

LASNE CRESTED BANTAM

TEXT & PHOTOS LASNE: SIGRID VAN DORT

... Why easy, if complicated is possible... difficulties since 1980

**...AND THE (FAKE)
AUGSBURGER
BUTTERCUP FOWL**



The Lasne Crested bantam

(pronounce as 'lan', the 's' is silent and the n is a 'thin' n)

Jacques Hanotier was the creator of this strange fowl which combines striking traits, as far as appearance is concerned, while being in the same time a good layer. The Lasne crested bantam was named after the city of Lasne in Walonian Brabant (South of Belgium) where Jacques and his wife lived.

It had to be a chicken with the qualities of a Fauvist in the art of living and completing the list of other Walonian breeds.

Anyway, this was thirty years ago and on the National in Ranst (near Antwerp) my attention was drawn by a row of 'weird chickens', which were on the 'Acceptance' part of the show.

The shy animals did not want to be photographed so I asked an 'official' to assist, or, in other words, to be voluntarily molested by a pretty defensive rooster of Lasne.

I am never satisfied with a few shots of a weird chicken and I always want to know more about it, e.g. why does this animal exist? What was the initial plan of its creator? Pierre Sadane, a Dutch speaking Walonian judge, was willing to bring some clarity about this chicken. He sent me papers with information. It's not a story for your imagination, because not every chicken breeder strives for grave ideas or creating a Myth. But it is sure worth sharing this with you because the origin of this breed is really interesting.



*Title page:
Lasne crested
bantam rooster.
Left: Lasne
crested bantam
rooster and
pullet.
Middle: Lasne
crested bantam
pullet.
Bottom: isabel
hackle on a
rooster.*



Origin

Jacques Hanotier (scientist, as his wife), a connaisseur of genetics in fowl, on which he wrote a book in 1999 (*Éléments de Génétique à l'Usage des Petits Eleveurs de Poules*), wanted to create a chicken that would look blue, but also one that would breed true, without producing blue, black and splash offspring. In other words, he wanted a self-blue breed. Of course he ended up with lavender which is true to colour breeding when pure. The other English word for lavender, self blue, indicates this. A grumbler who cares about the shade which also appears on the blues. First name of this chicken was therefore 'Blue of Lasne'.

Herve x Ukkelse...

Jacques started with a black Herve fowl and a porcelain d' Uccle. Because porcelain in French is used for both mille fleur and porcelain, we can suspect it was the 'lavender mille fleur' that he used.

The first generation offspring from this cross must were almost black mixed with gold but all carried the lavender gene and were more or less booted. Booted is easy to get rid of and also the beard of the d'Uccle was soon gone.

By inbreeding, in the first generation 25% of the offspring were lavender in black feather parts and isabel in the golden and red feathers. More of a kind of a sloppy isabel golden neck. Without the lav gene they should have been golden necked at that time. The hens, which are supposed to be black/lavender, show less gold than cocks, they are rather 'black' thanks to their hormones compared

to cocks. This also happens when black is diluted by lavender.

... topped with a crest

To add a touch of originality, they were crossed once to a Poland bantam. This ornamental crest would be kept when the Lasne continued to develop because Crest (Cr) is a dominant trait. By crossing to a Poland they introduced the duplex comb and the cavernous nostrils in the creation.

While breeding them further, they saw a buttercup comb develop which looked like the Sicilian buttercup. In the article written by Karl Losson there is a mention of a buttercup shaped comb that kept coming back in all kinds of appearances.



Lasne crested bantam cockerel. The standard comb shape is very difficult to obtain; single comb till the fourth serration, splitting towards the end...

The full crest of the Poland was reduced to a distinct one. Besides the combination of visible traits, the Lasne has another distinct trait: green eggs! This trait was borrowed from the Araucana from Renee Dulieu. Laying green eggs is a dominant trait so the Araucana was used only once.

The type of the Lasne looks like the type of the Herve fowl, which is only selected for appearance, if you keep in mind what other breeds are used. The Lasne has next to a small crest, white ears and a red halfway parted buttercup comb (not to be compared with the Buttercup, but it sure can be compared to the comb of the Augsburg fowl) and a lavender colour.

Why easy?

It wouldn't be the first time a breeder has a picture in his head and a list of traits his creation should meet in future and his wishes will never be reality because the way traits inherit is discarded or just unknown, resulting in a bird that doesn't breed true and meeting his own standard requirements appears to be hardly possible.

The best known example is breeding the blue colour. Blue chickens do not breed true, and consequently cannot come from pure breeding. Pure breeding blues are splash. To breed a blue chicken they need to be crossed with either blue or black. In continental Europe only the blues and blacks are welcome at exhibitions, the splashes are not. They have to stay at home for breeding. The splashes are not totally useless therefore and don't have to be considered as 'waste'.

'Waste' in chicken breeding is something one should think about in a moral, ethical way, the 'waste' of breeding chickens are living creatures and not 'things' or 'material'.

Anyway, to get a certain amount of 'waste' from blue breeding, you can use lavender, but also a grey colour and pure breeding, so all birds will be lavender/grey/ light blue. Colour problem tackled.



The two cockerels which were in Ranst. Neither one was correct, these were the best in comb, therefore it was necessary to give in on colour.

Comb problems in Lasne

There seems to be problem with the comb of the Lasne for years. It seems to be the same problem people in Germany are coping with in the case of the Augsburg fowl since 1880 (!).

The comb is a rather strange thing when you take a close look at it. The comb of the Lasne looks a bit like the buttercup comb of the Sicilian Buttercup. The front starts as a single comb; according to the Standard of the Lasne this single part should have four dents, splitting into two single combs. Considering the founding fowl of the Lasne, the true buttercup comb as from the Sicilian is not in its list.

The comb of the Lasne looks like a combination between a single comb and a double comb, which is also the case in the Augsburg fowl (cross La Flèche x single combed Lamotta).

By crossing to a Poland (after Herve x d'Uccle = both single comb), the gene producing the double comb (V-shaped comb, two spikes splitting above the nose) came into the Lasne.

D^ΔV is a dominant gene (counter part single comb d⁺) which shows as impure, being represented by the splitting the comb on any location.

The Poland has, just like the La Flèche, Houdan, Crèvecoeur, Sultan and Breda, the V-shaped comb, also called two horned comb (Dutch) or 'leaf' comb in the Houdan. All these combs are "duplex"-combs which carry the symbol D^ΔV.

The comb of the Sicilian Buttercup is genetically a totally different comb although it consists of two parts as well. This comb got the symbol D^Δc.

In D^Δc the c is written as a small letter because the Buttercup comb is recessive to the D^ΔV duplex-comb. The order of dominance is therefore: D^ΔV > D^Δc > d⁺ which is single comb.



Lasne hen, even more difficult to breed the correct comb shape.

Fake Buttercup

In both the Lasne and the Augsburg a kind of look-a-like buttercup comb is constructed by an impure cross between $D^{\Delta V} \times d+$. This leads to numerous phenotypes/appearances; there is no sense to be knots. The theory of the Augsburg, stating that the comb segregates in the well known 25-50-25 percentages, does not last because there are more comb modifiers in the mentioned combination, like also for instance comb size.

$D^{\Delta V}$ causes in pure condition a reduction of the comb size, through which the comb becomes a lot smaller and concentrates into two spikes/horns or a small 'leaf' comb as on the Houdan.

However, when $D^{\Delta V}$ is impure, due to e.g. a cross to single comb, this size reduction doesn't happen.

This is the reason why Lasne shows a wide range of comb shapes and it's a gamble whether the shape is standard or not.

In the standard description is an extra problem, splitting of the comb after the fourth dent of the single shaped front side. Its possible this phenotype has been seen most in the heterozygous (impure) intermediary variant, or it was just a matter of taste?



The real Sicilian Buttercup combs.
Photos and animals: Giuseppe Tasso (It.).

References:

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Intermediary combs show lots of shapes, as seen also in the Augsburg fowl, in which case the comb should split after the second dent.

This is choosing for difficult, as most of the animals will not meet the standard comb. It's possible to improve such fowl by means of other interesting traits, in order to make it kind of useful - for example, besides a nice appearance, good meat or lots of eggs... But this way of breeding can rather be seen as mopping with the tap; I excuse myself if this sounds arrogant to you, it's not meant at all that way.

Knowledge of inheritance of comb shapes exists since 1905.

(Bateson & Punnett, Hurst), 1906 (Davenport), 1923 (Punnett), also later research is done on comb shapes 1940, Hutt & Lamoreux, 1941, 1949, Hutt, 1943, Hutt & Mueller, 1986, Somes, 1991, Somes Jr.. In 1991 R.G. Somes Jr. proved the existence of $D^{\wedge}c$ which was another allele of the duplex V-comb on the same gene D. The D gene has therefore three alleles ($D^{\wedge}V$, $D^{\wedge}c$ en $d+$)

Heterozygous, nevertheless standardized.... pffff

Besides the segregation of the comb shapes of the Lasne (and Augsburg) as proof for breeding an impure comb shape, there is yet another proof that this happens: the shape of the nose.

All pure breeding $D^{\wedge}V$ (two horn comb) breeds have a 'high nose' (La Flèche, Crèvecoeur, Breda, Poland, Sultan and Houdan with its leaf comb). The Sicilian Buttercup has a normal slit nose and a duplex comb.

The cavernous nostrils have no relation to the duplex V-comb. Crossing a Poland with cavernous nostrils x single comb with slit-nose, the high nose appears to be recessive. Therefore, the Lasne must have lost its high nose very recently. Unless there is some kind of throwback appearing now and then but this will go along with a reduced comb size! It can be assumed the comb size reducing property of $D^{\wedge}V$ when pure, also having an effect on the shape of the nose.

If the buttercup comb shape of the Lasne (and Augsburg) came from the Sicilian Buttercup, the high nose would still be there in a cross with the Poland ($D^{\wedge}V$), because Somes showed that in a cross between $D^{\wedge}V$ x $D^{\wedge}c$ the dominance of the high nose is manifested! This also happens in a cross between F1 x F1 (brother x sister of the initial cross).

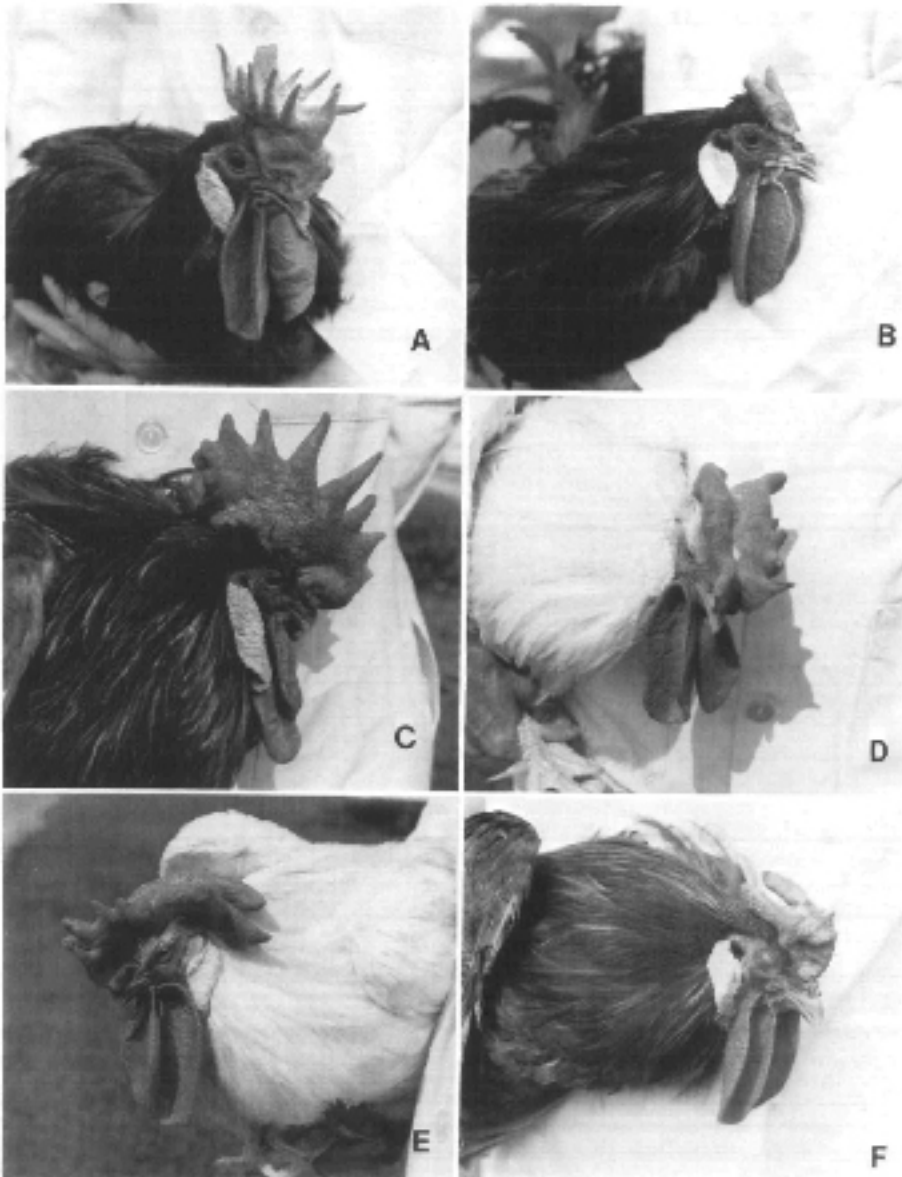


Figure 1. Combs of duplex comb breeds and F_1 crosses: (A) Buttercup; (B) La Flèche; (C) Buttercup \times single F_1 ; (D) La Flèche \times single F_1 ; (E) La Flèche \times single F_1 ; (F) La Flèche \times Buttercup F_1 .

F. La Flèche x Buttercup F_1 .

Different types of duplex combs from Somes Jr's research on duplex combs (1991).

NB. the photos of these crossbred combs are 'a' photo because comb shapes segregate in multiple shapes. It was impossible to do research on every segregation.

A. Sicilian buttercup/buttercup.

B. La Flèche.

C. Buttercup x single comb.

D. La Flèche x single comb.

E. La Flèche x single comb F_1 (this one looks almost identical to the Lasne comb for the splitting halfway and some dents on the front. Lasne is inbred multiple times for single x duplex of the Poland.



What is definitely clear about the origin of the comb of the Lasne is that there would never have been a small crest on the Lasne if a Buttercup had been used... I limit myself to the argument and reasoning the Lasne is impure in comb shape and will never ever breed the proposed standardized comb shape.

The only way to correct the comb on the Lasne is a cross to Sicilian Buttercup and choosing that particular comb shape as standard. Skip the splitting of comb thorn number '123', because it's theoretically and practically highly unlikely to obtain this.

Perhaps this conclusion leads to another direction in breeding the Lasne, which is better taking into account the manner of breeding it right now? The same applies to the Augsburg fowl, which is on the Red List (of extinction) since March 2009. It's likely they are less favoured because of the not pure breeding combs, which is an extra handicap for the breeders who want to exhibit this bird on shows.

Knowledge of the inheritance of traits in fowl, and especially the absence thereof, could mean an inglorious end of a breed in which people have been investing a lot of time and money for decades, and the Augsburg fowl since 1880, simply because breeding objectives are genetically not viable.

(See also: <http://site.voila.fr/bassecourbelge3/page1.html>)

(See also: <http://www.quenovel.be/Horticole/hpage56.htm#poules>)



Top: La Flèche.

Photo: Dirk de Jong



Augsburger pair.

Photo: Beate Milerski



Augsburger roosters.

Photo: Beate Milerski

AUGSBURGER FOWL

The Augsburger fowl was created in the 1870s from La Flèche with black legged Lamotta. The Augsburger fowl is the only Bayern breed in the German standard and is of land race type and purely a bird for beauty.

Despite of this, one can expect $\pm 180, 58$ grams white eggs a year.

Most appealing is the so called buttercup comb. On the rooster it's upright and starts on the front as single and splits after the first or second dent in a buttercup shaped comb. It should be as follows: both hind parts should show as closed. Matching to the buttercup comb: medium sized, thin wattles and white oval ears, for appealing contrast.

The the Augsburger fowl was first spread in the Swabian and later Schwarzwalt region. Until the sixties of the last century they were much loved but in the nineties they became almost extinct. The breed survived due to their early maturing, numerous eggs and their cheerful character. The blue colour originates from the former Eastern German standard, which makes the Augsburger fowl being bred in two colours. The biggest problem is the buttercup comb which segregates. Pairing two buttercup combs gives a statistical division of 25% horn comb, 25% single comb, 50% buttercup comb. Not all buttercup combs are suitable for show. A lot of combs are too high or floppy.





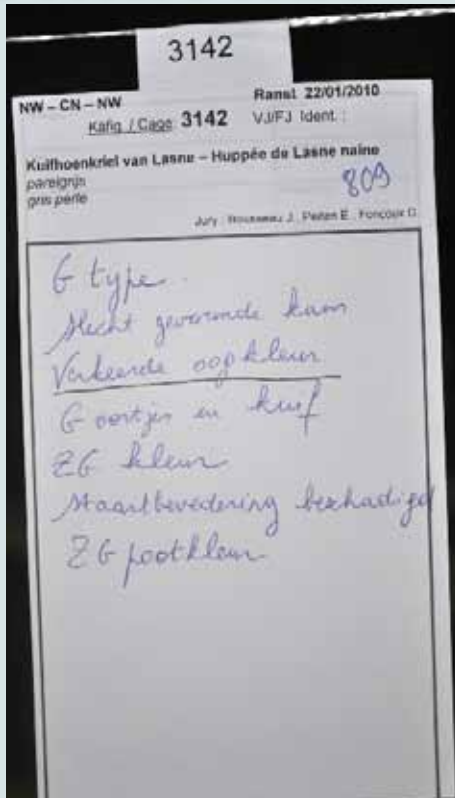
Photos of the Augsburger buttrecup fowl, exhibition quality, which are nearly extinct...

Photos: Beate Milerski



STANDARD

Lasne Crested Bantam



Fr. : Huppée de Lasne D. : Lasner Zwerg-Haubenhuhn GB. : Lasne crested bantam

Origin: Belgium. Created in the 1980s by Jaques Hanotier (†2008) at Lasne, in the province of Wallonian-Brabant.

General appearance: squatted bantam with a single comb which splits on the hind part, a rounded and deep breast. Head points are bright red. A small crest, oriented backwards, adorns the back of the head. The shanks are slate.

Traits: very hardy bantam, good layer, especially suited for free roaming but can be kept in aviaries, flies easily. The eggs have bluish green shell and weigh about 35 grams.

Description of the MALE

Body: rounded, posture upright.

Neck: firm, rather long, elegantly curved.

Head: a bit elongated, medium size.

Comb: **single, upright front part, comb blade splits after 3 to 4 regular dents to the hind in two parts, vivid red colour.**

Crest: well filled, rather long, upright and backwards oriented.

Beak: firm, medium length and curved to the point, slate colour.

Wattles: medium length, rounded, vivid red of colour.

Earlobes: small, smooth, oval, white.

Face: smooth, vivid red of colour.

Eyes: rather big, vivid in expression, orange brown.

Back: broad at the shoulders, medium length and slightly sloping backwards.

Wings: well developed, carried horizontal, the tips hidden under the saddle.

Tail: well developed and rather wide spread, carried in an angle of 50 degrees, main tail broad and long and covering each other. Sickles well developed.

Thighs: not very visible.

Shanks: medium length, rather tucked in the heel joint, smooth, fine scales, slate.

Toes: 4, smooth, well spread, same colour as the shanks.

Nails: well curved, horn colour.

Feathers: smooth, sufficiently broad, moderate down development.

Hackle: long, well developed, partly covering back and shoulders, the neck on the front well enclosing.

Saddle: well developed and long.

Description of the FEMALE:

Besides secondary sexual differences, the same characteristics as the male except:

Neck: more upright.

Comb: **single, front part folded, comb blade splits after 3 to 4 regular dents to the hind in two parts, vivid red colour.**

Crest: more filled compared to the male, broader than high.

Back: broad, a bit steep backwards, almost horizontal.

Abdomen: well developed.

Tail: half open and carried in a 45 degree angle.

Faults: set too high; wings carried too low; tail too much spread; pale eye colour; pale beak and leg colour; folded comb of the male.

Disqualifications: red earlobes; traces of yellow pigment in the beak, shanks, skin; single comb; skull knob.

Ring size: male: 14 mm; female: 12 mm.

Standard weights: Cockerel: 750 grams

Cock: 900 grams

Pullet: 700 grams

Hen: 750 grams

Accepted colours: lavender.

For lavender: see colour description in the standard (of perfection).