival I concluded that the eggs would be fertile and allowed my hen to sit on her last eight eggs, before moving him from her pen.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, the six pullets fed on high protein diet and nurtured by the long hours of daylight of the Highland Summer, had started to lay, diminutive bantam sized ones at first, progressing to size 2 shop eggs.

My borrowed cock bird was too good to waste so I introduced him to my pullets. Some eighteen days later the first of them showed signs of broodiness. I moved her with a dozen eggs for her to sit, only to find that a week later the second pullet became broody, but not before the original hen had tired of her brood of eight chicks, two cocks and six pullets and decided to lay again. Her eggs were obviously sterile, but those of her daughters were not.

At the time of writing I have 7 pullets and a hen covering 83 eggs!

I delight in rather pointless mathematical calculations, or so my friends tell me, but I discovered that should this rate of increase continue unabated by October 1993, I shall have 6,700 Silkies on my premises. By October 1996 every square foot of Scotland, from Carlisle to Cape Wrath will host a Silke, clucking merrily and waiting to hatch yet another brood.

The fecundity of Silkies

Yet, despite the fecundity of the Silkie and its willingness to sit eggs from any species, avian or reptilean, so I am informed, many keepers are reluctant to use pure-bred Silkies to hatch game birds.

Silkies are loose feathered; indeed the body feathers are little more than downy plumes. Not only will wet eggs cling to such plumage, to be smashed as soon as the hen leaves her nestbox to feed, but young chicks are frequently strangled when they are caught up in the breast feathers of hens.

Cross-bred Silkies

Many keepers favour crossbred Silkies as broodies, mating game hens to Silkie cock birds so that the progeny retain the hard feathering of the game fowl and the broody qualities manifested by the Silkie.

Cornell University, which has conducted research into the imprinting manifested by certain birds of prey, from lesser kestrels to eagles, cross

A Good Silkie Cross used as a Broody

Light Sussex bantams with Silkies. They produce broodies suitable for hatching the delicate eggs of predatory birds.

Both Silkies and their hybrids will willingly sit long after the 21 days it takes to hatch hen eggs. Duck eggs take a full 28 days to incubate, while Muscovy ducks and domestic geese take 35 days, yet the Silkie remains on eggs for this length of time.

The disposal of cock birds can be a shade more of a problem, for while these birds are edible, as indeed all poultry is edible, the Silkies fibo-plume down is anchored in black skin that deters all but the most omnivorous gourmet.

I've just researched the subject of the Roc, a huge bird plucked from the pages of Arabian mythology, so large that it can, 'truss an elephant in its talons'. Archaeologists believe that the tale could indicate that Arab dhows were blown off course by typhoons and visited New Zealand where they encountered Moas. These were 12 feet high and became extinct half a century before Europeans arrived.

The Roc of Arabian legend was infinitely bigger. In addition to devouring elephants, its eggs needed a full ten years of incubation. I wonder if Silkies were used to hatch them!

REARING HEALTHY CHICKS

by P.Laing, UK 1997.

Broody Hen Rearing Chicks outside

Of course, the vast majority of chicks are reared on large specialist commercial units, and rearing of chicks from day old will be considered in more detail in a later article, but this month we will consider in particular, birds that are reared right up to the time that they become young adults at about 18 weeks of age. At this time the chicks, now pullets or cockerels, can be needed for a number of quite different purposes. Most of them will either remain on the same farm or be sold on as commercial egg producers, and, in these cases, the cocks will, of course, have been destroyed as babies. Others, however, will be kept as replacement breeders or for showing, or sold as pure breeds into small flocks.

So what is needed in a well reared bird at this age? Most important of all, the pullet or cockerel must be well grown, and have sufficient reserve of body weight and fat, (but not too much!) to enable it to cope with the stresses involved in moving from the rearing firm and coming to full maturity and egg production. Unthrifty and below-weight point-of-lay birds of both sexes are very susceptible to disease, particularly Mareks disease, and will not develop into good adult specimens or produce well. This is really common sense, and part of the philosophy of good husbandry for all farm animals, but I am constantly surprised by the large number of cases referred to me where poor egg production, disease or lameness in adult birds is just the result of poor rearing.

When the birds are moved at point-of-lay, there may be an abrupt change in their environment. If they have been intensively reared, and are to be transferred to an extensive outdoor system, or to a multiage pure breed farm where all the pens have been heavily populated with chickens for a long time, they will need to be resistant to the inevitable challenge they will meet from coccidiosis. If, on the other hand, the birds have been reared on an extensive system, they must not

A Pair of Chicks raised in a Indoor Pen

pass on parasitic infections to their new farm, so should get a treatment against worms, coccidiosis, and external parasites like lice and mites before they are moved. Suitable wide spectrum products should be obtained from your vet.

Also, the birds must not break down with any diseases that they are carrying when they are moved to a new environment. By far the most important to consider is the virus cancer, Mareks disease; so important, in fact, that I have devoted a separate article to it, which will appear later in this series. Here it is only neccesary to state that, in spite of the difficulties and expenses involved, vaccination against the disease during the first 3 weeks of life should be incorporated into the rearing system for all commercial chickens.

Another disease that often breaks out in clinical form soon after transfer is some form of respiratory disease. This may be associated with mycoplasma bacteria or infectious bronchitis viruses, and in any case, can be serious both to the birds themselves, and often more importantly, by spreading it to the birds already present on the new farm. This leads into considering another important factor relating to chick rearing. Unless the chicks have developed an immunity to the various diseases that are common in adult birds before they are of point-of-lay age, they can contract them from carrier birds when they arrive at a new farm or go to the showground, because most of these diseases are highly infectious and can spread quickly and widely from bird to bird, in the air, in dust particles, or via intermediate hosts such as wild birds, vermin, beetles, flies and forage mites, so vaccination against these diseases during rearing is an important point to consider.

Methods of vaccination

Vaccines are, of course, available against many diseases, but thank goodness not all of them will be necessary on most rearing farms. Indeed, if vaccination against every possible disease is carried out, not only will the cost be excessive, but there is a real risk that the bird's immune system will be over-loaded so that only a poor protection against subsequent disease is achieved with the vaccine. A very real difficulty for small poultry producers is that almost all good commercial vaccines are sold in 1,000 dose bottles and that, for the live vaccines, once the bottle is opened it must be used within a maximum period that can be as short as 4 hours. Some vaccines can be put in the drinking water, some can be given by the eye-drop method and some have to be injected. Where injection is necessary, as with Mareks disease, the dose is small and it is a fiddly procedure without automatic commercial multi-dose syringes, which are expensive. It is true to say that, with regard to vaccination, the small poultry farmer is at a severe disadvantage compared with the large commercial producer.

Another hazard relates to the final vaccination that produces a continuing year-long immunity in birds at point-of-lay against the serious virus diseases infectious bronchitis, Newcastle disease and egg drop syndrome. This vaccine is given by injection and is extremely dangerous if, and this is very easily done, it is accidentally injected into the person administering it or holding the bird. It is incorporated in what is called an oil base which

Chicks in a Brooder

is highly irritant to human tissue and causes a very severe reaction if the skin is accidentally punctured by the injection needle. Over the years, a number of workers in the poultry industry have lost fingers through accidental inoculation.

Establishing a programme

The vaccination programme should usually start with Mareks disease which should be given as soon as possible after the chicks have hatched. This vaccine is given by injection and, in my opinion, a repeat dose at 3 weeks old is always good practice. With forward planning, a single bottle can be used for two ages of chicks on the vaccine day.

Gumboro disease is another hazard for poultry farmers. This is a virus that can both kill and cause interference to the development of the bird's immune system. In this way, its symptoms have similarities with human AIDS. If it is present on the farm and this can be established by veterinary diagnosis, vaccination will be necessary. Great care is needed in building this vaccination into your rearing programme because if it is done at the wrong time, or the wrong vaccine is used, it can also interfere with the effectiveness of other vaccines given to the poultry and even cause clinical disease.

Before the chicks are 3 weeks old, a decision as to whether to vaccinate against infectious bronchitis and Newcastle disease must be made. Obviously, vaccination is essential if there is perceived to be a significant risk of infection being introduced from outside the farm, if chicks are going to mix with birds reared on other farms, are going to be sold to other farms in due course or used for show purposes, but it must be remembered that vaccination with live vaccines is always an additional stress to birds because it actually gives them a very mild dose of the disease itself, and therefore, on some isolated units, a considered decision may be taken to avoid this stress by not vaccinating at all. In any case, vaccines should, in my opinion, be regarded as management tools and not as the simple answer to every disease problem.

This article has concentrated on building up immunity in the birds, so that they are well equipped to pass on to the next stage of their lives.

POULTRY: RELATED OR NOT

Author unknown. USA.

Rich Buff Pekin Cockerel

QUESTION: When breeding chickens should one be careful to see that they are not related? How long can chickens be inbred without hurting them?

ANSWER: How much inbreeding should be practised depends almost entirely upon your skill as a breeder. Since your skill as a breeder may depend upon your knowledge of what happens with inbreeding, I will try to explain this point at some length.

Each individual has pairs of chromosomes that contain the genes, or hereditary units. Just as chromosomes are in pairs, so the genes are in pairs. If we have two genes alike, such as two genes for blue eyes, then we say that this eye condition is homozygous. Homozygous means two like genes. If someone has two genes for brown eyes, they are homozygous for brown eyes. If these two individuals mate, the offspring will get one brown gene from one parent and a blue gene from the other. This individual has two genes for eye colour that are not identical and we say this is heterozygous. So heterozygous is when a pair of genes are not alike. This person would probably have brown eyes as the brown gene is usually dominant to the blue gene.

Any individual, human or chicken, has hundreds of pairs of genes. They are homozygous for some and heterozygous for some. There are many recessive genes present as just one gene that we do not know about. The effect of inbreeding is to make the genes alike (homozygous). It takes 10 generations of first cousin matings to bring about the same amount of homozygosity, or likeness of the genes as one brother-sister mating. Brother-sister, father-daughter, and mother-son are alike in their effect. A half brother-sister mating causes 12½% homozygosity. As you breed relatives together year after year, they become more related and more homozygous. Once you cross in an unrelated individual, all inbreeding is wiped out and the heterozygous condition is restored.

Is inbreeding making chickens homozygous, bad or good? It may be either bad or good.

Soft Buff Pekin Hen

Inbreeding makes the genes homozygous. If the genes made homozygous happen to be good, desirable genes, then you have improved your stock by inbreeding. But many of the genes that will be made homozygous will be bad genes, so that as a result of inbreeding you will get blindness, soft shelled eggs, infertility, poor hatchability, and all sorts of bad results.

The simple trick to follow when inbreeding is to raise lots of offspring and cull hard to get rid of the undesirable characteristics.

You may practice inbreeding and selection for a few years and get excellent birds of great uniformity, but they may have a few uniform faults, such as poor combs. If you do not have any inbred birds with good combs, you may have to buy one and introduce some new genes for comb shape into your stock. This should be done rather gradually as you may be also introducing a lot of genes that you don't want. Then select for the comb you want and as many other characteristics as possible in the first offspring. If you are able to improve your stock on a trial basis, then introduce some of the new genes into the rest of your stock.

Sometimes the homozygous inbred stocks are not the best individuals. Often when we cross two inbred strains we get hetuosis, or hybrid vigour. This is because in some cases the heterozygous condition may be the best. This is most apt to be true for such things as egg production, hatchability, and fertility. Unless you deliberately select good layers, inbreeding will probably hurt your egg production.

Most breeders of commercial egg layers practice inbreeding. This allows them to get rid of various bad genes, then they cross inbred strains to find combinations that will "nick" or give good production characteristics. Some exhibitions breeders do this but usually more or less by accident. A well known Pekin breeder that formerly showed excellent buffs and two strains of buff that he had bought from well known breeders. One was too red, had overly large but well shaped combs, and ran a little small. The other strain was too yellow, had small poorly shaped combs, and was a little large. He got wonderful birds out of the cross. Many were just right. He finally gave up and quit buffs because one strain had such poor reproduction that he could not keep going. Both strains had been inbred, but the breeders had not payed enough attention to the important reproductive traits (lots of fertile eggs that hatch).

I hope you can draw some conclusions as to whether inbreeding is desirable for you. If you only keep one or two matings and raise just a few birds, then leave inbreeding to someone else. If you can make a number of matings, can raise lots of young birds to select from and will keep selecting for good reproduction characteristics, then you can inbreed and perhaps greatly improve your stock.

If you want to buy a bird to improve your stock, find one you like and preferably one that is inbred. If a bird has the quality you want and is inbred, then it may well be homozygous for the genes you want.

USING POULTRYNZ PRODUCTS

POULTRY LICE POWDER

Control Poultry Lice by sprinkling Lice Powder around the vent, under the wings and around the neck hackles, repeat in 7days.

It may be necessary to dose again for bad infectations. It is recommended that Lice Powder is used regularly to prevent Lice re-establishing themselves on the Fowls. Poultry Lice Powder is Organic.

The main ingredients are: Sodium Hydrogen Carbonate and Silicon dioxide. Avoid inhalation of dust using a suitable dust mask and wear eye protection. There is no egg-withholding period.

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR (ACV) WITH GARLIC

Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) offers several potential benefits for poultry, including improved digestion, boosted immunity, and better feather health.

ACV can also help control internal parasites and keep the drinking water fresher by inhibiting algae growth. There is no egg-withholding period.

Here's a more detailed look at the benefits:

1. **Improved Digestion:** ACV helps balance the pH levels in the chicken's gut, aiding in digestion. It can help break down minerals and proteins, making them easier for chickens to absorb. ACV can also help cut through mucus in the gut, ensuring it's cleared out and eggs are clean.

2. **Garlic:** Contains 33 sulphur compounds, amino acids, germanium, calcium, copper, iron, potassium, magnesium, selenium, zinc & vitamins A, B1 & C.

3. **Enhanced Immune System:** ACV possesses natural antibacterial and antiviral properties that can help boost the chicken's immune system. It can help fight off harmful bacteria, including E.coli and salmonella. ACV can also help reduce the incidence of coccidiosis, a common intestinal parasite in chickens.

4. **Better Feather Condition:** Some poultry keepers report that ACV can contribute to shinier and healthier feathers.

5. **Other Potential Benefits:** ACV can help control internal parasites like worms. It can help keep the respiratory tract clear. ACV can help keep the drinking water fresher by inhibiting algae growth. Some studies suggest that ACV may even increase egg production, especially in hot weather.

6. **How to Use ACV with Poultry:** ACV can be added to chickens' drinking water, typically at a rate of 1 tablespoon per Litre. It's best to use raw, unpasteurised, unfiltered ACV with the "mother." You can also add small amounts of ACV to chicken feed to improve palatability. ACV can also be used to clean and disinfect chicken coops, waterers, and feeders.