



FRANKFURTER ZWERGHÜHNER ~ FRANKFURT BANTAMS

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Exhibition poultry is tied to the emblems of several sport and football associations (for example Aylesbury F.C. from England or Denizli-spor from Turkey). Some poultry associations in Germany carry the symbols of a regional/national breed in their coat of arms, just like the local club Hessen-Nassau, which is so rich in tradition. Its emblem exhibits the pigeon breeds Steinheim Baghdad and Hessian Cropper, as well as the only breed of bantam chickens originating from Hessen, the Frankfurt Bantam.

The Frankfurt Bantams are one of the youngest bantam chicken breeds in Germany, and they were named after their place of birth, Frankfurt am Main. The founder of the breed was Dr. Wilhelm Klee, a dentist living in the city of Alzenau. In his flock of (White-Black Columbia) Bantam Wyandottes he found a hen with a single comb. He stabilized this trait – the single comb – in his birds, and tried to get 'single-combed Bantam Wyandottes' recognized by the National Association of German Poultry Breeders (BDRG). Eventually, however, he failed to do so at that time, with the birds he had.



However, he didn't want to quit breeding, so he crossed his 'single-combed Bantam Wyandottes' with Light Bantam Brahmas, obtaining a bantam breed with characteristics significantly different from both Bantam Wyandottes and Bantam Brahmas. After 6 – 8 years of selection, the traits of his new breed were finally stabilized. He chose the name 'Frankfurt Bantams' for the newly developed addition to the chicken world, following the recommendation of the National Breeding Committee (BZA), which had suggested finding a name connected to the regional specificity of the breed. Dr. Klee lived in Frankfurt am Main while breeding them. From 1994 to 1997, the Frankfurt Bantams were exhibited in the category of newly developed breeds, a necessary step towards their recognition. In 2003, Dr. Klee gave up on his breeding efforts, and gave his last birds to his colleague Rolf Bautzmann. Pretty soon afterwards, the close inbreeding signaled its presence, so a new breed had to be used for fresh blood.

Bantam Sundheimer was the breed of choice, with birds coming from Rolf Bautzmann and his fellow-breeder Bernhard Bartmann.

In 2006, Andreas Faust from Rahden was to show the last 1,3 Frankfurt Bantams for a long period of time, at a Grand Show (the 25th European Show). It would only be in 2010, that Bernhard





Bartmann surprised everyone at the National Show, the *Bundessiegerschau* in Frankfurt with show-quality Frankfurt Bantams! One could ask, where could these Bantams better be exhibited than in their 'hometown', Frankfurt am Main?

From that moment on, things have been going better and better for the Bantams from Hessen. In 2011, 9 birds from Bernhard Bartmann and Rudolf Pfaff were exhibited at a local show. In 2012, the Hessen-Nassau Local Poultry Association - which has the Frankfurt Bantams on its emblem - held an event to promote its regional breeds. On this occasion, 19 Frankfurt Bantams were exhibited by Bernhard Bartmann, Rudolf Pfaff and Klaus Klebach.

According to its description in the standard, the Frankfurt Bantam should be a medium-sized bird, with harmoniously rounded contours, strong build, of moderate height, with foot feathering. Its plumage should be abundant, giving the impression of being relatively fluffy, but the feathers should not be soft. The weight should be around 1000 grams for the rooster and 900 grams for the hen. The body should be broad, carried horizontally. The back should be also broad, and not too short! There should be a clearly noticeable distance between the neck hackles and the saddle! The line of the back is steadily ascending towards the tail, with the lowest point at the middle of the bird's body.

Right: Neck hackle of a hen.

The shoulders have to be broad and well arched. The wings are carried horizontally, and they should be held tight. The tips of the wings are buried beneath the saddle feathers. Cross-wings are an eliminatory fault, and therefore taboo.



As a resemblance with the breeds used to create the Frankfurt Bantam, the tail is short, full and broad. In the ideal case, the tail reaches the eye-level.

Seen from behind, the main tail feathers form a 'horse-shoe' – a legacy from the beloved Bantam Wyandottes. Just like in the case of Bantam Wyandottes, the 'horse-shoe' is full of fluffy feathers, with the ones below growing upwards to support and complete the tail. Many sickles, well arched, cover the tail. The chest should be well rounded and deep, seen from the side, and broad, seen from the front. The head, not too big in comparison with the body, should be adorned with a single comb, medium-sized, with even serrations. The comb should follow the neck-line, without touching the neck. In the past, there were always problems with the faulty combs. The wattles are of medium length, well rounded, and fine in texture, just like the red-coloured face. The ears are also red. Aside from the standard, the orange eyes are considered a criterion for assessing production qualities. The beak and the legs are yellow. The feet are of medium length, strong, with foot feathering. The foot feathers reach till the middle toe. The

outer- and middle-toes are covered in hard feathers. Because of the foot feathering, the males need rings with a diameter of 16 mm, while the hens need size 15 rings. The two genders look very much alike, apart from the gender-specific differences. The hen has got a longer back, with no sickles and more visible main tail feathers. The head points are of a more delicate build than those of the rooster. The eggs should weigh at least 35 grams. The shell is light-brown. The annual egg production is somewhere around 150 per year.



In the breeds used to create the Frankfurt Bantams, the White Black Columbia variety is quite common. For this reason, it is no surprise that Dr. Klee chose the same colour variety for his Frankfurt chickens. However, he encountered some difficulties with the markings, during the process of having the breed recognized. Typically, the columbia colour pattern restricts the black to certain regions (neck and tail, mainly) – the Asiatic breeds are the best example for this pattern.

Both genders are somewhat similar as far as colour and marking are concerned. The head is completely white. The neck hackles consist of broad feathers, black centre with green shine, with white lacing. A bird is particularly impressive if the neck hackles are broad and shiny. Another quality is a clearly drawn lacing. Too much black and the absence of the white lacing in the neck hackles are considered faults. The feathers on the upper-back show various amounts of

black – here, we are talking about colour reserves, actually, since this part is covered by the neck hackles. These reserves of pigment ensure enough black in the wings and tail. The saddle of the rooster should only show thin lines of black.

The saddle of the hen is completely white. The main tail and sickles of the rooster are completely black with green shining, and tail coverts show white lacing. The tail of the hen is black, white lacing is accepted in the upper two main tail feathers of the hen, the tail coverts with white lacing. The primaries are black with a white lacing at the outer side. The secondaries should be as black as possible on the inner vane and white on the outer vane. Folded, the wing looks white. The foot feathering is white with black markings, especially on the toes.

The black here also represents a colour reserve. The rest of the plumage is white. As far as the underfluff is concerned, it does not really matter whether it is lighter or darker. The main thing is that it should be gray.



Among the serious faults of the breeds are the following: under-developed body, a back line that is too long, too short, or too narrow, round or tilted tail, downward sloping back line, too high or too low stance, flat chest, long wings, vulture hocks, not enough foot feathering or missing foot feathers on the middle toe, white in the ear-lobes.

As for the colour, obvious yellow sheen in the white plumage; black in places where it should not be; violet shine or a lot of white in the tail and not enough black in the wings are among the most common causes for losing points at shows.

If one gets white-coloured chicks among the offspring, one should keep in mind that these birds will often show too little black marking as adults.

Andreas Faust offers an almost romanticized version of the breed characteristics. Frankfurt Bantams are calm birds; the roosters do not crow much, they do not scratch the ground too much and do not fly. So, nothing can keep a breeder from starting with these Bantams, even if he lives in a residential area (provided that animal keeping be allowed). Those who prefer natural hatching are lucky with this breed, as hens become broody quite often. Now let's hope that these bantams will find new hobbyists, charmed by their qualities! You can find more information at www.frankfurter-zwerghuhn.de or from the main breeders themselves Bernhard Bartmann (bartmann@hanauer.de), Rudolf Pfaff (i.r.pfaff@t-online.de) and Klaus Klebach (klaus-klebach@t-online.de).

Below: Breeders of the Frankfurter Zwerghühner at the LV-Schau Hessen-Nassau 2012 in Alsfeld: R. Pfaff, B. Bartmann and K. Klebach with his son.



The Frankfurt Bantams are expected to make an appearance at the Regional Show in Hessen-Nassau, on the 1st and 2nd of November 2013.