

Combining Red and White to Get the Pyle Pattern

By Unknown British Author

Origin of the term "pile" has long been the subject of discussion and disagreement. There is a widespread belief that it has become corrupted from the word "pied," often spelled p-i-d-e by the pit Game breeders of the 18th century.

Against this theory is the fact that long before that time the term commonly used was poyle. It is worth noting that it is quite often, although not invariably, spelled pyle in America to this day.

Pile plumage is associated most particularly with Old English and Modern Game. It was one of the most ancient and beautiful colors of fighting Game and is said to have been greatly favored by the Stuart kings and their courtiers.

Apart from the Game breeds, it is surprising to find how few are the pile varieties which have been shown or standard.

Pile Leghorns were quite popular between forty and fifty years ago, when pile Wyandottes also made a brief but unstandardized appearance.

Apart from occasional pile Malays and Yokohamas, no other piles have been recorded. What a challenge this statement offers to our more enterprising Pekin and Belgian bantam breeders!

Basically, pile is a condition in which the red plumage of the black-red pattern (e.g., black-red Game, brown Leghorn) is inherited in conjunction with a factor inhibiting the expression of black plumage.

No Agreement:

Nature and inheritance of pile has been discussed in considerable detail by geneticists and no unanimous agreement has been reached to date on the interpretation of the varied results of their researches.

In practice, the factor which inhibits the expression of black in piles has been found to be either dominant or recessive. The dominant white factor undoubtedly provides the more satisfactory combination of the two, and I am doubtful whether the pile of exhibition standard could in fact be produced from the black-red/recessive white combination.

It is, however, important for pile breeders to be forewarned that piles of a kind can be of this make-up, since the risk of the recessive white factor being introduced inadvertently by way of a black-red out-cross.

The pile of dominant white make-up is certainly the more easily understood since this kind of white is both dominant and more common. First-cross progeny from a black-red x dominant white cross, such as brown x white Leghorn, should therefore be expected to provide 100 per cent piles. So far, the theory is straightforward, but the practical results have often proved disappointing and mystifying.

Reason for the non-appearance of the piles to be expected from such a cross will usually be found in the underlying genes of the whites. They may, and usually do, carry other color and pattern factors, concealed by their whiteness, which tend to obscure or break-up the pile markings.

Eliminate Silver:

Many white Leghorns, for instance, carry the factors for self-black and for sex-linked barring and most strains seem to be linked "silvers," as distinct from "golds."

Any of these factors, and probably others, may stand in the way of producing sound piles from a black-red x dominant white cross.

CROSS.

Professor Punnett has suggested that self-black, although remaining hidden from view, whether carried in conjunction with white or pile, may possibly prevent the full development of pile.

The "silver" factor would certainly need to be eliminated, since it more or less suppresses red and buff, and "silver" in practice almost completely self-white.

Although the standards for piles in Old English and Modern Game and Leghorns vary slightly in their wording, the details are common to all three.

In males, neck hackle should be light orange; back and saddle, maroon; shoulders and wing-bows, dark red; wing secondary dark chestnut on outer web (all that is visible when the wing is closed) and white on inner web; and the remainder of plumage pure white. For females, the neck should be white tinged with gold; the breast, deep salmon red, shading to thighs; remainder white, as pure as possible.

In producing piles to standard requirements there are two prevailing difficulties demanding constant vigilance and they are the reconciliation of clear breasts in males with fully-pigmented breasts in females, and strongly marked wings with entirely unpigmented wings in females.

For lasting success these problems can only be tackled by double mating, and generations of pile breeders have chosen either cockerel or pullet breeding, or have maintained distinct lines for producing both sexes.

Cockerel matings usually involve standard marked males x cockerel-bred females, weak in breast coloring but more pigmented on the wing bows and secondaries.

For pullet matings, standard marked pullets are matched with pullet-bred males weak in wing markings but more or less and shaded with red on their breasts.

A less acute problem is presented by the gradual but persistent loss of strength and richness of pigment, which results from continuous pile x pile matings.

Rigorous selection may keep this difficulty at bay for three or four generations, but sooner or later the outcross to white provides the only effective answer.

Black-red x pile should normally provide 100 per cent piles in the first generation, always presuming that the pile parent is an established standard-bred strain carrying the dominant white factor.

When the first generation includes a proportion of black-red, it is probable that the pile parent has inherited its dominant white from only one side, even if both its own parents were piles.

Genetically speaking, there is no such thing as a "pile-bred" black-red, and when introducing black-red into a pile there is no particular advantage to be gained by using only black-reds deriving from piles,

In practice, the black-red outcross is almost invariably introduced on the male side, by mating cockerel-breeding piles to a black-red cock. In pullet-breeding pens the desired strengthening of color is best achieved by mating pile-bred pullets to a pile male derived from a pile x black-red mating.

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