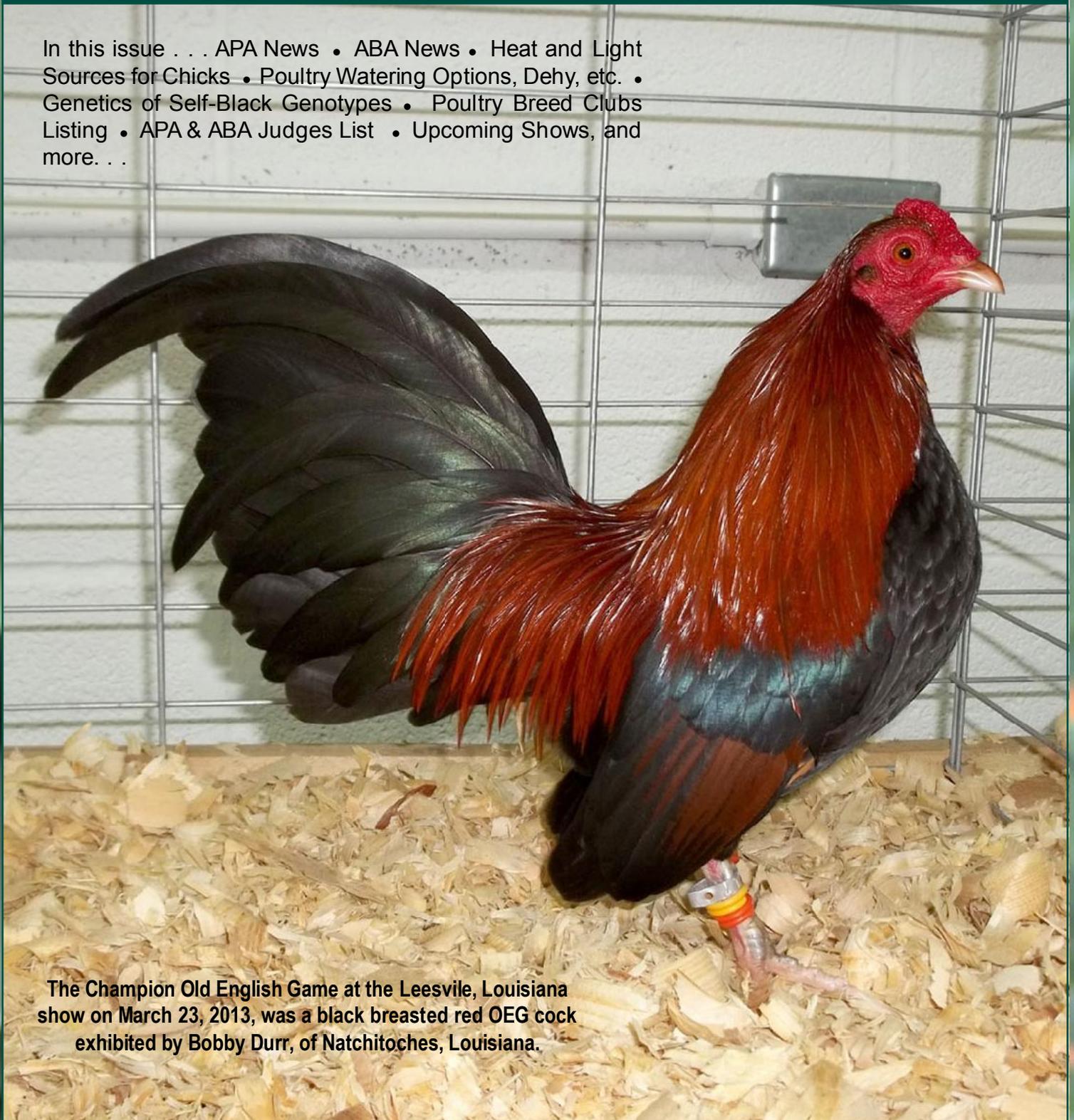


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Volume 5, Number 1 • <http://www.ExhibitionPoultry.net> • January 2014

In this issue . . . APA News • ABA News • Heat and Light Sources for Chicks • Poultry Watering Options, Dehy, etc. • Genetics of Self-Black Genotypes • Poultry Breed Clubs Listing • APA & ABA Judges List • Upcoming Shows, and more. . .



The Champion Old English Game at the Leesville, Louisiana show on March 23, 2013, was a black breasted red OEG cock exhibited by Bobby Durr, of Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Exhibition Poultry Magazine[®]

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On The Cover . . . The Champion Old English Game at the Leesville, Louisiana show on March 23, 2013, was a black breasted red OEG cock exhibited by Bobby Durr, of Natchitoches, Louisiana.
Photo by Ann Charles

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Exhibition Poultry Magazine[®] publishes upcoming show listings and show results from the South Central states (TX, AR, LA, MS, OK) plus those results supplied by our paid advertisers. *We reserve the right to refuse any advertisement or article that is deemed to be of inappropriate content by the Managing Editor of this Publication.

Upcoming APA & ABA Shows

LA - AR - OK - TX - MS

January 2014

January 4, 2014

College Station, Texas, Brazo County Poultry Club Show. Contact: Claudia Choate, Claudia@bluebonnetclassic.com, 512-273-2010.

January 17 - Feb. 8, 2014

Fort Worth, Texas, Southwestern Exposition & Livestock Show. Contact: 817-877-2400. website: <http://www.fwssr.com/>

February 2014

February 22, 2014

Newcastle, Oklahoma, The Great Plains Game Bantam Spectacular. One day-double show. Contact: Andy Barnes, 580-439-5956, ouchickencrazy@pldi.net; RR 2 Box 450, Comanche, OK, 73529.

March 2014

March 1, 2014

Pryor, Oklahoma, Mayes County Fairgrounds. NorthEast Oklahoma Poultry Show, ABA sanctioned - bantam only. Contact: Kenneth Kvittum (918) 476-5613.

March 1, 2014

Rison, Arkansas, Cleveland County Fairgrounds. Contact: Frankie Harper, PO Box 552, Rison, AR 71665; Phone: (870) 370-3427

March 1, 2014 - Tentative

Lagrange, TX, South Texas Classic, Fayette County Fairgrounds. Contact: Danny Hughes, P.O. Box 251, Garwood, TX 77442; Phone: 979-758-3471

March 4-23, 2014

Houston, Texas, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo. Contact: 832-667-1000 Website: <http://rodeohouston.com/>

March 21, 2014

Beaumont, Texas, South Texas State Fair. Contact: Phone (409) 832-9991, Email: info@ymb1.org, Website: <http://www.ymb1.org>

March 22, 2014 - Tentative

Alexandria, Louisiana, LSU Ag Center. Central Louisiana Poultry Club Spring Show. For more information, contact: Maddi Williams, 940-736-9491 MaddiWilliams@yahoo.com, email: clpoultryclub@yahoo.com, website: <http://clpoultryclub.wix.com/mainpage>

April 2014

April 5, 2013

El Dorado, Arkansas, Fairgrounds. South Central Regional Classic. Contact: Frankie Harper, PO Box 552, Rison, AR 71665; Phone: (870) 370-3427

April 12, 2013 - Tentative

San Marcos, Texas, Hays County Civic Center. Fancy Feathers. Contact: Jaci Kroupa, fresheggs91@yahoo.com; website: <http://www.fancyfeatherstx.org/>

May 2014

May 3, 2014 - Tentative

Little Rock, Arkansas, Arkansas State Fair Spring Show, Arkansas State Fair grounds. Entries at: <http://arkansasstatefair.com/livestockindex/Springfair.html> or contact: contact Dr. Keith Bramwell 479-841-6498.

September 2014

September 4-13- Tentative

Abeline, Texas, West Texas Fair and Rodeo. Contact: 325-677-4376. Website: http://www.taylorcountyexpo.com/taylorexpo_wtrf.html

September 13, 2013 - Tentative

Odessa, Texas, Permian Basin Fair & Exposition. Contact: Jerry Wiley, P O Box 212, Gardendale, Tx 79758. Phone: 432-366-3026 Website: <http://permianbasinfair.com/index.html>

September 20-26 2013- Tentative

Lubbock, Texas. Panhandle South Plains Fair. Contact: (806) 763-2833. Website: <http://www.southplainsfair.com/>

September 27, 2013 - Tentative

Tulsa, Oklahoma, Tulsa State Fair. Contact: Mike Geiss, (405) 761-8339. Website: <http://www.tulsastatefair.com/filesSite/Poultry4.pdf>.

October 2014

October 02, 2013

Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Southeast Arkansas District Fair. Contact: Lewis Hinkle, 870.543.0198, tootie9901@yahoo.com.

October 11, 2013

Dallas, Texas. State Fair of Texas, Pan-Am Poultry Show. Contact: 214-565-9931. Website: <http://www.bigtex.com/sft/>

October 17, 2013

Little Rock, Arkansas, Arkansas State Fair, Arkansas State Fair grounds. Entries at: <http://arkansasstatefair.com/livestockindex/Statefair.html> or contact: Dr. Keith Bramwell 479-841-6498.

October 18, 2013 (Special)

Lebanon, Indiana, Central Indiana poultry Show, Boone County 4-H fairground. Entries at: <http://poultryshow.org>. Call: 765-482-0750.



APA ABA Youth Poultry Club

The club promotes opportunities to practice showmanship, cooperation and fellowship and to be involved with their home community and with the poultry fancy in general.

For more info go to: <http://www.apa-abayouthpoultryclub.org> or contact: Doris Robinson, National Director, 810 Sweetwater Rd., Philadelphia, TN 37846 ~ Phone: 865-717-6270 ~ Email: nanamabrahma@att.net

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Jerry McCarty 513 McKinley St., Haughton, LA 71037 318/949-0027.

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L. C. "Corky" Higbee 6100 Cemetery Road, Noble, OK 73068-8604 405/872-7504.

Richard Peters P.O. Box 735, Noble, OK 73068 405/527-8513.

Robert D. Murray 920 S.E. 21st Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73129 405/632-7085.

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SAMUEL BRUSH, 1009 Hillview Drive, Keller, TX 76248-4012, sbrush@verizon.net, 817.379.6475, APA General License. (12-14)

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Monty Fitzgerald, 1713 CR 4280, Decatur, TX 76234; 940-393-8907

Tracy Hill 10721 Truman Street, Amarillo, TX 79118; 806/622-2488.

Melody Jonas 436 CR 3605, Lampasas, TX 76550-9711; 512/556-2800.

Dwayne Jonas 436 CR 3605, Lampasas, TX 76550-9711; 512/556-2800.

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Charles Mahoney 11312 Earlywood Drive, Dallas, TX 75218; 214/324-3911.

PAT MALONE, 4903 Brazowood Circle, Arlington, TX 76017, 817.478.2397, PatMalone@pleasantridgechurch.org. APA General License, Bantam Chicken & Bantam Duck (12-14)

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DWIGHT MADSEN, ABA Bantam License #349, Duck #161. ABA District 11 Director. 17402 Locust Rd., Carthage, MO 64836. Email: doit85@hotmail.com, Phone: (417) 359-3867. (05-14)



APANEWS January 2014

Two very important things are happening in the APA this month. The first is the election. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on January 28, 2014. The by-laws under Article II – Election of Officers, section e states: “Enclosed with the ballot shall be a return outer envelope addressed to the Secretary with a place in the upper left corner for the name and address of the voter so that the Secretary can identify the voter as qualified to vote.” What this means is that if you don’t include your return address in the upper left corner of the envelope your vote will NOT be counted. It would be a shame to take the time to vote and have that wasted because you didn’t include your return address. The candidates listed on those ballots are willing to give of their time and talents on a voluntary basis to support the APA, please encourage them by voting.

Now on to the fun part. The APA Annual will be held January 18 and 19 in West Springfield, MA. The Northeastern Poultry Congress always puts on a quality show and they are working very hard to make the APA and all exhibitors welcome. They have a great lineup of events for the weekend including a “Behind the Scenes Show Hall Tour” and a Jan Brett book signing. The APA General Meeting will be held at 4PM in the show hall. More information on the show can be found at their website: www.poultrycongress.com or by contacting Janet Winnett at 508-923-0051. Janet will probably be VERY busy show week, so if you need to call her do it early.

Don’t forget, if you would like to have anything discussed at the directors meeting on Friday evening, please contact your director soon so that item can be listed on the meeting agenda. The APA directors will be voting on the 2015 APA annual, so if your club is

interested in hosting this event, please contact the office for a bid form. I will be bringing a lot of merchandise and books for you to purchase, but if you would like to pre-order materials, just let me know and I will be happy to deliver them and save postage.

I hope everyone had a happy holiday and is ready for the year 2014. I will enjoy the new year, after I have all the ballot envelopes ready to go and those Christmas decorations all put away.

Hope to see you soon,
Pat Horstman

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American Sumatra Association, <http://sumatraassociation.org/> \$18/2yrs; \$25/3yrs. Doug Akers, 300 S. 400 W., Lebanon, IN 46052, email: dakers@purdue.edu (12-13)

Modern Game Bantam Club of America, Dues: \$20/year. Mailing address is 4134 NY Highway 43, Wynantskill, NY 12198; Lee A. Traver, Sec./Treasurer. Email: traverfarm@wildblue.net; Website is www.mgbca.org. (12-14)

National Call Breeders of America: <http://www.callducks.org>, Secretary: Dennis Fuller, email: wapsiwaterfowl@aol.com, 319-334-3497, Mail Memberships to: NCBA c/o Steve Jones, 9677 Butler Lane, Poetry, TX 75160 (12-14)

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ABA Happenings

January 2014

Hello all - I hope you have enjoyed your holidays and have been able to take some time to relax . I have just arrived back from the ABA National Meet with the Tennessee Valley Club in Knoxville, TN. Be ready to see a lot about this show in the next few months. I will just say that we will be back. The club did an amazing job at hosting our meet. The building was beautiful and open and clean. The show ran smoothly as well. I sincerely wish I would have been able to spend more time. The weather was not on our side. The long trek back to New Jersey was a ride to remember. Thank you Kevin Unrath (my husband) for getting us home safely.

The ABA ran a wonderful breeders auction which was a big success. A special thank you goes to all who donated the top quality birds and to all who participated in the auction. This event is a win-win-win.

The ABA wins by being the recipient of all funds. The donors win with some great publicity. The buyers win by getting some outstanding birds for their breeding programs. That is a WIN-WIN-WIN.

Thank you to the following donors: Christian Diaz, CA for some beautiful White Serama Bantams; The Bennett Family of KY for their wonderful donations of Black Modern Games and Mille Fleur d'Uccles; Rick Hare of NY for an outstanding pair of Black Rosecombs; Brian Knox of NH for an incredible trio of Light Brahma Bantams; Jack Ferguson of Tennessee with his lovely Splash Silkies; Gail Berube of New Hampshire for some great Partridge Wyandottes; and the top money maker went to Anthony Ashley of South Carolina for his donation of Dark Cornish Bantams. Thank you ALL!

The ABA Board of Directors met in Knoxville and covered some business. Stay tuned for all the details.

They will be included in our next newsletter which is mailed to all ABA members.

The ABA Website now has the 2014 legbands online and available for purchase. They are GRAY this year. The prices remain at .38 ea with \$5.00 shipping and handling. Visit www.bantamclub.com to order yours today.

We are busy prepping for our 100th Na-

tional. We will have lots of surprises!

If you would like to join the ABA, please visit our website at www.bantamclub.com or send your annual dues (\$20 USA - \$30 all others) to ABA, PO Box 127, Augusta, NJ 07822.

I will be working this month on the next Winter newsletter. If you would like to share a story - inquiry - advice or anything you feel would help your fellow fanciers, please send to me by January 15th. My new email is bantamclub@gmail.com.

Be well and remember to thank the bantam breeders!

I will be at the Northeast Poultry congress in January of this year so stop by and say hello.....

Anniversary show which will be in November 2014 at the Ohio

Karen Unrath - ABA Secretary

NATIONAL CALL BREEDERS of America



National Call Breeders of America

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For more information contact secretary Dennis Fuller, 1729 Otterville Blvd., Independence, Iowa 50644; 319-334-3497, wapsiwaterfowl@aol.com

(12-14)

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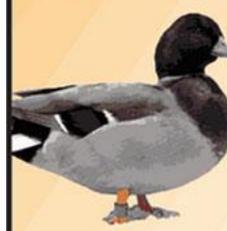
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Heat and Light Sources for Chicks:

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By Ann Charles

It's winter - one of the worst we have seen in years in most parts of the country. But breeding pens are still being set up, eggs being laid (hopefully fertile) and chicks should be hatching soon. Brooding chicks in artificial conditions, during the winter especially, can be a nightmare. However, the facts are that your chicks will have to be a minimum of 6 months old (pullets), and older (cockerels) if they are going to look their best for the early fall shows. Your best laid plans can all come to naught if you do not have a handle on two very important things this winter and that is *heat* and *light*.

Very often we depend on these two important elements to be supplied by the same object - a light bulb. You can go the real expensive route to protect your incubators and newly hatched chicks . . . commercial brooders with automatic thermostats and even generator back up systems would probably get the job done stress free - except for the price, which could be substantial. I believe that most of us, especially when we are hatching only a few chicks at a time, try to get by as inexpensively as possible.

If you are setting eggs in the winter a lot of your birds will be hit and miss on fertility - even if you have them in a comfortable environment, on a proper lighting schedule and a good quality breeder ration. If you are like me and hatch year round you may sometimes only hatch 5-10 chicks a week during Winter. Small frequent hatches work best utilizing small brooders with chicks graduating to a larger brooder as they grow. Light, heat and brooder space, should gradually be altered to fit their state of development. If this is your system, and you are hatching and brooding in the winter, and have several small brooders, you need to know something about heat and light and how it is produced by the bulbs (lamps) you are using.

It is important to know that when you switch on a light bulb, the wattage rating represents heat AND light that the bulb produces. Watts are a measure of power (energy per time) not light. Let's say you are using one of Stromberg's little light bulb brooders that work well if your chicks are inside in the winter as my early chicks are. I

use these for the first two to three weeks-of-age. I have found that an incandescent bulb of about 60 watts works really well for 5-10 large fowl Araucana chicks in one of these small brooders for the first week. That is, assuming I am keeping the brooder room (my office) at about room temperature. An interesting thing about incandescent bulbs is that they are terribly inefficient as light sources considering the power they use - but VERY efficient as a heating source. According to the Wikipedia on-line encyclopedia, a 100 watt bulb is 2.1% efficient. In other words, it produces about 2 watts of light and 98 watts of heat. Converting those figures to a 60 watt bulb would give us 1.2 watts of light and 58.8 watts of heat. Why would you want to pay extra for a heat lamp? Of course, with the governments new laws outlawing incandescent bulbs, one of the least expensive and most readily available sources of heat for our brooders may be hard to come by unless you stocked up on them before January 1st as I did. As far as 24 hour lights on baby chicks, it does them no harm and encourages maximum feed consumption and growth at an early age which is critical for top show birds next fall. There are, however, drawbacks to the incandescent bulbs being used in brooders. One of the main problems I have with an incandescent bulb in a brooder of any kind is the fragility of the filament in the bulb. More times than I can count I have had chicks huddle too close to a bulb, or jump up and bump it (maybe trying to catch a fly or moth drawn to the light), or in some other way come into contact with it causing the hot filament inside the bulb to break. As a consequence, the bulb goes out, leaving your baby chicks in the dark and without a heat source until you discover it - the next morning usually. By then you may have lost some or all of your chicks to the cold.

As my chicks really start to grow and are thriving and can handle a little less intense heat, I switch them over to a fluorescent bulb for both heat and warmth. Although not as hot as an old-fashioned incandescent bulb, the fluorescent bulbs give off a substantial amount of heat. Especially in a closed environment like a small chick brooder. The primary reason I use the fluorescent bulbs as soon as possible in brooders is because the chicks can bump them if they want. Being gas filled, there is no filament to break from the shock so the bulb does not blow out. With my large fowl Araucana who are bred for fast feathering I can usually switch them to a cooler brooder by week two. It is important to adjust for how much less warmth a fluorescent bulb emits and how much more watt-

age is required over the incandescent to compensate for heat loss.

Fluorescent bulbs are supposed to be as high as 8.2% efficient, some sources say they are three times as efficient as incandescent lamps... So 100 watts of electricity would be converted to approximately 8 watts of light and 92% will still come out as heat. So much for 'cool' fluorescent lighting. I have seen fluorescent efficiency ratings as high as 27% light, and 73% heat for a 32 watt bulb. As always, observation and careful management for each individual system are key. With fast feathering chicks in a small brooder I have found that a 20 watt fluorescent bulb puts out enough heat to keep them warm in a room kept at about 72-75 degrees. I have used fluorescent lights as high as 100 watts for brooders where I did not have as much control over the room temperature. It helps to have several different sizes on hand.

I suppose I should point out that I believe in "cold brooding" my chicks. I only give them as much warmth as they need to thrive and remain healthy. Too much heat is bad for baby chicks - it makes for long overgrown wings and under-developed bodies. Once my chicks are about 3-4 weeks-old I can usually switch them to a draft free, unheated brooder made out of a clear tote. I no longer supply heat at this age as long as the room is still at the 72-75 degree range since they are almost fully feathered - but they still need light. At this age I find that LED's work great. You can use either rope lights, or a strand of 25 white Christmas lights per tote brooder (\$1 a pack after Christmas and my personal choice), or whatever you wish. Attach them high in the brooder so that the chicks do not jump up and peck at them but the chicks are still well lit.

When it comes time to move chicks outside you may want to move to stage 4 of the "heat-and-light equation" and supply just the heat, if needed. Your chicks may be doing well outside with out any supplemental heat on those 60-70 degree days but with unpredictable jet streams and Arctic air blowing in it sure doesn't hurt to have a heat back up if they want it. A few years ago I began using heated resting mats for my youngest chicks who were brooding outside. The mats are safe, can't be bumped like a light bulb can, and the chicks usually use them only on the colder winter nights. The mats maintain a comfortable 99-100 degrees, 24-7, and are easy to clean with a hard plastic housing. They only use about 15 watts of power per hour. K&H Manufacturing's 9x12 mat is the one I have used.

I hope that this information will help keep your chicks warm and thriving this winter.

Poultry Watering Options, Dehy, etc.

By Ann Charles

We all deal with the various (and seasonal) problems involved with watering our birds from hatch, to shows, to the breeding pen. And a number of watering methods are available. Some work better than others and some work better under different conditions than others. A cage cup works well for birds at shows or in cages. And exhibition birds who tend to get their feathers wet in a cage cup, like Polish, do well with a bottle watering system. A lot of people are going to the nipple system that has been used successfully for years by the commercial chicken producers. But how do the various systems work and what are the benefits of each? I am currently experimenting with the water bottles. So far I prefer the water bottle system over a traditional waterer with my young chicks.

The water bottles utilize a ball bearing drinking tube and are gravity fed. According to the folks at Paws Creations*, the drinking tube water bottle works in the following way:

"There is a drinking tube attached to the bottle cap. Inside this tube are two stainless steel balls. As your pet licks on the end of the drinking tube the stainless steel balls are pushed back releasing the clean water directly into your pet's mouth. When your pet stops drinking the stainless steel balls fall back into position at the end of the drinking tube shutting off the flow of water. A few water drops may take place at this point as the vacuum pressure reestablishes itself and drip bowl will catch those."

Important Note: Your pet does not suck or nurse on the drinking tube; it just licks on the end of the tube to obtain the water. The pet uses the same drinking motions they would normally use if they were drinking from a bowl of water."

Please note they said 'vacuum pressure'. I have read instructions on-line for how to make a water drinking bottle using the widely available commercial drinking nipples and they would not work the same as the drinking tube with the ball bearings since many of these designs do not keep the vacuum in the bottle intact.

So far my baby chicks love the water bottle. I have a couple of small brooders in my office and I frequently hear clinking of the ball bearings in the water tube which tells me they are drinking. Their bedding is staying much drier and does not have to be changed as often.

On the subject of chicks and bedding, I am

wondering how many of you have used, or considered using, dehy alfalfa as bedding for baby chicks? I have read plenty of articles on rearing young chicks that promote everything from sand, to pine shavings, to newspaper. Personally, I have had problems with all of these for one reason or another. The newspaper is too slippery. For a while I used plastic shelf liner in my brooders for the first few days and I still use it in my incubator trays to make sure newly hatched chicks have good footing. But, I have found the best bedding for my newly hatched chicks is dehy alfalfa. If they eat it (and they will) there is no problem since they are getting a good dose of vitamins and protein. And I have never had any blockage issues as you can with shavings and fine sand.

When the dehy gets damp it seems to have a natural deodorizing property that is not in the shavings. I use about 10% alfalfa dehy in all of my rations for my chicks, breeders, and show birds. Besides being a nutritional feed, the Xanthophylls are off-the-chart compared to other feeds, including corn. Of course, if you have white skinned birds (or white feathered) the alfalfa may not be as suitable since it may tend to color the birds up in an undesirable way.

I have a white bantam Leghorn cockerel that I was hoping to show in the Spring and I just noticed his earlobes have turned a buttery yellow color! Not good. I have pulled all the corn and dehy from my white Leghorns and put them on oats (as I was advised to do originally) and hopefully their adult feathers will not have any brassiness. Working with each new breed always has its own learning curve. My Araucana, being yellow skinned, with only a couple of whites in the flock, are doing wonderful with the cracked corn and alfalfa dehy as part of their daily ration.

Back to the subject of the nipple watering system . . . According to Ziggity Water Systems, Inc.** , some key principles to remember with the nipple waterers are that "water ingested during the drinking process is limited to beak size . . . Water spillage happens when more water is discharged from the drinker than can be retained in the bird's beak . . . Therefore use low column pressure for birds with small beaks and increase pressure as birds (and beaks) grow."

As usual, it all comes back to management and the unique requirements of each type of watering system.

For more information on both bottle and nipple watering methods for your birds you may want to visit one or both of the following websites:

*Paws Creations: Website: <http://www.pawscreations.com/>

**Ziggity Water Systems, Inc.: Website: <http://www.ziggity.com/>

The Brooder Bottle Cap

Press Release: Davidson, NC (PRWEB)
March 27, 2013

"The Brooder Bottle Cap™ takes the mess out of providing your new chicks with clean and fresh water as well as eliminating the risk of accidental drownings", says Frank Cardaropoli, Owner of The Chicken Fountain, LLC. Poultry breeders "can enjoy the peace of mind knowing that their new chicks will always have clean water available and not worry about them drowning in a traditional waterer. The Brooder Bottle Cap™ also is the perfect set up for sick or injured birds that must be confined to an isolation cage or crate. If you use supplements and medications, they can be added directly to the water to keep your chicks healthy.

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you the opportunity to start your chicks on a dripper early in life making the transition to a permanent nipple waterer like The Chicken Fountain™ seamless", says Frank Cardaropoli, Owner of The Chicken Fountain, LLC.

(Editors Note: The Brooder Bottle Cap is available in sets of 2 for \$5.99 (total for the pair) with free shipping. Order here: <http://shop.chickenfountain.com/Brooder-Bottle-Cap-Set-009.htm>)



Neoplastic diseases: Marek's disease, Avian Leukosis and Reticuloendotheliosis.

By L.N. Payne LN & K. Venugopal

Abstract

"The commercially important neoplastic diseases of poultry are Marek's disease, which is caused by a herpesvirus, and the avian leukoses and reticuloendotheliosis, which are caused by retroviruses. These diseases are responsible for economic loss due to both mortality and depressed performance. Marek's disease virus (MDV) and avian leukosis viruses (ALVs) are prevalent throughout the world, and new strains which arise in particular locations may spread across borders.

"Marek's disease virus is transmitted horizontally only, and spread in hatching eggs and day-old chicks can be prevented by appropriate hygiene precautions. Transmission of ALV (Avian Leukose Virus) and REV occurs both horizontally and vertically (through the egg), and measures to prevent spread are more de-

manding.

"Marek's disease is controlled by vaccination, whilst Avian Leukosis is controlled by virus eradication programs, mainly at the primary breeding level". . . . *Rev Sci Tech. 2000 Aug; 19(2): 544-64.*

Association of the slow feathering (K) and an endogenous viral (ev21) gene on the Z chromosome of chickens.

By Bacon LD, Smith E, Crittenden LB, Havenstein GB.

Abstract

"A dominant sex-linked gene, K, regulates slow feathering (SF), whereas a recessive allele, k+, determines rapid feathering (RF) in chickens. This trait provides a convenient and inexpensive approach to gender identification of White Leghorn (WL) chicks at hatch, i.e., in a sex-linked mating using k+/k+ males mated with K/- females, the K/k+ male

chicks are SF, and the k+/- females are RF.

"However, in many WL strains, female progeny of SF dams produce fewer eggs and have higher mortality than progeny of RF dams. This loss in productivity has been attributed to higher infection and shedding rates for leukosis viruses (ALV) in SF than in RF dam lines. Because infectious endogenous viruses (EV) can induce immunological tolerance to ALV, we examined the expression and distribution of ev genes in SF and RF siblings from heterozygous K/k+ sires and k+/- dams.

"It was concluded that ev21 and K genes are tightly linked because, in different WL crosses, all SF chicks inherited ev21 but RF siblings uniformly lacked ev21. Alternatively, the K gene in WL may be a mutation resulting from the insertion of ev21 in the k+ gene. The SF chicks which harbor ev21 expressed infectious EV21; evidence that EV21 may influence susceptibility to ALV is presented."

(US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, East Lansing, Michigan 48823.)

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The Genes Involved in Self-Black Phenotypes

By Brian Reeder

Black colored chickens are very popular in the poultry world. This is understandable, as they are striking, appear clean in most settings and present a beautiful silhouette, especially in type-bred fowl such as The Cochins, Silkies, Japanese bantams, etc. While self-black, or solid black, is popular, it is not often well understood genetically and can be difficult to breed, especially when the attempt is made to create a black variety of a given breed that does not already have this color variety.

It is important to understand that there is no such thing as a “black gene”. Black is a complicated color variety genetically, though it looks very simple to the eye, as is the case for all of the self-colored varieties (many whites, buff, red, etc). To arrive at the self-black phenotype, we need several mutations that increase the melanin levels of the fowl. It is easier to fully melanize the female than the male, as the female is more melanized than the male in the jungle fowl to being with. Of the six well known e-alleles, only three are generally found with the fully black phenotype: E (extended black) ER (birchen) and eb (brown). There have been some claims that other e-alleles may be capable of being fully melanized and though I have never seen any evidence for this, that doesn’t mean it is impossible. I will discuss this more at the end of the article.

Of the three e-alleles commonly associated with solid black phenotypes, E and ER are the most commonly encountered. Brown (eb) based self-black lines are much more rare. While E is called ‘extended black’, it does not make a solid black bird in and of itself, requiring the same generally grouping of additive type genes as the other two alleles to make the self-black phenotype. Extended black is named for the chick down of this allele and not because it makes a solid black adult plumage. The brown allele (eb) is a mutation of E and shows an extension of melanin in comparison to the red jungle fowl e-allele, e+ (duckwing). As all three of these e-alleles (E, ER and eb) are more melanized than the wild type allele (e+) it seems intuitively logical that it is these alleles upon

which self-black phenotypes can be most easily made.

Both E and ER are known colloquially as “crow wing” in that the adult males do not show the pheomelanin wing triangle as seen in e+, eb, ebc and eWh males. As well, the hackle of both sexes and the saddle and shoulder of the males of the E and ER alleles show a heavy melanized stripe in the center of the feathers. These two alleles are then probably easiest to fully melanize to create the self-black, as they are already heavily melanized to begin with. The brown (eb) allele is more melanized than the e+ allele and is also less pheomelanin (as seen in the female body - absence of the salmon breast). While the male of the eb allele does show the pheomelanin wing triangle, both sexes show the strong black hackle stripe and the male shows a strong black stripe on shoulder and saddles. The presence of melanotic extension in this allele also presumably makes it easier to fully melanize. The most difficult aspect of fully melanizing the eb allele is the pheomelanin wing triangle of the male. In my personal experience, lines of eb-based, nearly self-black birds often show fully black females and males that are fully black except for the wing triangle, which remains pheomelanin and must require a very specific melanizing gene to cover. Fully self-black lines of eb e-allele birds are known in black Wyandotte and black Leghorn, so it seems that fully self-black eb birds are possible, but may be harder to make than on E or ER, possibly requiring a rare melanin mutation to be successfully, fully melanized.

To go beyond the basic color blocking of the e-alleles (E, ER and eb) requires the addition of two or more melanizers, generally. My experiences indicate that there are several different mutations that melanize normally pheomelanin areas of the fowl. Melanotic (MI) and charcoal are two of the known melanizers, with MI being the most well

known and extensively studied of all the melanizers. I also refer to “recessive blacks”, which is a catchall of several different unnamed and little studied factors that seem to be different genes and also seem to not be Melanotic or charcoal. It is my experience that most blacks have melanotic and at least one other melanizer, generally somewhat recessive in their function, being

more recessive in males than in females. I refer to this as ‘sex-expressed’. Charcoal is likely one of the genes in the ‘recessive black’ complex of factors.

Melanotic is diagnosed by the fact that it tends to melanize the top of the head and upper hackle of both sexes, while partially melanizing the shoulder and saddle of the male by making the mid-stripe of the feathers wider and more distinct (as long as none of the interaction genes such as Pattern gene, Columbian and/or Dark brown {ginger} are

present). The recessive black complex genes tend to have the strongest melanizing effect on the lower hackle of both sexes, as well as melanizing the outer edges of saddle and shoulder feathers in the male. There is some variability to the extent that the various recessive black complex factors melanize. None seem to be very effective at melanizing males when heterozygous.

When any of the three e-alleles (E, ER or eb) is combined with MI and any one (or more) of the recessive black factors a nearly fully self-black phenotype can be expected. However, in my experience, unless both (all) factors are homozygous, it is not likely that a fully self-black male will result. The males seem to require homozygosity for both of the melanizing factors in order to create a fully black phenotype. However, on the eb e-allele, just these two types of melanizers do not seem to be sufficient to make the fully black phenotype in males, which will usually still show the pheomelanin wing triangle even with the full gene combination described. For the brown allele (eb) there seems to be a third

“It is my experience that most blacks have melanotic and at least one other melanizer, generally somewhat recessive in their function, being more recessive in males than in females. I refer to this as ‘sex-expressed’...”

gene (at least) required to make the fully black male.

As a further consideration, some of the non-melanized varieties seem to carry a factor that suppresses the expression of melanin in the sex feathering (hackle/saddle/shoulder) of the males. When this factor(s) is accidentally recombined with the melanizers, even on one of the three more melanized e-alleles, it can be extremely difficult, even impossible, to create the fully black phenotype in males. Some attempts to make self-black varieties in some breeds seem to be stymied by this type of factor.

I have seen several odd anomalies in relation to self-black phenotypes that make me believe this is a very complicated subject for which we have only touched the tip of the iceberg. In one rare instance, involving a line of black Minorca, there seemed to be only one melanizing gene in addition to the e-allele (E). However, I was never able to extract that factor and observe it functional in recombination with any other line, no matter the outcross I tried or how many generations I carried those outcrosses forward. Only when the fl offspring were backcrossed to the said Minorca line for two or more generations did the factor begin to express again in the phenotype. Perhaps there was a gene that suppressed pheomelanin and allowed only one melanizer to completely blacken the feathers? I can't be sure and never pursued the factor far enough to make any definitive determination.

Another highly anomalous occurrence that I witnessed and recorded in a line that was a combination of several rare breeds, including the Japanese black long crowing breed Kurokashiwa (Black Oak), was the appearance of what appeared to be E, ER and e+ down in the offspring from a male that was an established ER/e+ heterozygote and who was bred

only to confirmed e+/e+ females. How is it possible that a male that is a heterozygote at the e-allele, expressing ER and e+ could at times throw a third e-allele; E? I have no idea. It is not possible for any given bird to have three doses of the e-allele. So what may have been happening? I suspect that there may be a melanizer that is recessive (one of the 'recessive black' complex) that causes ER to appear like E in some instance, but that is only conjecture.

A further anomaly that occurred in this line was that in a mating of confirmed e+/e+ x e+/e+ siblings (offspring of the above mentioned male that seemingly threw three e-alleles, crossed to confirmed e+/e+ females), a very small number of E down-appearing chicks emerged that subsequently grew into typically E-appearing adults when not fully melanized to make a self-black phenotype (i.e., somewhat birchen like but slightly more melanized with no breast lacing). Since we know that the e-allele E is the most dominant of all the e-alleles, there is no way it could be carried as a recessive to e+. So what was happening there? I do not know, but I would surmise that there is an unknown melanizer, either another e-allele mutation that is very recessive or a recessive melanizer with a powerful effect on the chick down. I cannot state with certainty what was happening, and as I don't have that line anymore, it will fall to someone else to make a determination as to what such an effect is genetically.

Wheaten is an interesting e-allele, as it is

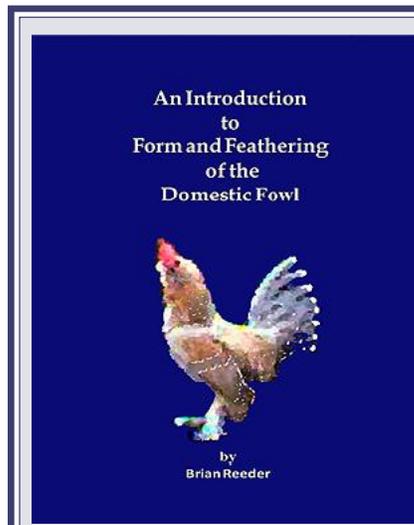
the opposite of those we have discussed. Wheaten restricts melanin, as can be seen in the absence of hackle striping in males and the drastic reduction of melanin in females as well as the extension of pheomelanin across the female's back. The fact that the fully pheomelanic varieties such as self-buff and self-red occur on a wheaten base tends to reinforce this notion. It is my experience that wheaten is the least amenable of all the e-alleles to melanization, with MI having only

a small effect on this allele and the recessive black complex factors showing only partial expression in females and nearly none in males. The most melanized expression on a wheaten base that I have ever witnessed is found in the Recap breed, which appears to be a melanized and patterned wheaten. However, I have seen a report of the possibility of full melanization on a wheaten base.

Several years ago, an article about the Cubalaya appeared in the magazine Backyard Poultry. In it the author (who's name I have, unfortunately, forgotten) stated that he felt I was wrong when I stated in my

book, *An Introduction to Color Varieties of the Domestic Fowl*, that wheaten was not amenable to melanization and could not be used as a base to produce self-black phenotypes. As evidence of this, he cited the black Cubalaya. He stated that the black Cubalaya emerged spontaneously from the regular BB Red Cubalaya. This he sites as proof that a black phenotype can occur on the wheaten

“Melanotic is diagnosed by the fact that it tends to melanize the top of the head and upper hackle of both sexes, while partially melanizing the shoulder and saddle of the male by making the mid-stripe of the feathers wider and more distinct . . . The recessive black complex genes tend to have the strongest melanizing effect on the lower hackle of both sexes . . .”



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(eWh) e-allele base. I must state that I have never owned or worked with any black Cubalaya nor have I ever seen the chicks of such or an adult in person. I do not know the coloring of the chick down in black Cubalaya chicks, which makes any real diagnosis nearly impossible.

As I noted in the above example, I had an instance where E-downed chicks (that then grew into near self-black adults) emerged from breeding confirmed e+/e+ homozygous siblings that descended from a melanized male that also showed melanizing anomalies in some of his offspring. This leads me to suspect that the black Cubalaya may represent exactly such an effect as I witnessed, and is not actually a fully melanized wheaten. I still have to state for the record that I do not believe that wheaten can be fully melanized to self-black, but I do believe that this anomalous

form of E-downed chicks/self-black adults can emerge from any of the other e-alleles. While I only witnessed this effect on e+/e+ homozygotes, it is possible that such could also occur from homozygous eWh-based birds.

One key to making an accurate assessment of the nature of the black Cubalaya is to examine the chick down. If the chick down is solid white or white with a bit of faint black striping on head/back (as in Redcap chicks), but then the adult bird is self-black, it is possible that there is in fact a melanized form of wheaten. In such an instance, there could be a mutation of wheaten (not eWh, but something like a "eWh~M", as a rough example, for 'melanizable wheaten' that mutated at the e-locus from eWh) that can be melanized or there may be a melanizer that is powerful enough to cover wheaten, either on its own or in conjunction with other melanizers. However, if the chick down of the black Cubalaya is black on the back and top of the head and white under the chin and on the abdomen or is solid black with a brownish head, then we are dealing with an E or ER-like e-allele, as such down is not wheaten. I suspect the chick down is the diagnostic key to these self-black Cubalayas, said to have emerged from eWh (non-E/ER) parent stocks.



The excellence of Janice Hall's winning Black Cochin cockerel makes self-black look easy . . . It is not - - especially in the male birds. Photo by Janice Hall.

Personally, I have never witnessed wheaten be amenable to melanization, certainly not full melanization to self-black, however, that does not mean it is not in the realm of possibility, as I have not worked with every line of fowl on Earth, nor have I owned, bred or even seen in person any black Cubalaya, and there are likely to be mutations that I have never encountered. However, as I have seen actual melanized downed individuals arise from the

mating of two confirmed homozygous, duckwing (e+/e+) birds, I suspect this may also be the more likely explanation for the seemingly anomalous occurrence of black Cubalaya arising from BB Red Cubalaya. The chick down of the black Cubalaya would be a most important diagnostic tool in determining what type of e-allele is actually at play in the variety.

In closing, I want to point out that self-black fowl are very elegant, lovely birds. Self-black allows the silhouette to really stand out. As well, a well-bred line of the self-black variety of any breed is an excellent starting point for beginners, as long as the males are sound for melanization in the hackle/saddle/shoulder, thus implying homozygosity for the melanization genes. If the males are not sound in the sex-feathered areas, they can be very difficult to clean up, in many instances. Self-black is a very popular variety for showing in many breeds and there are often very good lines available of the variety in those breeds. The beginner would do well to work with such a line. However, I would strongly discourage beginners from trying to make a black variety in a breed where none exists, as it is a complicated variety genetically and can represent many difficulties that beginners may find insurmountable.



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