

EXHIBITION MODERN BROWN RED GAME BANTAMS

By Charles J. Scullin of St. Louis, MO

The following notes are by F. Wardle Smith, Barnby Moar Lodge, Retford, England at the turn of the century. He, along with Dan Clayton, Walter Firth, Shaw Haigh and Fred Smalley, were the real Champions of Modern Brown Red Bantams. Fred Smith, as well, bred and exhibited Lemon Blue Modern Game Bantams. Mr. Hue B. Catheart, Hill Park Cottage, Bothwell-Near-Glasgow, Scotland—the present day Modern Red Pyle Game Bantam King—was Mr. Smith's Poultry Manager and it was he that told me of the use of Lemon Hackle crosses to procure that famous Lemon Top Color on Brown Reds, which really should be called Lemon Blacks. Herewith Mr. Smith's notes which are as applicable to Lemon Blues as they are to Lemon Blacks (Brown Reds).

“Brown Reds will not breed true to color from what is generally known as single mating. A perfect Lemon Top Color Exhibition Cock, mated with a Bright Lemon Hackle Exhibition Hen, will often throw a large proportion of ‘grey’ chicks which, of course, are useless for breeding Brown Reds.

“In both sexes the head should be long and lean, the beak strong and slightly curved, the eye large - bold and free from the heavy over-hanging brow. The neck should be long and thin and well cut away or cleaned out at the throat; the back short and flat, broadest across the shoulders, and tapering towards the tail. The shoulders should be broad, prominent, carried well up and slightly away from the body; the wings short, the flights carried under the saddle feathers, and well nipped into the body behind the thighs. The breast should be broad and firm, and the breast bone short, and curved like the keel of a boat. There should be no lumber or heaviness in the under part of the body behind the thighs. There the bird should lie fine and well cut off to the root of the tail. The thighs should be long and muscular, set well apart and the shanks round in front, smooth and rather shorter than the thighs; the hocks, neat and clean joined; the feet large and fine, the toes well spread and the back toes set on low-down and carried straight back. The tail should be small, short, fine and straight, carried tight and slightly above the horizontal line. In cocks the sickles should be slightly curved, narrow and pointed and a little longer than the cock's tail. The secondaries and the tail coverts, fine and pointed. The thighs set in the middle of the body, so as to give the bird a firm, well balanced appearance. Nothing more objectionable than the thighs set too far forward - this always makes the bird look stilty and ungainly. The whole appearance must be tall, bold, springy and hard. The feathers

short and hard and neck and saddle hackles fine, wiry and pointed in cock.

“Eye color, black; face and comb, mulberry; beak and nails, darkest horn color or black—older birds go light in leg color. Hen’s comb small, fine and evenly serrated. Cock color—Head, hackle, back, saddle and wing butts, pure bright Lemon. Hackle striped toward the bottom of neck with Black; the back and saddle feathers being black at the base and sharply defined. The rest of the body and tail feathers, black, except the breast, which should have each feather laced at the edge with short round (not pointed) Lemon Lacing. The shaft of every feather—Black. The breast lacing extends from the throat to the junction of the thigh with the body. The sheen, a most important point, must be a brilliant green. Hen hackle, pure bright Lemon, with the center and the shaft of each feather, black, the Lemon color running well out the top of the head. The breast lacing similar to the cocks. The balance of the body and tail feathers black with brilliant green sheen.

“Chief faults to avoid: long backs, bad eyes, thick necks and long feather—cocks showing a darker shade of color on the wing butts, then on the back you should carefully avoid. In hens, soft feather and coarse tails. Purple or bronze sheen or dull body coloring either sex cannot be too strongly condemned.

“To produce exhibition Cock, use a perfectly colored Cock, mated with hens short of breast lacing and lots of Black in their hackles. A capped hen will produce cocks also. Good cockerels may also be produced from hens over laced on breast and back and sides with a cock rather darker in color but with minimum of lacing and be short and hard in feather. Pullets may be bred from Exhibition hen; and a dark cock very sound in Black, especially thighs and belly and minimum of lacing. His hackle must be even in color. An exhibition cock mated with very glossy bodied hens with dark hackles will also produce pullets and occasionally a good cockerel—this is the closest we can get to Single Mating in Brown Reds.

“Of course, many birds will be bred with Brownish bodies, bad eyes, crooked breasts, in-knees, etc. These should be disposed of. Avoid breeding from coarse sickled cocks, or flat shins, or any deformity. Always choose Cocks full of quality and of a pure sound even color whether dark or light in shade and never breed from a cock having a pale washed out colored back and dark Wing Butts.

“Above all things never cross a Brown Red with a Birchen or a Duckwing. Nothing gotten but dull, straw colored Males and rusty, dull colored hens—a dirty brown. Always breed from the glossiest and purest colored birds. The secret of breeding Brown Reds is to thoroughly master the difference in the various shades of color and to know the exact pedigree of the breeding stock. No breed of game fowl requires such careful mating to get Show Specimens as the Brown Reds. There is the gypsy face and breast lacing which breeders of the other varieties (except Birchens) have not to contend with, but when an approximate perfect Exhibition Brown Red is produced, there is no variety of fowl that can compare for brilliance of color and attractiveness.

This article appeared in the 1941 year book.