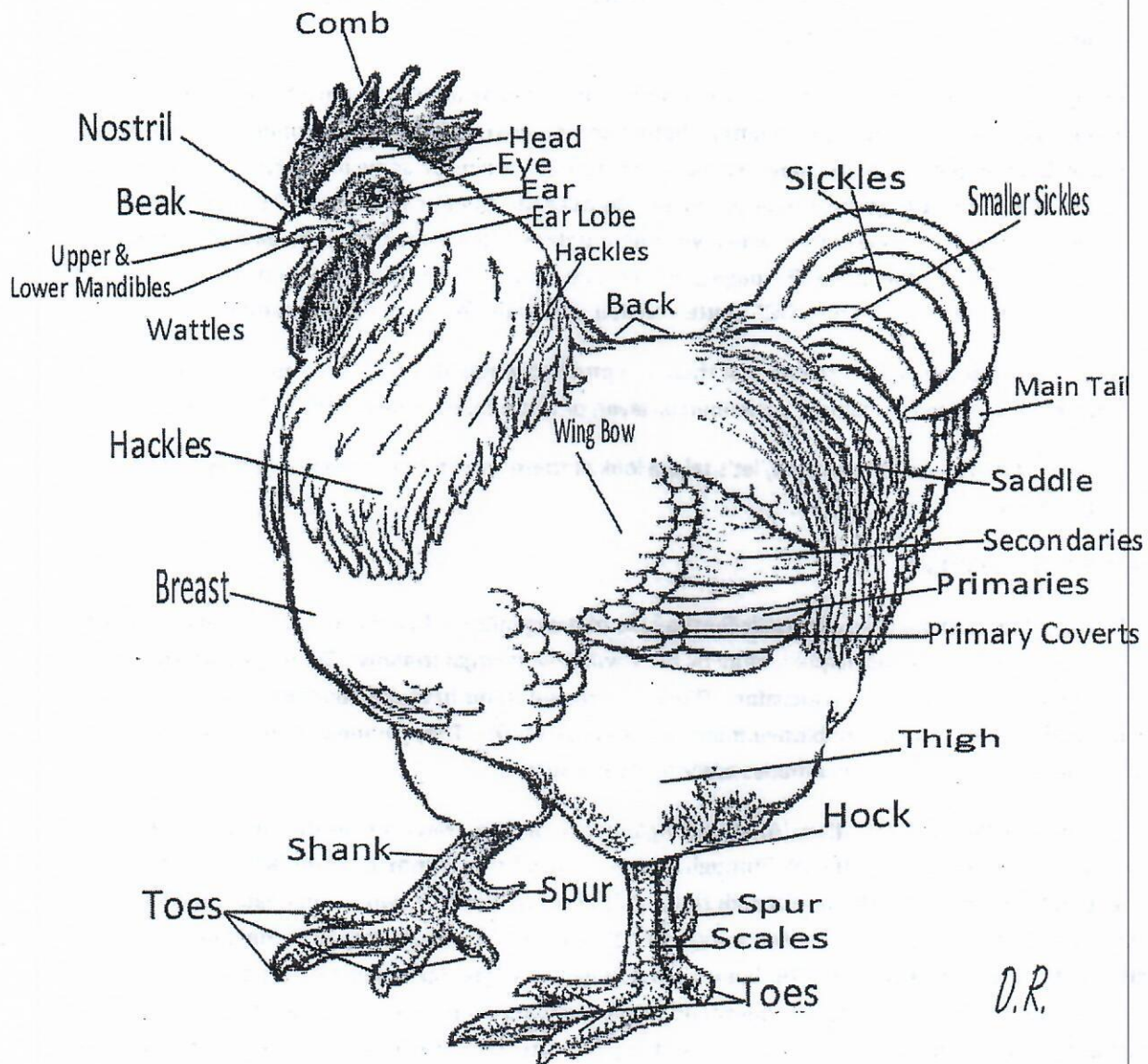


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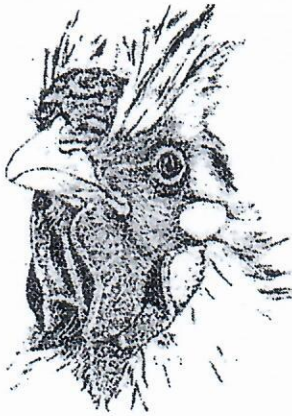
## **Poultry Terms you will need to know**

1. Axial feather
2. Bantam
3. Large or standard fowl
4. Brassy
5. Cock and cockerel
6. Comb
7. Condition
8. Crest
9. Defect
10. Disqualification
11. Dubbed
12. Faking
13. Foreign color
14. Hen and pullet
15. Lopped comb
16. Side sprig
17. Slipped wing
18. Split wing
19. Stub
20. Type
21. Undercolor
22. Uropygial gland
23. Wry tail

# External Parts of a Rooster



# Comb Types



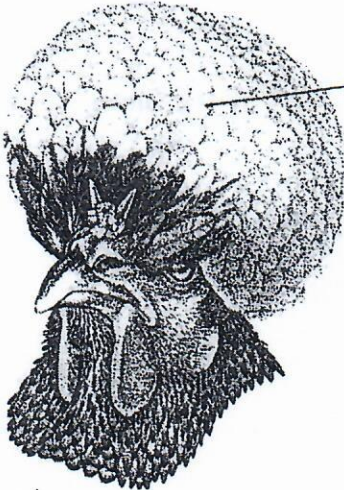
Silkie Comb



Rose Comb



Strawberry Comb



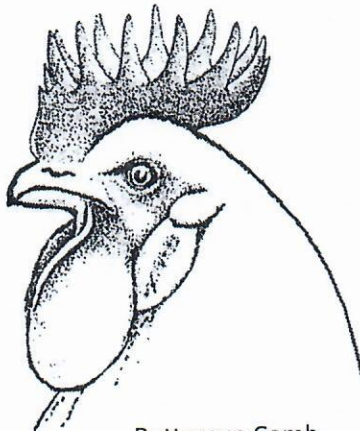
V-Shaped Comb



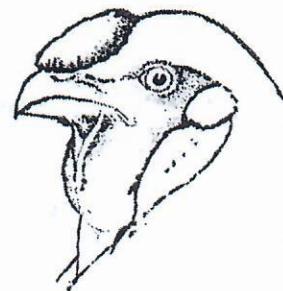
Single Comb



Pea Comb



Buttercup Comb

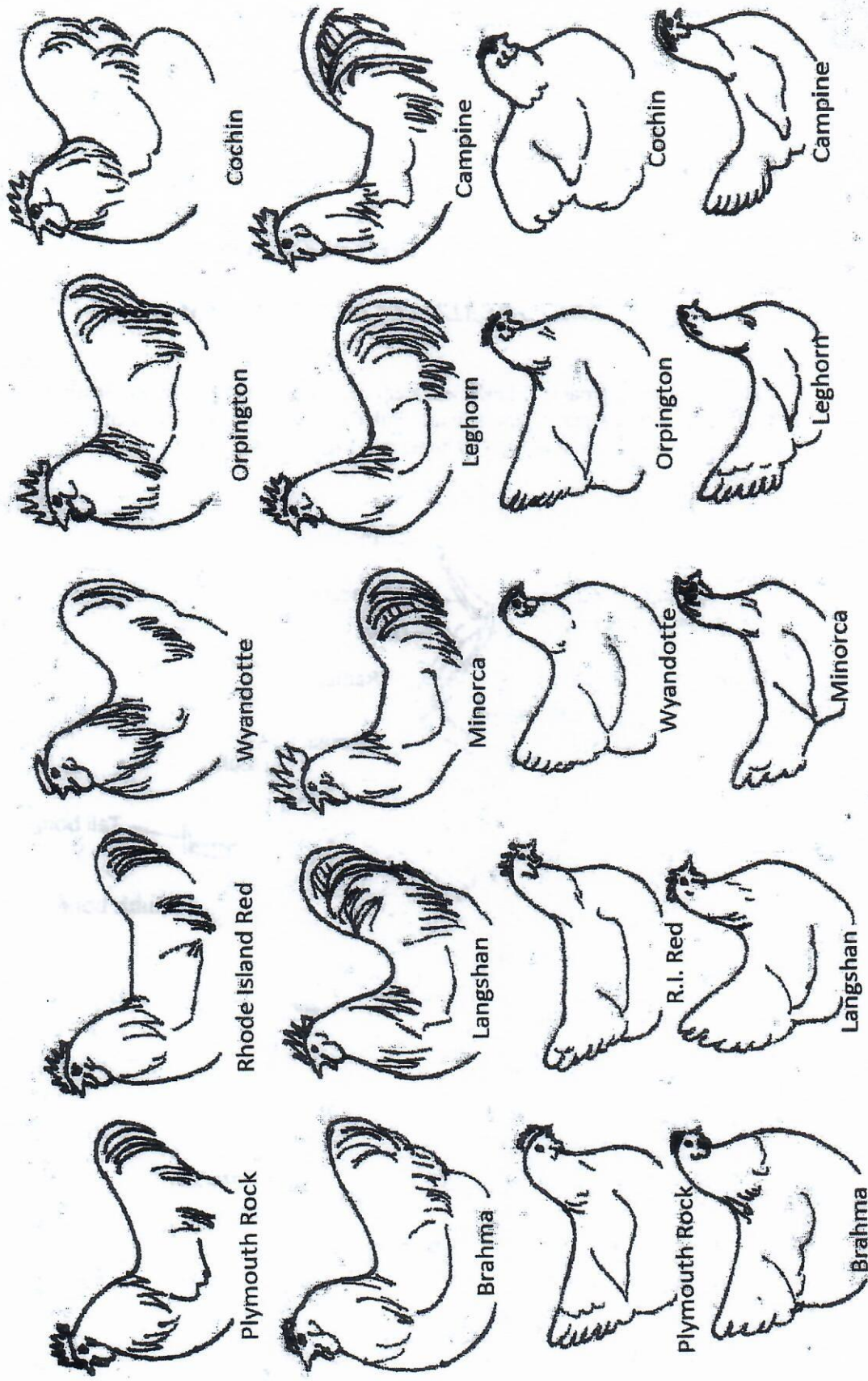


Cushion Comb

# Breed Types

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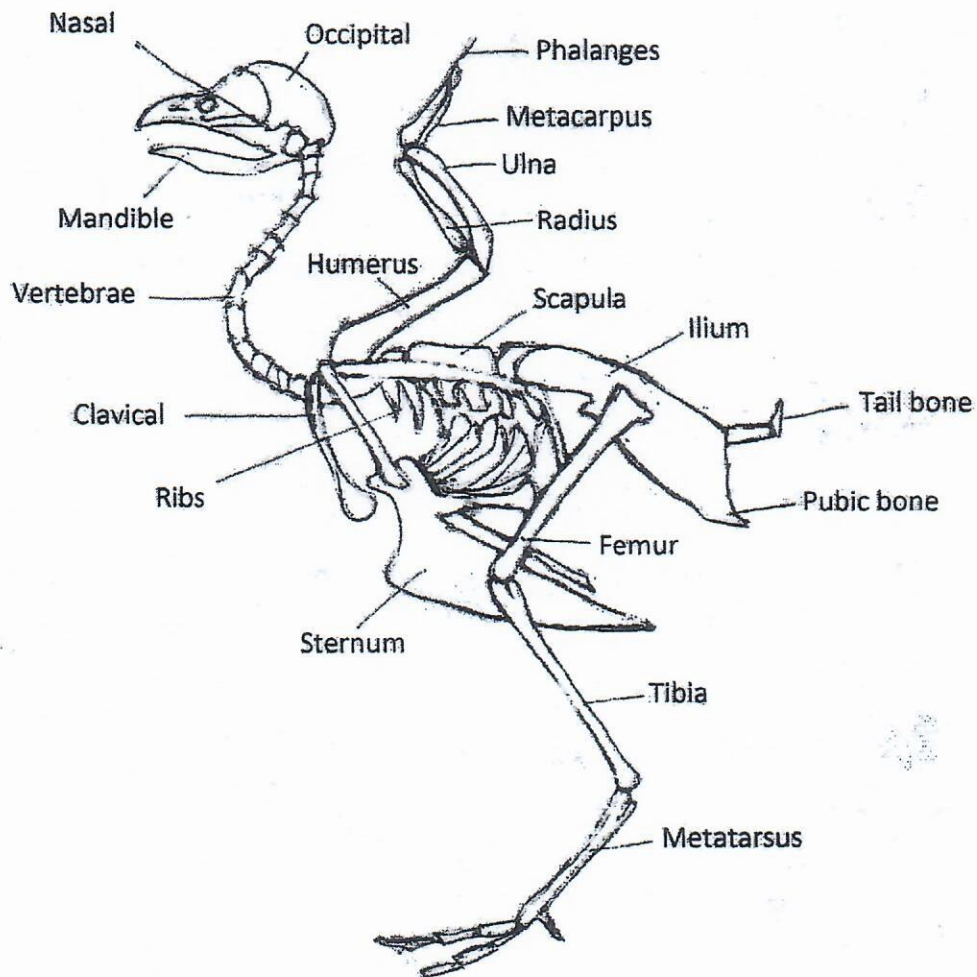
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## FLOCK MASTER EDUCATION

### ***THE CHICKEN SKELETAL SYSTEM***

Label the following parts: Mandible, Occipital (skull), Ribs, Phalanges, Sternum, metatarsus, Metacarpus, Scapula, Ilium, Pubic bone, Humerus, Tibia, Femur, Clavical, Nasal, Ulna, Radius, Tail bone, and Vertebrae.



(23)

## CLASSES AND BREEDS OF POULTY

### BANTAMS

OLD ENGLISH The Old English breed is the only breed in this class

MODERN GAME The Modern game breed is the only breed in this class

SINGLE COMB CLEAN LEGGED (SCCL) Anconas, Andalusians, Australorps, Catalanas, Campines, Delawares, Dorkings, Dutch, Frizzles, Hollands, Japanese, Javas, Jersey Giants, Lakenvelders, Lamonas, Leghorns, Minorcas, Naked Necks, New Hampshires, Orpingtons, Phoenixs, Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Islands, Spanish, Sussexs

ROSE COMB CLEAN LEGGED (RCCL) Anconas Antwerp Belgians, Dorkings, Dominiques, Hamburgs, Leghorns, Minorcas, Red Caps, Rhode Islands, Rosecombs, Sebrights, Wyandottes

ALL OTHER COMB CLEAN LEGGED (AOCCL) Ameraucanas, Araucanas, Buckeyes, Chanteclers, Cornish, Crevecoeurs, Cubalayas, Houdans, LaFleche, Melays, Polish, Shamos, Sicilian Buttercups, Sumatras, Yokohamas

FEATHERLEGGED (FL) Cochins, Frizzles, Brahmas, D'Uccle, Faveroles, Langshans, Silkies, Sultans, Booted Bantams

BANTAM DUCK Calls, Woods,

### LARGE FOWL (STANDARD)

AMERICAN Plymouth Rocks, Dominiques, Wyandottes, Javas, Rhode Islands, Buckeyes, Chanteclers, Jersey Giants, Lamonas, New Hampshires, Hollands, Delawares,

ASIATIC Brahmas, Cochins, Langshans

ENGLISH Dorkings, Redcaps, Cornish, Orpingtons, Susses, Australorps

MEDITERRANEAN Leghorns, Minorcas, Spanish, Analusians, Anconas, Sicilian Buttercups, Catalanas

CONTINENTAL Hamburgs, Campines, Lakenvelders, Barnvelders, Welsummers, Polish, Houdans, Faverolles, Crevecoeurs, LaFleche

ALL OTHER STANDARD BREEDS (AOSB) Modern Games, Old English, Malays, Sumatras, Aseels, Shamos, Yokohamas, Pheonix, Cubalayas, Sultans, Frizzles, Naked Necks, Araucanas, Ameraucanas

## DUCK

HEAVY    Pekin, Aylesbury, Rouen, Muscovy, Saxony, Silver Appleyard

MEDIUM    Cayuga, Crested, Swedish, Buff

LIGHT    Runner, Campbell, Magpie, Welch Harlequin

BANTAM    Call, East Indie, Mallard, Mandarin, Wood

## GEESE

HEAVY    Toulouse, Emden, African

MEDIUM    Sebastopol, Pilgrim, American Buff, Saddleback Pomeranian

LIGHT    Chinese (China), tufted Roman, Canada, Egyptian

## TURKEY

TURKEY    Royal Palm, Bronze, Narragansett, White Holland, Black (Spanish),  
Slate, Bourbon Red, Beltsville Small White

## GUINEA FOWL

GUINEA    All guinea fowl are in this class

# COMMON DISEASES OF POULTRY

The commercial poultry industries that supply us with top quality meat, eggs, and other poultry related products, infuse billions of dollars into the United States economy each year. The health of these birds determines not only the quality of our food but also the financial well-being of every owner and every employee who works in poultry related business.

While the commercial industry keeps an ever vigilant eye on the health of their birds, the backyard and/or poultry showman many times do not recognize the signs and symptoms of illnesses or conditions that could be problematic.

Below are four the most common diseases and conditions that we see in poultry.

**Coccidiosis:** (sometimes referred to as coxy) this condition is caused by protozoa that live out their life in the lining of the intestine. They create lesions that bleed and destroy parts of the lining that they live in.

Bloody diarrhea, weakness, huddled birds are the first symptoms and infected chicks usually die. Survivors are almost always small and unthrifty, and will not reach their full potential for egg, meat or showing. Because of their damaged intestinal walls, they are unable to absorb all of the nutrients they need.

Good husbandry practices and a feed containing a coccidiostat will help prevent this disease. Keep chicks dry, clean, warm and not overcrowded. Always start chicks with a constant supply of clean fresh chick starter and water. Chicks that are a week old can be given water with apple cider vinegar (1 tbsp. per qt.).

If the disease is present, clean the cage, isolate the infected birds, and use a sulfa drug following the package directions. The effectiveness of these drugs will vary according to how far the disease has progressed.

**INFECTIOUS CORYZA:** This is caused by bacteria and is generally passed from bird to bird by direct contact or contact with contaminated feeders and waterers. It

causes an acute respiratory infection that will produce a foul smelling nasal discharge, sneezing and swelling of the face particularly the eye (eyes). Incubation is short, ranging from a few hours to 3 days with mortality as high as 50%. Untreated birds that recover will remain carriers.

Infected birds should be treated with antibiotics mixed according to directions and any bird that repeatedly gets infected should be put down.

There is a vaccine that will help limit this disease.

**AVIAN POX:** This is a virus that is generally carried from bird to bird by a vector such as mosquitos or biting flies. It produces lesions primarily on the face of a bird but can also be seen on any area that is not feathered such as the wattles, comb, skin or legs. These start out as small nodules, and then grow into lesions that quickly burst and scab. The scabs slough off and reform until the disease runs its course. These sloughed scabs contain the virus and can be picked up by other birds.

The pox that remain on the outside of the bird are called dry and pox that are located inside the oral cavity, down the throat, and in the upper respiratory track are referred to as wet. Mortality can occur with either type but the wet pox cause birds to have great difficulty eating and drinking and therefore cause a higher death rate.

The virus runs its course in 3-5 weeks and there is no treatment. A vaccine is available, and while it is not 100% effective, it is helpful.

**MAREKS DISEASE:** This disease is caused by a herpes virus. While there is a vaccine available to help curb this, it is not 100% effective. Birds of any age and gender can contract Mareks, but young birds, female birds and stressed birds are the most susceptible.

This virus is carried through the air and can difficult to control, but does not live outside of the infected bird for long periods of time. The virus lives longer in freezing temperature than at room temperature, and it is also very sensitive to germicides. Incubation time is approximately 2 weeks but clinical symptoms may

not appear immediately. Many times birds will harbor this disease and not show clinical signs until much later or when stress weakens them. Because of this, the infection can spread throughout the unvaccinated flock before one realizes that the problem exists. Birds will appear to be normal then become lame, weak, and uncoordinated almost overnight. Many times they will continue to eat and drink but are unable to stand. This is because the virus has caused cancer-like tumors in the brain, spinal cord, nerves, liver, spleen, kidneys, heart, lungs or the intestinal track. As long as the bird lives, they will be able to spread the virus.

Listless and down birds become targets of pecking by others in the flock. This can spread the virus quickly. To limit the spread, these birds should be put down immediately.

**AVIAN LEUCOSIS:** Like Marek's disease, this too is cancer-like in that it produces tumors that are either focal (make a tumor in one place) or diffuse (carried by circulatory system and causes organ enlargement and failure). And, like Marek's disease, the most susceptible birds are young, female and/or stressed.

Since the incubation period is approximately 16 weeks, birds under 4 months will not show symptoms yet may be infected.

The clinical symptoms are pupils that are irregularly shaped and constricted, and irises that have a grey tint. The bird will appear weak, listless, have a swollen or enlarged abdomen, and be thin with a protruding keel bone. Even though the bird eats, it will continue to become more emaciated and will die.

Since the virus has a short life span outside of the infected bird, it is spread mainly by direct contact with other infected birds. Freezing and thawing kills it and it is sensitive to some disinfectants.

There is no vaccine or treatment for Avian Leucosis, therefore all birds that show symptoms of this disease should be destroyed.

## EXTERNAL PARASITES OF POULTRY

There are three distinct types of external parasite groups that will infest poultry: lice, mites and sticktight fleas. Each will cause decreased egg production, rough feathers, poor body condition, loss of weight, irritation to the animal, and possibly death.

**Lice:** These are small, wingless insects that usually spend their entire lifetime on one bird. Of the more than 40 species of lice that infest poultry, none are of the sucking variety; instead their mouthparts are built to chew. These lice feed on feathers, scales, dead skin cells or scabs. They will feed on blood if it is available but they do not possess the ability to puncture the skin to suck blood. If they are examined under a microscope, they will be seen to have 6 legs like all other insects.

The mother louse can lay up to 300 eggs that she bonds to feathers, these hatch anywhere from 3 to 14 days, and one month later each newly hatched louse is fully grown and laying her own eggs.

Diagnosis is made by physical examination of the bird. One can readily see lice crawling on the skin, clinging to the feather, see the egg clusters that are deposited on the shaft of feathers (near the vent is a favorite place) or see the feathers that have lines chewed across them.

Birds that are free range will usually not have a problem with lice as they use a dust bath for control. During a dust bath, the lice are loosened from the feathers and fall into the sand. The heating of the sun on the dirt makes short work of lice. If lice infestation becomes a problem, they can be controlled by insecticides in the form of dust, spray, or bathing liquid.

**Mites:** Mites are of the spider family and are much different than lice. They have 8 legs and feed on blood. Unlike lice, some mites do not spend their day on a bird, instead they prefer to spend this time in the barn; hiding on the roost, or in the litter. They feed at night, crawling onto the bird while it is roosting, filling up on blood then crawling back into hiding before daybreak.

The signs of infestation will be clusters of eggs around the vent area, skin irritation with red or scabby areas.

Their life cycle can be as short as 10 days or they can enter a dormancy that can last for 5 months. These factors make them more difficult to control and the numbers can be staggering in a short amount of time. Insecticides will work to repel them but since the mites are not on the bird during the day, it does not kill them. To insure that the birds are not being attacked at night, the barn and roosting area must be treated with insecticides.

**NORTHERN FOWL MITE:** Because of the virility of this particular mite, it deserves special attention. This one does spend its entire lifetime on a single bird and will become sexually mature within 4 days. Each one can live for over 1 month and can survive off of the host for 3-4 weeks. Over 300 eggs are laid by the females and these hatch within 24 hours. Four days later they are laying eggs and all of this time they are feeding on blood. Overwhelming numbers of mites can be reached very quickly and can cause anemia severe enough to cause the death of the bird.

The huge egg clusters clinging to the feathers around the vent area with live lice crawling around are key indicators that Northern Fowl Mite is present.

These mites are particularly difficult to control once they are on a bird for several reasons: they can become resistant to insecticides, so one must change and use different kinds, and, if any mites survive the treatment (and many do), they will reproduce quickly. Consistency is the key to the control of this parasite. Once this mite has been identified on a bird, daily examination, isolation and treatment until all signs of the mite are gone, is a must.

**SCALY LEG MITE:** This mite lives, breeds and dies under the scales of birds' legs and feet. The mites reach laying age at 2 weeks and will continue to live for 2-3 months. They can be passed to other birds that share the same roost. They suck blood and loosen scales which many times will allow a bacteria or fungal infection

to enter. These problems cause so much irritation and pain that birds become lame. Eventually birds become so lame and weak that they die.

Loose scales that look like they have powder packed under them are a clear indication that the Scaly leg mite is present. The old method of control was to dip the legs in diesel or kerosene, but today most pet supply stores sell medications for the treatment of scaly leg.

**STICKTIGHT FLEAS:** These small fleas are often overlooked by poultry owners until the bird is heavily infested. Like any flea they can be extremely difficult to control. After hatching, they quickly attach themselves to the head of a bird and bury themselves into the skin around the face. The favorite places on a bird are around the eyes, on the crevices of the wattles and neck, and the comb. Many times there will be hundreds on a bird. Because they bury their heads into the flesh to suck blood and leave only a small portion of their body sticking out, it is easy to overlook them and equally difficult to rid the bird of them.

Wild birds can also be infested with these fleas and can easily bring them to your coop spreading them quickly.

These fleas are particularly difficult to eradicate once they are on the birds. Most of the natural repellants have no effect on ridding your coop and your birds of this pest.

Frontline drops that are given to dogs will kill them on the birds but care must be taken to put them directly on the skin and to avoid getting them in the eyes. Only 2 drops are needed to accomplish this. To avoid infestation again, the coop must be treated or the birds must be moved to another area.

## National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP)

The NPIP is a voluntary program developed in 1935 to control and eradicate Pullorum disease and fowl typhoid. The USDA, state agencies, and the poultry industry administered it cooperatively. Florida is classified as a US-Pullorum-Typhoid Clean State. Over 95% of the US breeding and hatchery industry participates in this program. All commercial hatcheries and dealers must be NPIP participants in order to sell and/or transport chicks and eggs. Currently in FL authorized testing agents are at all exhibitions to inspect birds and test those not already tested. All poultry going to public exhibition must be from US Pullorum-Typhoid clean flocks or have a negative NPIP test within 90 days.

**Salmonella:** It is an intestinal bacterium of which there are over 2,000 different types.

**Pullorum** (caused by *Salmonella pullorum*) and fowl typhoid (caused by *Salmonella Gallinaria*) are specific diseases of chicken and other poultry. The symptoms include white diarrhea, droopiness, ruffled feathers, pale comb and wattles, loss of appetite and high death loss. Pullorum and fowl typhoid are not only transmitted by close contact and contamination, but may be transmitted through the egg from the hen to the chick, bird to bird, and by fecal contamination.

Commercial flocks have eradicated these diseases, but it still exists in backyard birds, some wild birds, and smuggled birds. All exhibitors to the Manatee County Fair **MUST HAVE THEIR POULTRY TESTED** either at the Fair check-in or 90 days prior to the fair by an authorized agent.

An authorized agent is a person licensed by the state plan to perform pullorum tests. In the whole blood test performed in the field or at exhibitions, a loop full of blood is taken from the wing vein with a needle and is mixed with a drop of antigen on a glass plate at room temp. The plate is tipped back and forth to continue to mix serum and antigen. If no antibody is present in the blood, the stained antigen will remain homogenous or smooth for at least 2 mins. If there is an antigen present in the serum, it will stick to the antigen and clump into little islands large enough to be visible within 2 mins. A bird with a positive test will not be able to be shown and the whole flock must be quarantined and tested.

For individuals wanting to become a participant in the NPIP program, an authorized agent needs to come and test 100% of your flock. The birds must be tested yearly to be NPIP certified.

To become an NPIP participant or to get more information about the program, you may contact your local County Extension Agent and request the information on how to become a member.

# KEEPING YOUR ANIMALS HEALTHY

## THE 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR DISEASE PREVENTION

Disease is a departure from health. It may be physical and/or mental, but it impairs normal body and mind functions. Any disease, and its resulting debility and pain, causes symptoms ranging from mild inconvenience to death.

An animal's world is full of bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa, and parasites and most of the time animals remain healthy even through heavy exposure. But on occasion, these substances overwhelm the body's immune system by drastically increasing in number and causing infectious disease. We recognize when our animals are ill and judging from their symptoms, can usually tell when we need to administer medications to help them heal. Because infectious diseases can be passed to other animals, steps must be taken quickly. Separating the sick animal, giving the right medication at the right dosage for the right length of time helps them heal and protects the remaining animals.

Some diseases are non-infectious. Nutritional problems, chemical poisons, injuries, even excess stress can cause this type of diseases. While these cannot be passed to other animals, they cause their own set of problems and can lower the animal's resistance to any of the infectious disease organisms. An animal can have multiple diseases, infectious and/or non-infectious, and this can make a proper diagnosis and treatment difficult to determine.

Diseases are passed to animals in a huge variety of ways but all of them can be divided into two groups: vertical and horizontal. Vertical transmission is the passing on disease from the parents to the offspring. These can be infectious or non-infectious. Vertical transmission of disease is most often determined by careful and accurate record keeping. Horizontal transmissions are the most common way diseases are passed. This is either through direct or indirect contact with the infected animal. Direct contact transmission occurs when the diseased animal physically touches or is very close to another animal and passes the disease through saliva, nasal drainage, pus, feces, and/or blood. Indirect contact involves a third party such as feeders, waterers, contaminated shoes, clothing, or even used farm equipment and tires. Humans that are handling one animal after another such as judging, working in pens, etc. can easily pass diseases. It is not uncommon for some diseases to be passed from one farm to another in this fashion. Wild birds and animals have even been known to carry diseases and parasites from one farm to another.

Maintaining the health of one's farm is never by accident, it is the result of some good old fashioned ethical work practices. A few rules, practiced without fail, you will reduce your incidents of disease significantly. Here are the 10 commandments for healthy animal practices:

1. All newly acquired animals must be quarantined for 10 days away from the other animals.
2. Spend time every day looking at each animal.
3. Learn about common diseases, symptoms, treatments and immunizations. Keep basic supplies and medications on hand and learn how to administer them according to USDA recommendations.
4. Limit the wild bird and wild animal (think squirrels, rats, mice, snakes) access to feeders and waterers. Some of these animals are predators and will kill or maim your animals. Even mice feed on feathers and can kill chicks.

5. Pen to protect. Secure and protective penning is a must. Your birds are defenseless against extremes in weather and predators. If you have pastured poultry, the most likely predators will be foxes, raccoons, coyotes, and hawks. Most of these will attack at dusk or dawn but can take prey any time. Pastured poultry should be confined at night for protection.

6. Remove and quarantine any sick, or injured animal until symptom free for 10 days.

7. Wear the same shoes to the farm every day and do not wear them anywhere else.

8. Provide and use decontamination solutions when others visit your farm.

9. Clean and disinfect equipment often.

10. All dead animals should be incinerated or buried deep enough to stop animals from digging them up.

Remember, healthy animals live longer, produce better, and are a tribute to their owner.

# PUREBRED EXHIBITION OR COMMERCIAL?

## “CLEARING UP THE CONFUSION”

“Why was my bird disqualified for being a commercial?”, “What’s the difference between a commercial and a purebred?” “The sign at the feed store said purebred.” “But, my chicken is so pretty...”

These are just a few of the comments and questions that need to be addressed for the beginning poultry exhibitor.

Purebred exhibition birds, commercial layers and commercial meat birds all have their place in the many county and state fairs across this country. These fairs are where 4-H, FFA youth poultry exhibitors display their projects for all to enjoy. Without these poultry exhibits, some in the public would never see a live chicken, duck, goose, turkey or guinea. Because the general public is not “poultry savvy”, it is our duty as exhibitors to be correct when we enter our birds. They come to see the beautiful display of birds and to try and understand the judging on the coop cards. Nothing is more confusing to the public than to see a coop card that has “DQ” written on it. It is also disheartening for the exhibitor.

Usually the exhibitor will first realize that there is a problem when filling out the show or fair entry form. “Is my bird a purebred exhibition, a commercial layer, or a commercial meat bird?” “How do I know?”

To answer this often asked question, let’s take a look at these very different areas and how to enter them properly.

### PUREBRED EXHIBITION

These are birds that are bred especially for the sake of being pure in their lineage and are held to certain standards that are outlined in great detail by the 2 world-wide organizations: The American Poultry Association and The Bantam Association. These two organizations have created the standards for each pure breed of bird and have published them in their guide books. They continue to make careful decisions when new breeds or varieties apply for acceptance.

The American Poultry Association, (APA) was organized in Buffalo, New York in 1873, making it the oldest animal association in the US. Through the years they have published a book called “American Standard of Perfection”. This book details through pictures and written words what each breed and variety of chicken, duck, goose, turkey and guinea should look like. It also lists all of the defects and disqualifications for each breed. This book is what Judges use it to determine the best bird in a show, breeders use to know breed types, buyers use it to know which bird they should purchase and showmanship participants use it to learn everything they can about their particular breed. If one owns, breeds or shows poultry of any type, this book is a must.

In 1917 a group of bantam poultry breeders met and formed the American Bantam Association, (ABA). This group has dedicated its membership to bantam enthusiasts and publishes a detailed guide book called, “Bantam Standard”. This book is the ultimate guide for anyone choosing to show bantam chickens or ducks as it is the one that judges use when determining the winner of a show. It tells what the breeds should look like and lists all of the defects and disqualification of each one. Breeders, buyers,

and showmanship participants use it as a guide for all these activities. If you do any of these, this book is a must-have.

The APA Standard includes large fowl and bantam chickens, waterfowl, turkeys and guineas. The ABA standard describes only bantam chickens and ducks. They also include some breeds and varieties of bantams that have not been approved by the APA. While all of this sounds confusing, it really is not in the showroom as the judges will handle all of that. These books are like the bible for poultry and like the Bible, they will do you no good if left unread.

When purchasing a purebred bird to show for the first time, the surest way to buy quality and not get "duped" is to attend an open poultry show of some size, say over 300 birds, look at all of the birds on display, decide on a breed you like, get the show list, find the exhibitor and talk. Exhibitors are usually thrilled to see someone express an interest in their birds and will be a great resource to you; even better, talk to several. Do not be afraid to ask about defects, disqualifications and how the exhibitor places at shows. *HINT: First time buyers should never buy from the feed store, order from a hatchery catalog, buy on-line or buy from an auction until you are much more familiar with the breeds and the standards. The safest way to make your first purchase of a purebred bird should be from a reputable breeder in a face to face meeting.*

Taking the time to study the breed standards is such important steps for any exhibitor. This cannot be emphasized too much, yet is often overlooked.

When showing a purebred bird at any show, make sure it matches either standard as closely as possible. Most chicks purchased from a farm store or catalog do not meet the "standard" for purebred poultry. Go point by point and compare your bird to the standards...feather pattern, feather color, eye color, comb type, slope of back, tail set, etc. When you are satisfied that your bird does match and that it has nothing that would disqualify it from being shown, then enter it as a purebred in the show. Remember, the bird with the fewest defects will be the winner of the show....and yes, judges do know the standards.

These purebred show birds can be large fowl, bantams, waterfowl, turkeys, or guineas and should be at least 5 months old. Some breeds mature later and are not ready for showing until they are much older. The breeder you purchased them from can help answer this question. Yes, they lay eggs, but they are not commercial egg layers and yes, you can eat them but, they are not as tasty or as tender as the birds bred for meat production. On a fair entry form, these birds are should be listed in the purebred area, never in the commercial section. When you enter them correctly, the show staff will have your cage ready and in the proper area when you arrive.

#### COMMERCIAL EGG LAYERS

Egg production birds are ones that have been bred to lay heavily in any condition. They are used by the commercial industry as well as home flocks for laying large eggs. The most common breed of commercial layer is the white leghorn. Because this breed is sold in feed stores and hatcheries across the country and is listed in the APA American Standard of Pfection as a purebred, a great deal of

commercial layer is the white leghorn. Because this breed is sold in feed stores and hatcheries across the country and is listed in the APA American Standard of Pofection as a purebred, a great deal of

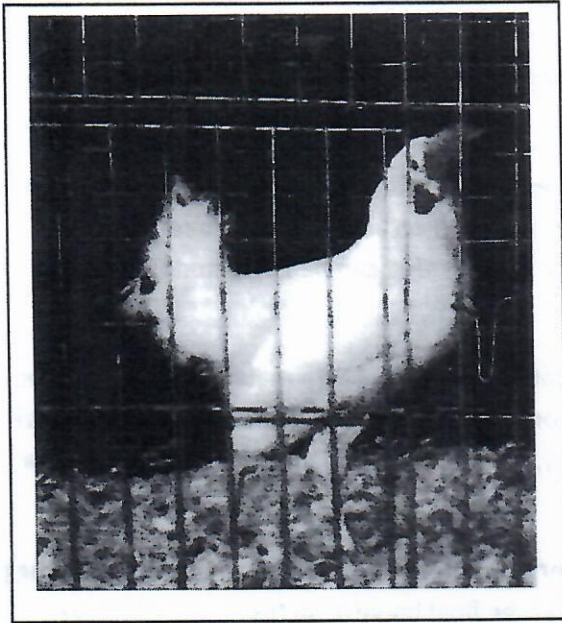
confusion exists. But the purebred type and the commercial type are worlds apart. The purebred birds have been selectively bred for many years to conform to certain standards....commercial birds, although the same breed, have been selectively bred for production. Therefore, the body types of these two are very different. The exhibition leghorns are large and long, full breasted, and possess wider and deeper bodies. The commercial leghorns have been bred over the years to have smaller bodies yet have large abdominal cavities well suited for heavy egg production. They have the ability to lay 300+ large white eggs a year on minimal amounts of feed; they are regular laying machines.

Commercial brown egg layers are generally specialized cross-bred birds that go by any number of names: red sex-link, black sex-link, sil-go-link, red star, comet, Rhode Island Red, etc. Many of these names have been chosen by companies to distinguish their own personal breed of brown egg layers from other companies' birds. Most of the confusion for exhibitors and from the public comes from the Rhode Island Red breed. Remember that purebred exhibition birds have been selectively bred for many years for exhibition and they possess the qualities that are listed in the standards while the commercial strains have been selectively bred for heavy egg production and do not possess the qualities that would allow them to shown in a purebred class. *Many feed stores sell and hatchery catalogs carry "purebred Rhode Island Reds" when in fact they are the commercial strain and not exhibition birds at all.* The commercial types are shorter bodied, more round, are orange to red orange feathering and many times have black or white flecks on their feathers. The purebred exhibition Rhode Island Reds are long, rectangular, and have a very deep mahogany coloring with black tails. The commercial types are very heavy layers of the beautiful and much coveted large to jumbo brown eggs. These brown eggs cost more in the markets because these birds eat more, and their larger bodies require more space to keep. It is simply a matter of economics. There is no nutritional difference related to egg shell color.

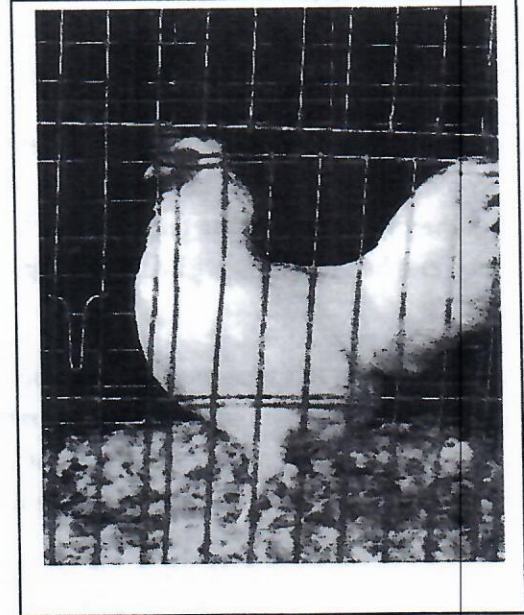
All commercial type layers should be entered in the commercial section of the show and never entered as an exhibition purebred. They should also be in production (laying) at the time of showing....remember this is a commercial class and their commercial value is egg production. The judge is judging these birds on abdominal capacity for production...so they should be young, laying, healthy, alert, clean disease free, parasite free, and have a large abdominal cavity. The judge will not be using either standard to judge these birds; production is the name of the game here.

Although some fairs will allow male entries of some commercial breeds, it is the female that is the real competitor. These birds are large fowl only as bantams lay smaller eggs and have no commercial value.

Study the pictures below to see the differences between a commercial and the purebred white Leghorn.



Commercial Production



Exhibition Purebred

#### COMMERCIAL MEAT BIRDS

Some shows allow exhibitors to show meat birds. These are crossbred birds that have been bred for extremely fast growth on minimal amounts of feed. Historically they were bred from the white Cornish and the white Plymouth Rock breeds but have long since have become a much different type of bird. They are white feathered because of the pigment from plucked feathers that can be left on the carcass after slaughter. Dark feathers leave dark spots where each feather was plucked whereas white feathers leave no markings on the carcass.

The actual breeding lines of the commercial hatcheries that deal with these birds are closely guarded. These birds provide the world with many reasonably priced products: Cornish game hens, fryers, lunch meat, chicken strips, ground products, parts and pieces and roasters. Fast food vendors rely heavily on these products. All of this comes from the same birds; we just harvest them at different ages. The Cornish game hens are actually only 4 week old at harvest, while the oldest bird is only 12 weeks old when they are harvested for the large oven roasters. All of the other poultry products that we consume are harvested between these ages. The by-products from this industry are enormous: feathers, heads, feet, and internal organs are all used by any number of producers ranging from pet foods to fertilizers to bedding and clothing. These birds cannot be allowed to get older because of their body weight. They can actually grow so large that their legs cannot support their body and they can no longer stand which causes a slow and painful death.

These birds are sold as meat birds at feed stores and from hatcheries all of the time and make an excellent food source for anyone desiring to raise their own meat and fill their freezers. Ideal harvest time is between 5 and 7 weeks when a dressed bird will weigh 2 ½ to 3 lbs.

When a fair allows a showing of meat pens they generally will provide all of the exhibitors with 10 or so day old chicks 6-7 weeks before the fair. The exhibitor is responsible for all areas of raising these birds and then will return to the fair with 3 to 5 birds to enter in a "meat pen". While these birds must be clean and healthy, they are basically judged on the amount of meat that can be harvested from each one.

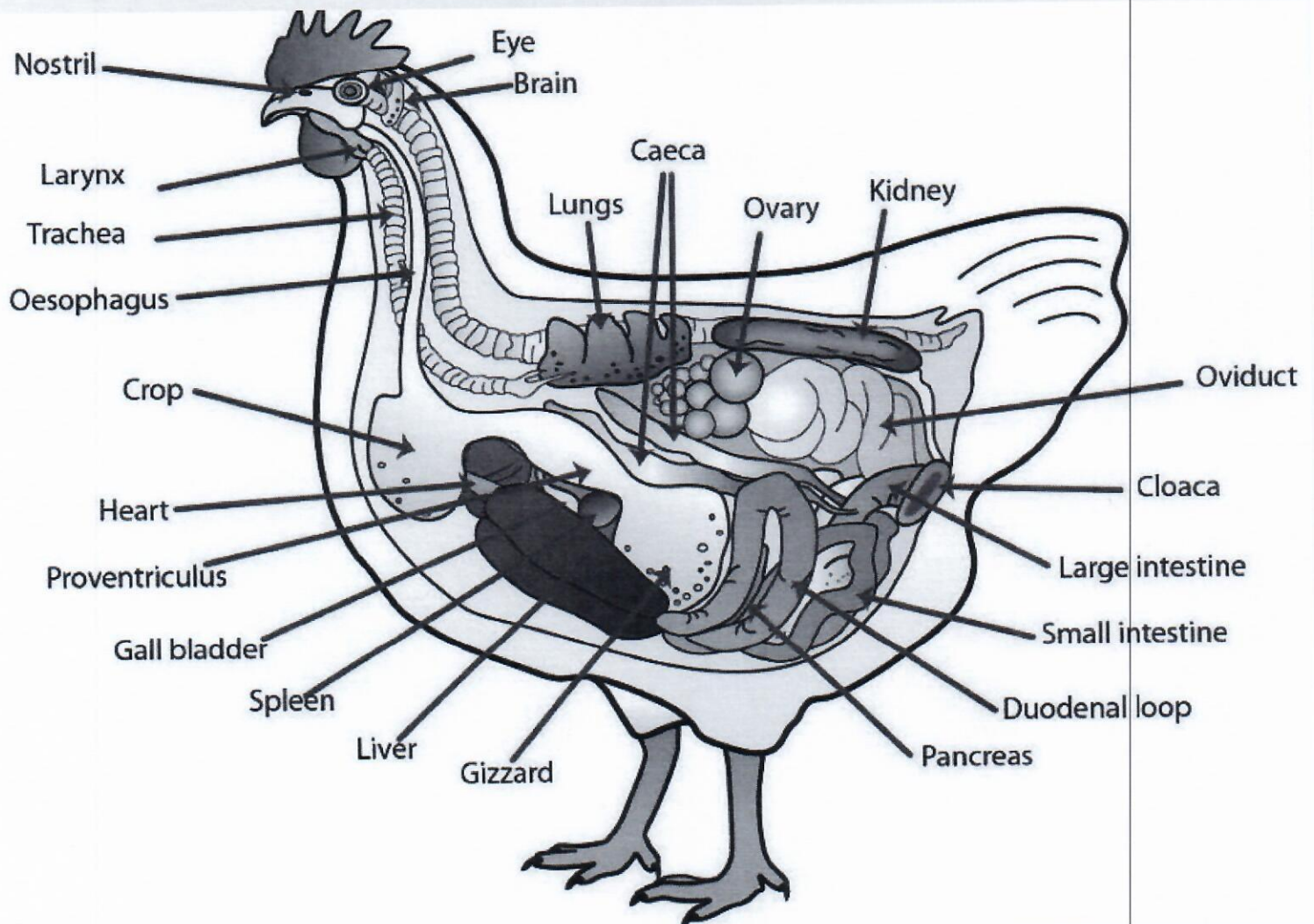
When entering this type of show, use your widest and meatiest birds and try to match them so that they all look alike. It is not usually advised to mix pullets with cockerels in the same show pen because of size differences. Again, make sure that these birds are healthy, clean and alert. The largest, meatiest, clean and most well matched entry will be the winner.

These birds are to be entered in a meat exhibit only...never in a purebred exhibition or a commercial egg production class. Remember, they are only 12 weeks old at the final harvest, so they never lay eggs.

Properly entering your birds not only proves that you are knowledgeable and the general public is educated about poultry. This is a win-win situation.

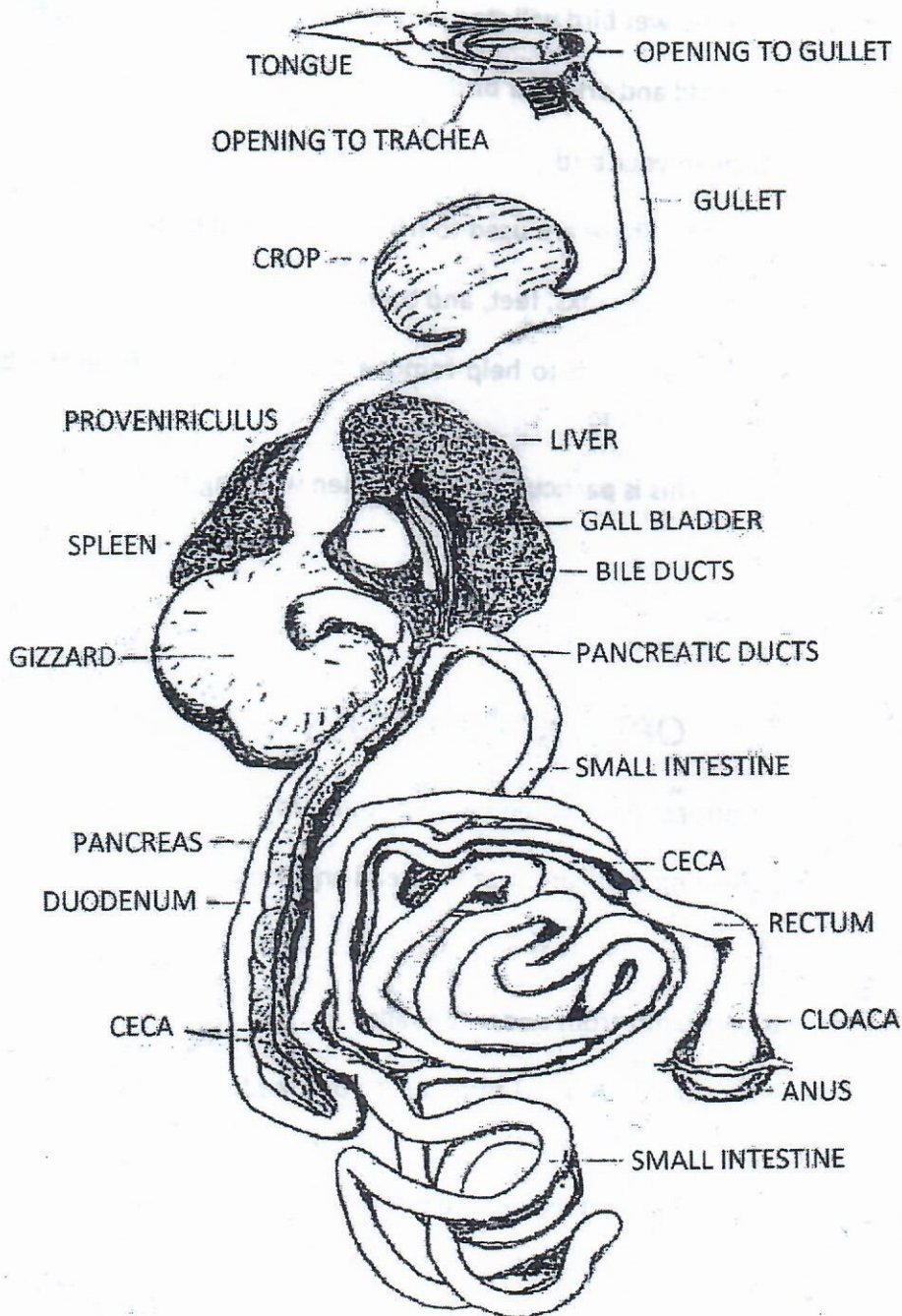
Written by: Cindy Kinard  
APA-ABA Youth Poultry Club Youth Leader

# Basic Internal Anatomy



<http://www.poultryhub.org/physiology/body-systems/digestive-system/>

## THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM OF POULTRY



## ESSENTIAL BATHING MATERIALS

The following is a list that you must gather before you start bathing your birds:

1. Three tubs of warm water – These are what you bathe and rinse your bird in.
2. Drying coop – This is where the wet bird will stay until dry.
3. Towels – These are used to hold and dry your bird.
4. Shampoo – This is used to clean your bird.
5. Nail Clippers and emery board – These are used to trim toenails and beaks.
6. Toothbrush – This is used to clean shanks, feet, and toenails.
7. Vinegar – This is used in the last rinse to help remove any shampoo left on the bird. U  
approximately ¼ cup in the bucket or tub.
8. Small sponge or washcloth – This is particularly useful when washing the head.

## OPTIONAL SUPPLIES

The following are useful but not essential when bathing your bird.

1. Cotton balls – Good for cleaning small areas of the head and toes.
2. Q-tips – Use for cleaning around nostrils and toenails.
3. Toothpicks – To clean stubborn dirt from under toenails.
4. Blow dryer – Used to dry loose feathered birds or if you needed to spot clean at the l  
minute.
5. Blood stop – Just in case you get a bleeding toenail from trimming too close.

## GROOMING BOX SUPPLIES

A box or bag to hold your grooming supplies is essential at a showroom. Since you will want to have your bird looking its very best at a show, not only for the judge but for the other exhibitors, the last minute, touch-up grooming should be done after the bird arrives at the show. This final grooming is easier to do and more is accomplished if the bird has had some time to settle in the coop and is calm. REMINDER: *No amount of grooming will help a dirty bird. Grooming at a show is for touch-up and does not replace a bath.*

1. Silk cloth – This is used to smooth and shine feathers. Yes, *silk*, not a towel.
2. Q-tips – Used for head or feet if needed.
3. Emery Board – Use to even out beaks and toenails.
4. Feather shine – Most exhibitors will use a small amount of baby oil, show sheen, or other product that is used to put a luster on animals. Use sparingly on tight feathered birds and maybe not at all on loosely feathered birds..
5. Blood Stop – Always good to have.
6. Wet wipes – Cleaning feet is a must after travel.
7. Small trash bag –Clean up.
8. Vet-rx, antibiotic ointment, baby oil, Vaseline- A light coat of any of these on the comb, beak, and legs will brighten the color and give a soft shine.

# SHOWMANSHIP STUDY GUIDE

Animal showmanship is a much loved activity for all youth who are involved in raising animals. It provides a way for participants to engage in an activity that not only is fun, but proves to be educational.

Showmanship with any animal has two basic and distinct divisions: handling and knowledge. Judges look for handling abilities that will allow them to see that the participant can correctly handle and display the animal and that they can do so without risk of injury to themselves or the animal. The knowledge area is determined by the questions that a judge will ask during each individual's showmanship time and how well the showman has chosen, groomed, and cared for the animal.

Every animal group has a unique way that showmanship is conducted and regionally there will be differences. This guide will concentrate on poultry. Most fairs and poultry shows across the nation that have poultry shows will offer the exhibitors the opportunity to participate in poultry showmanship.

Poultry showmanship participants learn quickly that it is a process they must start long before the scheduled event.

## FOR THE EXHIBITOR

### CHOOSING A SHOWMANSHIP BIRD

Youth generally begin choosing their showmanship birds by closely observing them to determine which ones are gentle enough to be handled. Some breeds are naturally more inclined to be gentle such as Rocks, Old English games, modern games, Silkies, Cochins, Dutch, and Japanese. Other breeds such as leghorn and LaFleche will take more patients and time. Of course, one can always find a wild Cochin or a very gentle leghorn, so it goes to prove.....there are exceptions to every rule. It is generally recommended that your chosen showmanship bird (s) not be your number one show bird, in fact, they may have several defects. This is encouraged in many shows because if a judge asked how you would improve your bird, you have the opportunity to point out the defects. There is always the possibility that you and the bird may be participating in showmanship when the show judge is judging the show and your showmanship bird will not be judged. It will be no loss if your showmanship bird is a second string bird with defects that would keep it from being grand champion.

Any bird brought to showmanship should be clean, healthy, fully feathered, and purebred exhibitions breed. Production or commercial type birds should not be used for showmanship as these birds are bred for egg or meat production and are generally not handled by the owner.

Many exhibitors have the opportunity to choose several birds as possible showmanship birds while others may not and will have to work with one or two birds. Either way, the first step is handling each

bird to determine which one(s) actually like to be held, will remain calm and feel settled in your hand. It is always best to choose several for this first test then choose at least two to start training.

Birds learn from patient, gentle repetition and food rewards. Knowing and practicing this will make training your bird much easier.

**The following guide is for handling chickens of all sizes.**

**HOLDING:** Holding a bird the correct way reduces the chance of injury to both the handler. The bird feels safe and relaxed which greatly reduces stress to the bird.

There are two main holding positions for chickens. They will be referred to as the #1 and #2 positions for the remainder of this manual.

To hold a bird, the breast (keel) should rest in the palm of your hand with the bird's head facing your elbow and the bird's legs dangling from between the fingers. The thumb of that hand will hold the bottom of the outside wing. With that arm bent at the elbow, the bird will be held close to your body. This will confine the other wing and make the bird less likely to flap. Your free hand is used to open the show cage, or can be placed on the bird's back. This will soon become second nature to you and the bird. Holding a bird in this position is the basic hold and from now on will be referred to as the #1 position. You will use this position every time you transport a bird.

The #2 position is used for penning or passing from one person to another. Hold the bird in the #1 position. Slide the hand that has been on the bird's back, down to the far side and grasp the wing and leg. Gently roll the bird away from your body and slide the hand that has been under the bird out and grasp the wing and leg closest to your body. The bird is now in position to either pass or place in a cage.

Many exhibitors find they are more comfortable using bantam birds for showmanship. Larger birds are heavy and many times are difficult for all but the most experienced showman. Control is the key word....the handler must always be in control of the bird.

## **HANDLING AND TRAINING**

1. Start your training by holding your bird correctly until both you and your bird are comfortable. This may take several days but remember: this is the foundation for successful showmanship. Practice picking the bird up and holding several times a day. Allow the bird to take treats such as cut up grapes, pieces of bread, dried meal worms, kernel of corn, etc. from your hand or fingers. When they have done this several times and expect to be hand fed, then move to the next step. **IMPORTANT:** Don't skip this step because it is basic and will be used for the rest of training.

2. Posing on a table is the preferred method because if a bird can pose on a table then it will certainly pose in a cage but not necessarily the other way around. Look closely at the picture of your breed in the American Standard of Perfection and/or the Bantam Standard; this is what you want your bird to look

like on the showmanship table. The object is to allow the judge to get a view of the bird's type when you pose them. Holding the bird in the #2 position, gently stand it on a table that has secure footing such as shavings, straw, grass mat, etc. then slowly remove your hands. When the bird starts to move or squat, place your hand under the bird to lift it and reposition it where you want them to stand. A gentle stroking of the wattles while the bird is standing will quiet it and causes it to position the head properly. Reaching to the side of the tail, one can easily achieve the proper tail angle and spread. Never place your hand on the bird's back as this only causes them to squat. Repeat as often as necessary until the bird stands with the head and tail in the proper position. Now feed a treat. Repeat, repeat, and repeat some more, and above all, be patient.

When the bird learns to stand, you may move on to the next step. Introduce a show stick and use it, instead of your hands, to position the head, tail and wings if necessary. Judges use show sticks to pose birds when judging so you will want your bird to be accustomed to being touched by one. A small diameter dowel stick is a great substitute for a show stick but should be used for training only, never at a show or in showmanship.

This training takes time and will vary according to breed, sex and age of your bird, and the amount of time you spend working with them. Be patient; it will work.

3. This part of the training is probably the easiest. Using a show type cage, try to replicate the show atmosphere by penning your bird in the cage and supplying some distractions. Being caged next to other birds, background noise, talking, playing music, and having people move around will very quickly teach your bird to "tune out" the distractions and become calm in a noisy show environment. This greatly reduces the bird's stress level at a show and allows the bird to show at its best.

4. Birds quickly become accustomed to and are comfortable being picked up, passed and placed in and out of a cage if it is done correctly and consistently. REMEMBER: ALWAYS PASS, RECEIVE, AND PLACE BIRDS IN AND REMOVE BIRDS FROM A CAGE, HEAD FIRST. The following steps are safe for the bird and the exhibitor.

**HOW TO PLACE BIRD IN A CAGE:** With the bird being held in the #1 position, start the #2 position by using the hand on the bird's back to open the cage door. Now put your bird in the #2 position and place them in the cage head first. In one move, position the bird in the center of the cage and turning the bird so a judge would have a side view of the bird and have the bird pose. Make any final adjustments to the bird's stance, smooth any feathers that may be ruffled, remove your hands from the bird and cage. This takes some practice but can be accomplished with patience, practice and a treat.

**HOW TO TAKE A BIRD OUT OF A CAGE:** Using your hands and arms, reach into the cage, turn your bird to face you, slide your open hand beneath the keel and allow the legs to be between your fingers. With the other hand on the bird's back, restrain the wings with the fingers of both hands and lift the bird. Remove the bird head first and place them in the #1 position. Never remove a bird from a cage that is flapping or resisting as this could result in injury to either or both the handler and/or the bird.

**PASSING A BIRD:** By now the bird is comfortable and not stressed by handling so learning the art of passing a bird is more for the exhibitor to accomplish. Enlist another person to assist with this activity.

Stand facing your assistant with the bird in your hands in the #1 position. Move the bird to the #2 position and hold bird away from your body for the transfer. Watch your assistants face so you will know when they have control of the bird. The assistant will reach under the bird with one hand and place their other hand on the bird's back. When they feel that they have total control of the bird, they should glance up at you. This signals that they have control of the bird and you may remove your hands from the bird. They will then take the bird to the #1 position.

### **USING TURKEYS, WATERFOWL, GUINEAS OR EXOTICS**

Turkeys, waterfowl, guineas and exotics are beautiful birds with many forms, colors, and sizes. In fairs and showrooms across the nation, they have proven themselves to be greatly appreciated by the public as well as exhibitors. Yet many of them have maintained some degree of their wild heritage and can be more difficult to tame and train for showmanship.

Turkeys in particular must be shown in such a way that their feathers are not handled. In the wild, turkeys have the ability to turn their feathers loose when they are attacked by a predator. This ability allows the bird to escape and leaves the aggressor with a surprised look, a mouth full of feathers and an empty stomach. When turkeys are being shown, great care must be taken to protect against any roughness because they still have this ability and will use it. If this happens, the exhibitor is left with a surprised look, a handful of feathers and no ribbon. And the turkey is.....well...somewhat naked.

One often forgotten fact is that turkeys are heavy and the showman that is waiting in line for showmanship must hold the turkey with both of the birds' legs together and the free arm surrounding the top in order to control the outside wing. Judges generally like for them to be placed on the table. Once it is on the table, both legs are held together and pulled backwards toward the showman and at same time the bird is placed down on its breast. The turkey will generally spread its wings on the table at this point for balance. One cannot pose a turkey or make them spread their tails so therefore the exhibitor generally receives no points for that part of the showmanship exam.

If you practice with a turkey, you always run the risk of it loosing feathers.

Waterfowl in the wild escape predation by flying or fleeing onto water. Exhibition waterfowl have retained much of this ability and are usually somewhat flighty and nervous about handling. Most waterfowl are judged by visual examination in a coop and are seldom handled. Call ducks and some light ducks are the exception to this rule. Because ducks and geese cannot pose or change their stance, the winner is determined by their type, their movement, their balance on the legs, and their stance. Using waterfowl for showmanship again presents a problem for the judge when trying to determine points for posing and handling.

Call ducks can be used if the showman takes care to hold legs together while resting the duck in their palm and the exhibitor has great control of the duck. Their wings are powerful and they are expert escape artist.

When moving a duck either on a table or in a cage, it is expected that the showman will move and turn the duck by its neck. Heavy ducks turn slowly and do not appreciate their wings being opened for examination.

Using a goose for showmanship presents the same problems plus some. They are heavy and have strong legs and wings with claws on both. They are judged by observation in a cage and are very seldom handled. The showman who chooses to use geese, will need to be strong with the ability to lift and control these majestic birds because the judge will want them to be lifted onto the table by both wings, turned by their neck and be under control at all times.

**NOT RECOMMENDED:** Guineas and exotics such as pheasants, quail, or peacocks do not make good showmanship birds.

#### **HINTS:**

**PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.....BE PATIENT, BE PATIENT, BE PATIENT**

Once you have a bird trained, a few practice sessions before each show is all that is necessary to sharpen both you and your bird's skills.

Having at least 2 birds trained for showmanship allows you to have the flexibility of taking either bird to a show. Birds used for showmanship should always be healthy and in full feather.

#### **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

The most important thing to wear during any showmanship contest is a SMILE. This never goes out of style and always makes a great first impression.

The published show rules or catalog will be the guide for choosing your showmanship attire. Read and follow the rules for each show. Some fairs consist totally of FFA and 4-H exhibitors so you will be expected to dress accordingly. Open shows will often times print what the showman is expected to wear. If there is no published dress code, one can never go wrong with the following: White shirt with collar and some type of sleeve (weather appropriate), black pants, jeans or skirt, closed shoes (no sandals or flip-flops), and a belt. APA-ABA Youth Club, APA youth, ABA youth, and/or any breed club member can put the icing on the cake and wear a show coat (buttoned) with all of their hard earned patches displayed on it.

Clothing and hair should always be neat and clean.

The following short list is what most showmanship judges will determine to be "out of dress": too much jewelry or "bling", ear phones, ear buds, caps or hats, shorts, high heels, miniskirts, tank tops, and/or exposed undergarments. All phones and other electronic devices should be turned OFF.

### **SHOWMANSHIP DIVISIONS**

Fairs, clubs, organizations, etc. determine the divisions for youth shows and showmanship. While there may be slight differences between organizations or even regionally, most are similar. These will be published and the participant is responsible for following the rules. Generally the divisions will be broken down into age groups with allowances made for novice and handicapped exhibitors.

Some shows allow for a first time exhibitor, no matter what age, to be tested as a novice. This type of testing will provide the participant with experience of showmanship and the score sheet is geared more towards providing valuable information than about receiving a score.

Handicapped exhibitors are always encouraged to participate in poultry showmanship. The show superintendent will make the final determination as to what division they will be in. When filling out an entry for the show, if there are any special considerations that need to be taken, this should be noted on that entry. The show superintendent will then notify the showmanship judge of any adjustments that are necessary. Many handicapped participants have successfully shown poultry and competed in all areas of showmanship. Case in point: One wheelchair bound showman, with very limited uses his hands, often participated in showmanship using his brother as the handler. This exhibitor was allowed to tell the brother what to do and in doing so he would prove to the judge that he was knowledgeable about his project.

Competitors who are deaf or have difficulty speaking, are always allowed an interpreter. Those that need extra time to complete the skill will be allowed to have that time.

### **ENTRIES AND SIGNING IN**

After receiving a show catalog or the fair rules, READ IT and look closely at the entry form. There is usually a place where you can indicate your desire to participate in the showmanship contest. Read the rules ahead of time and keep them with the copy of your entry as you will need to refer back to both. This is where you will find if there is a dress code and what it is, the age divisions, and whether you will need to enter your showmanship bird in the show or just bring it to participate. Most shows require the exhibitor to own the bird and enter it in the show in order to participate in showmanship.

Upon arrival to the show, find the entry table or youth area. Most will have a paper posted for showmanship sign-up. Some allow you to choose a time while others will determine the start time for all participants. Either way, you should indicate your desire to participate by signing in at the appropriate area. Make sure you know when showmanship will start.

Being dressed 30 minutes ahead of time will give you time for all of the last minute study you might want to do, get your bird from the coop, and be in place when the contest starts.

# POULTRY EXAMINATION FOR SHOWMANSHIP

Poultry entered in a show or fair will undergo a visual and a hands-on examination conducted by the judge to determine the placement of the bird in the show. Judges that examine purebred poultry are licensed by the American Poultry Association (APA) and/or the American Bantam Association (ABA) and they compare the bird to the standards set by these two organizations. Judges that examine commercial/production poultry usually work in the commercial poultry industry or teach poultry science and use their skills to determine how productive each animal is in terms of either laying ability or meat production.

**PURPOSE OF EXAMINATION SHOWMANSHIP:** The value of poultry is in either its ability to have commercial value as an egg layer (Production meat birds known as broilers are generally not used in a showmanship contest.), or to maintain and reproduce purebred animals close to the standards set down by the APA and/or ABA. Both of these may be shown in the proper division. Production/commercial are always large fowl birds and must be shown in a production class and be in full production in order to place. Exhibition birds should always be shown in their proper class in the exhibition part of the show. Because all birds are judged and placed by a visual and hands-on examination by a judge, learning the basics of how to conduct a proper and thorough examination is fundamental for every poultry owner and exhibitor; therefore, it is vitally important for young exhibitors to look at their flock through the eyes of a judge and be able to apply the APA/ABA standards to these birds. Equally important is handling ability. One must be able to correctly handle the bird without risking injury to the animal or one's self. Participants are expected to know proper handling techniques that include: holding, caging, passing and receiving of their animal and posing the bird either in a cage or on a table. There will also be questions on general poultry knowledge such as class, breed, variety, sex, and age of the animal they are showing.

The showmanship contest starts when the exhibitor, holding their bird, approaches the judge. It is expected that the contestant introduces him/herself and tells the judge the class, breed, variety, sex and age of the bird they are holding. They may also state where they are from and what organization(s) they are showing under.

The judge will then give further instructions. Many judges are asking participants to conduct an examination of the bird. These exams start with a visual inspection for signs of diseases, defects, and/or disqualifications. Many participants will begin with the bird standing in the coop and use an extending pointer known as a "show stick", the exhibitor can point to each area as they explain and this helps the judge understand more clearly what area of the bird is being examined. .

## Purebred exhibition birds

Purebred exhibition birds are examined for conditions and the conformations that are described in the APA and/or the ABA Standards. Anything that falls short of these standards is considered to be a defect or a disqualification.

The exam should start with the bird posed on the table or in a cage. With the bird standing, stance, balance, body type and proper wing carriage can be seen and pointed out to the judge. This should take only 30 seconds or so. The exam then continues and the participant will hold the bird. Starting at the head, proceed to the neck, back, tail, vent, followed by the lower portion of the bird including legs and feet. Some of the areas that should be pointed out to the judge are: color and shape of beak (bill for waterfowl), type of comb, color of eye, color and shape of earlobes, shape of wattles, length of neck, length of back, tail, color of legs, leg feathering for feather legged breeds, and number of toes.

#### Production/commercial egg layers

As with other birds, this exam will start with the head, proceeds to the tail and ends with under carriage of the bird.

Areas that should be pointed out are: Comb is red and waxy indicating that bird is in production, back is proper length and width, fluff area is full, legs are straight and wide set, and the breast is full and straight

Production/commercial broilers are not used for showmanship.

Part 3 (holding examination) for purebred exhibition poultry.

This final part of bird examination is looking at the areas of the bird that were not visible when the animal was being posed. Again, the exam generally starts at the head and proceeds over the top to the tail and concludes with the undercarriage including feet and legs. The areas to examine are: feeling for back width, opening wings to check for color and molt, and the presence of lice and/or mites on the body or feathers of the bird.

When the examination by the exhibitor is completed, the judge will give farther instructions.

At the end of the exam, it is a nice gesture to say thank you to the judge.

# SHOWROOM DO'S AND DO NOT'S

## The unwritten rules of showing poultry

Knowing and following proper etiquette when attending or entering a poultry show creates a pleasurable experience for all involved: the show committee, the other exhibitors, visitors and of course, you. Most of these unwritten "rules" are really a matter of common sense and none of them are a matter of "life or death". These suggestions will make you feel like a seasoned exhibitor and not so much like a "rookie".

1. Fill out the entry form correctly and ALWAYS MAKE A COPY FOR YOURSELF, send it in on time and include any entry fee.

Coop cards are filled out using the information you have put on your entry form. Each bird's entry must be transferred to these cards either by hand or interred into a computer program. Once they are completed, the cards are then placed in order. Once the cards are all filled out and the numbers tallied, the show committee will know the total numbers for the show. With this step finished, it is time to design the showroom with the correct number of cages and proper placement of each cage to match entries. Countless hours are spent on "behind the scenes" work but these hours are critical for the smooth operation of a show. The showroom design and coop cards are readied for the actual physical set-up of the showroom. Volunteers will spend hours opening and setting up stands and cages, placing water and food cups in each cage, and putting in shavings. Then the actual hanging of the coop cards is done. The huge amount of work that go into the proper handling of a show is the reason that deadlines are several weeks ahead of the show. Everything hinges upon entries.

A simple one minute check to make sure your entry is complete and correct can prevent the show committee from spending hours correcting a mistake that was made on an entry.

Unless you have an emergency such a bird that died, or went into a molt, do not ask the committee to change your entry. A last minute change involves much paperwork and sometimes even requires the moving of cages in the showroom.

Sending in your entry fee money along with your entry reduces mistakes and saves time at check-in. Some shows and fairs will not accept entries that do not include the entry fee.

## 2. Bathe and groom those birds.

One week before the show, bathe and groom your birds that you are planning on taking to the show. Check your copy of the entry to be sure they are the right ones. A clean, well groomed and properly cared for bird is a great testament to the exhibitor. One cannot expect to win if they show up with a dirty, disheveled, and unkempt bird. Build a reputation of showing well-bred and well cared for birds and you will earn the respect the show staff and of other breeders.

## 3. Arrive at least 1 hour prior to the start of judging. This is called "coop-in".

The first thing you will pick up is your show sheet. It will be at the front desk and will have every exhibitors name and corresponding number on it, (including yours) and you will want to keep it handy during the show. After saying "Hello", unload your birds and find your cages. Always check the information on the coop card to make sure all of the information is correct. Put each of your birds in its proper cage and give them water but no feed until judging is finished. (If judging is to be the next day, you will want to feed them but remove the feed before they are to be judged). Some birds tend to gorge on feed and with a full crop, they may throw up on the judge when they are being handled. That is never a good start.

If there is room under the cages, some shows will allow you to stow your carriers under them. If not, take them back to your vehicle. Bring in your grooming box and spend a few minutes doing your showroom grooming.

At times, birds that are placed next to each other will start to spar. If this happens, place a barrier between the cages, such as paper or cardboard, preventing them from seeing each other; out of sight, out of mind.

## 4. Judging- this is called "the show ". But what is there to do?

Here is the best part: Your work is finished for a few hours; now it is all up to the judge(s). Use this time to visit other breeders, get something to eat and drink, check out the sale area, enter some of the contest, buy some raffle tickets and always look at the other beautiful birds that are entered. Some shows have booths set up where you will find poultry supplies, books, or other items of interest that are for sale. Sometimes there are breed clubs you can join and shows will advertise the fact that a breed "meet" is being held. This means that a particular breed club is sponsoring winners of that breed with special, and much coveted, awards. Meets usually attract high numbers of individuals that show the breed and this give you the opportunity to see more birds of this breed than are usually shown.

One of the most enjoyable activities to do during this time is to check your skills against that of the judge. Choose a breed, look closely at each entry prior to judging and mentally place each one. After they are judged, go back to see how well you did. This will help hone your skills as an exhibitor and as a breeder. Learn to see the birds as a judge sees them.

During the judging, you will see isles roped off. These ropes are there to allow judges and clerks uninterrupted time to do their jobs. Judges and clerks need the fewest distractions possible. You may watch the proceedings from the next isle if you wish. When they are finished in an area, the ropes will be removed and you are free to resume looking. Now is the time to look at the entries, study them and try to understand how the judge reached his decision. At first you will say, "They all look alike to me". But, after a period of time, you will be able to distinguish the small details that set one bird apart from another. You will be able to see what makes a winner win and a loser lose. Remember you will be viewing and judging only on what you can see from the outside of a cage but judges handle entries and some very important things only reveal themselves only upon handling the bird. Usually the judge will make note of what he finds and will write it on the coop card. REMEMBER: Judges have studied poultry for years. They have served as clerks, worked under and been critiqued by other judges, and finally passed the strenuous APA and/or the ABA written, oral and showroom tests. They really make very few mistakes. The best part is they are usually more than happy to talk with you when they have finished their work for the day. All you have to say is, "Will you talk to me about my bird"? Then be prepared for one of the best lessons in poultry you will ever have.

#### 5. Did I win?

The class winners will usually be on display on "Champion Row". So if your bird is there, you are certainly a winner because from these displayed birds, the grand and reserve champions will be chosen. Winners of contest, drawings and the top birds will be either posted or announced at the end of the show. If they are announced, the crowd will gather near the announcer to listen. At times it is hard to hear over the noise of the birds and the lack of a speaker system. Trophies and ribbons will be handed to the winners. Now is a good time to note the winners on your show sheet so you can contact them later if you want.

#### 6. End of the show. This is called "Coop out".

This is the time you remove your birds from the show cages and put them back in their carriers. Most fairs have a specific time to coop-out. This is usually a very busy time, so be patient, be prepared to move slowly and follow the fair rules.

A shows coop-out time is immediately after winners are announced. Although you may see people taking their bird's home after they are judged, the proper coop-out time is after awards.

It is disrespectful and shows poor showmanship when an exhibitor removes their birds from a show just because they do not agree with the judges' placements.

When you have finished putting your birds back in their carriers, check once more to see that you have every bird going home that came with you. Many times birds are left behind because someone forgot to check one last time. Take your coop-cards with you. The information on them is very valuable when setting up breed pens or preparing for the next show.

#### 7. Before you go....

Many fairs require you to help with dismantling cages and cleaning the show area. Independent shows usually do not require this but your help is always appreciated. More hands make the hard work of folding cages, storing equipment, and cleaning the showroom easier. So pitch in and help.

Thank the people who have made this show possible: the show staff, judges, and any of the breeders that have offered advice. They will all appreciate a heart-felt thank-you.

At larger sanctioned shows, a poultry newspaper publication may have an area set up to take pictures, receive orders for ads and sell subscriptions. Why not pay for an ad thanking the show staff, judges, and breeders; then, order a subscription to the publication. In the next issue, you will have your bird's picture and your "thank you" published. Now when your new subscription arrives, you will have "bragging rights" with proof.

Most of all enjoy the other exhibitors and the birds because that is the real addiction of showing birds.

## SHOWROOM GROOMING

Showroom grooming is putting the final touches on a bird just before judging starts. You want your bird to look its best so take 5 minutes and make sure it does.

Steps 1 – Remove your bird and chick for any dirt or “poo” that may have gotten on the feet or feathers. Use a baby wipes to wash the feet and toes.

Step 2 – Put a little baby oil on the shanks, feet, toes, beak, comb, wattles, and earlobes. Remember too little is better than too much. Birds with feathered shanks and toes should have just a dab put on the bare parts of the legs and feet. Remember the spurs too.

Step 3 – Smooth any rough feathers by running your fingers down them to put the web back together. This is especially important for wing and tail feathers.

Step 4 – Using a silk cloth, rub the bird from head to tail several times. Don't forget the underside. This puts a soft, natural looking shine on the feathers. Tightly feathered birds will benefit from extra rubbing, full and heavy feathered birds may need a few strokes while silkies do not need any.

Step 5 – Gently place your bird back in the coop with one last pat. You are now finished and can leave your bird knowing you did the best job possible.

# SHOWMANSHIP HANDLING

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Exhibitor is neat and clean..... (3) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Introduction and speaking ability..... (2) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Proper caging, posing, and passing of bird..... (10) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Class, breed, and variety of birds shown..... (10) \_\_\_\_\_

Extra credit for tie breaker:

- 1 DQ or Defect: sickness, underweight, stubs, slipped wing, lice (5) \_\_\_\_\_
2. ABA Bantam classes..... (7) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Large fowl classes..... (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Written test score \_\_\_\_\_

Handling test score \_\_\_\_\_

Extra credit score \_\_\_\_\_

Total score \_\_\_\_\_

## STARTING IN SHOW POULTRY

The hobby of showing poultry is one of the most rewarding ones and unlike many hobbies; this one is generally enjoyed by the entire family.

Maintaining a backyard flock of chickens and finding out how enjoyable these unique animals are is usually what makes one want to go the next step and raise a “few show birds”. There is no mysterious formula that makes a bird become a show winner. Yet it does not happen by accident either. There are important steps that must be followed if one is to become a successful exhibitor of chickens.

**Only purebred fowl can be shown.** While most hatcheries and feed stores will advertise purebred poultry for sale, these birds often do not possess the characteristics of a show bird. Just as people all look different, so do animals.

Resist the urge to purchase the cute little fuzzy chicks until you have completed all of the following steps.

**Attend a poultry show and talk to the breeders.** This may seem like a step that can just be ignored, but after seeing firsthand the vast number of breeds and varieties of poultry, it will quickly be understood why this was important. It is mindboggling to see it for the first time. While there, talk to a few breeders. Most of them will be hanging around close to where their birds are cooped and they love to tell you about their breed of bird. Some will offer you eggs or even birds to start you on your way to showing.

**Invest in a standard.** This step is vitally important. The American Bantam Association (ABA) and the American Poultry Association (APA) both publish books with the standards (qualifying and disqualifying features) for all showable fowl. The ABA book is called the Bantam Standard and can be purchased at their web site and at the larger shows. The APA book is called The American Standard of Perfection and can be purchased at their web site and at larger shows. Both of these books contain all the information concerning every breed that can compete in shows. Each breed has its own breed standard such as body shape and stance (confirmation), comb type, color of legs, eyes, earlobes, skin, and face. Lots of breeds have several color varieties and each accepted color variety is described in detail. These books also list general, as well as breed specific poultry information including disqualifications and defects. It is important to remember that when the birds are entered into a show, each one is handled by a qualified judge to determine how it measures up to the standards set for that breed and variety. BEFORE you make a purchase, become familiar with the standards of the bird(s) you wish to purchase. When you find the birds you like, take your time, ask questions, and examine every bird. Keep in mind that the bird closest to having all of the standard features and the one with the fewest defects and no disqualifying features is the one that will win the show.

**Be prepared.** Have pens and enclosures ready before you make a purchase. These should be predator proof, weather appropriate, and space appropriate. Feeders, waterers, nesting boxes and a roost need to be in place and waiting for the birds. You will also need pet carriers with a layer of clean pine shavings in the bottom (for absorbency) to transport birds.

**Buy birds from a reputable breeder.** Chicks are cute and almost irresistible, spur of the moment purchases are made at auctions, the pictures in the catalogs are beautiful, and the internet site makes them sound so nice – but these are all dangerous moves when purchasing a show bird. You really need to see, handle, and examine the adult birds carefully before investing money, feed and time into them. Reputable breeders will spend the necessary time and answer your questions before you make a purchase, and they will never knowingly sell you an animal that is ill or has disqualifying features. Once you have made your choice, make your purchase and take them home.

**Feed them well and spend time with them.** Animals that are penned depend solely upon their caretaker for their food, water, shelter and protection. All brands of poultry feed come with recommendations for age appropriate feeding and should be followed. NOTE: scratch feed and cracked corn are treats and should never be used as a complete ration for birds. Food and water must be fresh for the health and well-being of your animal, and a well-built pen or enclosure provides protection from the elements and all predators. REMEMBER: Conditioning your bird for a show starts the day you get that animal and continues for its lifetime. By being observant while tending your flock, you will soon learn the "language" of the birds. Normal clucking, discovering a bug, dust baths, laying, broodiness, a predator in the area, illness and evening sounds can all be distinguished by the attentive owner.

**Be Proactive about health.** Set up an isolation area with a small pen that is removed from the main flock. Birds that are returning from a show or newly purchased should be in this holding area for 10 days before being placed with the main flock. This can also be used for an isolation area for any bird that appears to be ill. If you suspect that a bird is getting sick or has some unusual symptoms that you do not recognize, the breeder that you purchased your bird(s) from will usually lead you in the right direction as to possible causes and any medications that could help. Keeping a small supply of the basic medications and knowing what that they can be used for is helpful when you discover that a bird is not feeling well. CAUTION: Any bird purchased from an auction may have been exposed to diseases that would not be apparent for several days. They can appear to be healthy and robust but within a few days, they become listless and show symptoms of being diseased. Isolation of these birds will save you countless hours and could save your entire flock from being exposed to any germ that is present. Always err on the side of caution.

**Attend a show.** If possible it is best to attend at least one show before you actually enter your birds. Spend time looking at the layout of the barn, look at the birds, talk to exhibitors, see out the displays, and generally get a feel for the show bird hobby.

**Enter your birds in a show.** Get the proper entry form from the show secretary. These will usually be e-mailed to you or a copy will be sent to you. After studying your birds, determine which ones you would like to take to a show. These animals should be in full feather, be very healthy and possess no disqualifying features that you are aware of. Fill out the entry form as completely as you can, make a copy for yourself, and send it in with your entry fee. Entries are usually required to be in several days or even weeks before the show is held.

**Bathe them.** Bathing and basic grooming, such as nail and beak trimming, should be done a few days before the show. The benefits of bathing early has the added benefits of calming a bird, allowing plenty of time for feathers to dry completely and giving the bird time to work the natural oil back into their feathers. The final show grooming takes place just prior to judging at the show.

**Transport carefully.** Wire cages can be very damaging to the feathers that you have carefully bathed and groomed. Because of the smooth interior, plastic pet carriers are a better choice. One bird per carrier is preferred as this eliminates any squabbling and fighting while they are on the way to the show. Protection from wind, sun or freezing weather is a must while they are being transported.

**See the show secretary.** Upon your arrival at the show, the show secretary will give you an exhibitors list that will list all of the exhibitors' names and their numbers. Find out what number you have been assigned and you will then be ready to "coop in" your birds. The coop cards hanging on the cages have been carefully filled out by the show team and will list the breed, variety and sex of each bird you entered. Your exhibitor number will be written on it so you will know which cage you are to put your bird into. After you have placed the right bird in the right cage, put water in the cup provided and depending upon what time of day it is and how soon judging starts, you may or may not feed your animal at this time. Your carriers should be placed back into your vehicle or if the show

permits it, you can store them under the cages. Hint: Have your name on all of your carriers to prevent any mix-up.

**Last minute grooming:** A quick wipe with a silk cloth and a little baby oil on the comb and legs is usually all that is needed if you have properly prepared your bird for the show.

**Enjoy.** The sights and sounds of several hundred beautiful, well cared for show fowl in one area is impressive and one that is not soon forgotten. Take the time to look at each entry especially if there are breeds or varieties that are new to you. Try to look objectively at your birds and compare them to the others that are there. After judging, look at the scoring and notice how each one was placed and try to see why the judge placed each one where they did. Keep in mind that you may be showing against breeders that have years of experience and they bring all of this and their vast amount of knowledge with them. No matter how you place in the show, take your coop cards with you at the end of the show. The information on them is useful for a breeding program and they can help you to determine if that bird should be entered into another show. Remember that the poultry judges have handled thousands of birds, they have the standards committed to memory and they make very few mistakes. Much can be learned from them. After judging is completed, most of them are happy to review your birds with you.

**Coop out.** After awards are announced, there will be a flurry of activity as breeders begin to return their birds to carriers and start their long treks home. Some have traveled long a great distance to attend the show and are ready to get the trip underway. Most breeders are considerate and will remove all food containers, water cups, and clips from the coop that their bird was in. You will notice that as the cages become empty, some will start to fold them and get them ready for storage. All help at this time is welcomed and most appreciated.

Following these few but so important steps will start you off in a positive and productive direction and you can be confident when showing your birds from the very first show. Be prepared for a lifetime of learning and pleasure when you enter this world of show birds.....but.....a word of caution: It is addicting.

## HELPFUL HINTS

The following are some of the more useful tips that have been proven to make your poultry experience downright fun.

1. Always buy purebred show birds from a reputable breeder, one that shows and wins. Because of the possibility of disease and parasites, you will never want to buy birds from an auction. Commercial layer birds can be purchased from a feed store or mail order, but the purebred show birds that they sell are "so-so" quality and generally have too many defects to show well or are disqualified at shows.
2. Learn all you can about show birds. Purchase the American Standard of Perfection and the Bantam Standard, read and study them. Information you gather from other people and the internet may or may not be accurate. While it is well intended, it may also be misleading. The standards are factual and can be trusted.
3. Attend shows and talk to breeders and judges. Join a poultry club and be active. Learn the lingo. Hatch and raise some chicks.
4. Spend time with your birds and take proper care of them. You are their sole provider and protector.
5. Learn the basics and build on them. Even judges and top breeders are always learning new things.

***WARNING!!!! POULTRY IS ADDICTING AND THERE IS NO KNOWN CURE!!!!***