

service in ACTION

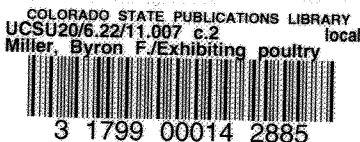
RECEIVED **Colorado State**
University
Cooperative
Extension

APR 12 1990

COLORADO STATE LIBRARY
State Publications Library

no. 11.007

Exhibiting poultry

Byron F. Miller¹

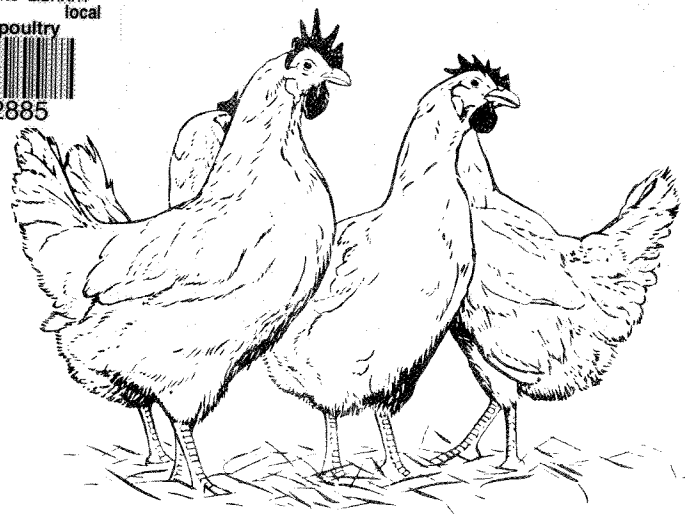
Quick Facts

Beginning poultry exhibitors must distinguish between standard-bred poultry and production poultry.

Standard-bred poultry is selected according to physical characteristics such as feather color and body shape.

Production poultry is selected for economic factors such as production and feed efficiency.

"Standard of Perfection" is a book describing all recognized breeds of domestic poultry.



In contrast, production poultry is selected for economic factors such as production, growth rate, feed efficiency, livability and meatiness.

Feathers, earlobe color and general color pattern is of no concern unless it affects the economic productivity of the bird and the offspring.

Birds classified as production poultry are produced in large numbers to provide high quality protein in the form of meat and eggs.

Poultry Classifications

One of the major questions confronting the beginning poultry exhibitor is the difference between standard-bred poultry and production poultry.

Standard-bred poultry is selected according to feather color, color pattern, body shape, size and many other cosmetic factors. Exhibition birds in the standard-bred show classes are compared to the "perfect" birds, such as chicken, duck, goose or turkey, as described in the "Standard of Perfection," a book published by the American Poultry Association.

The "Standard of Perfection" describes all recognized breeds of domestic poultry and provides full color pictures of the ideal specimen for a particular breed. Various defects and disqualifications are described to help the novice exhibitor select birds for exhibit.

Standard-bred poultry are show birds so appearance is of primary importance.

Selecting Birds for Exhibit

Standard-bred poultry should be selected according to the desirable qualities for that breed. Birds that display defects such as poor conformation, off-color feathers, side sprigs or an obvious deviation from the standard should be eliminated from consideration.

Final selection should be based on comparisons of weight and shape, comb features and overall appearance to the standard ideal for the breed under consideration.

Production-bred poultry should be selected on

¹Byron F. Miller, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension poultry specialist and associate professor (retired), animal sciences (2/88)

the production qualities they possess. A broiler or meat production bird should show meatiness. The breast should be very heavily muscled, possess a straight keel and be absent of blisters and callosities.

The body should be covered with fully developed feathers and a minimum of pinfeathers. The back, shanks, feet and toes should all be straight. Legs should be wide apart to accommodate the wide breast.

Egg production stock should be sparsely covered with meat. They should weigh between 2½ pounds and 5 pounds when mature, depending on the breed. The body should be deep and wide to capacitate the development of many eggs. Pubic bones should be wide apart with very little fat padding. There should be little or no molting.

Skin and shank color is important in birds that have been laying eggs but not important in pullets just reaching sexual maturity.

Finally, any bird selected for exhibit should be selected for its healthy appearance. Bright eyes, an upright stance and brightly colored comb and wattles are all signs of health and vigor.

Preparing for Exhibition

Exhibition birds are under considerable stress, so extra effort must be taken to avoid stressful situations.

The birds should be "trained" by housing them in an exhibition cage for several weeks before a show. Handling and talking to exhibition birds helps prepare them for the rigors of being around humans.

It is important to maintain their usual ration while at an exhibition and to provide water from home when possible.

Birds should be bathed with a mild detergent and warm water every few days. An old toothbrush works well for cleaning around the scales on the shanks and feet.

Glycerine or vegetable oil rubbed on the comb, wattles and shanks will give them a nice sheen.

Freshly bathed birds should be allowed to dry in a clean, dry cage in an area that is warm and free from drafts.

Finally, exhibitors should avoid litter materials and straw that can stain wet feathers.