

THE EUROPEAN SHOW FOR BRAKEL FOWL IN BRAKEL (BELGIUM)

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Above: Club members, aldermen and mayor of Brakel Herman de Croo (3rd left). In the middle, with a Brakel rooster, André van Damme, secretary of the Braekelclub Nederbraekel. To the right the author/photographer of this report, Jan Schaareman.

December 13, 14 and 15 of last year the specialty club 'Braekelclub Nederbraekel' held an European Show in Brakel, Belgium. Not only for the Brakel fowl, but also for Brakel-related fowls, like the Zottegem Fowl, Zingem Layer Fowl and the Zwalm Valley Fowl.

The town of Brakel is situated in the centre of the Flemish Ardennes, still a nice country side. Decorated still with nice old-fashioned farms, where the Brakel Fowl has its origin. Touristic, this area has much to offer and is well-known for its cycling race: the Tour of Flanders. In particular the 'cobblestones' (well-known road-stones by cyclists) are still abundant here.

The municipality of Brakel – in particular the mayor Herman de Croo (who even has the honourable title of Minister of State) has supported this European Show by unveiling a monument of the Brakel Fowl at the end of 2012, realizing that the Brakel Fowl is part of the cultural heritage of the municipality.

The mayor has also mediated in the search for a show location; Sports centre AVERBO at 9660 Brakel (Michelbeke). However, this sports centre is meant for the well-known volley-ball team of Brakel, playing in the highest division of

Belgium. Only the week-end of December 15. the sports centre was still free, so there was some room to hold an European show for Brakel fowls.

The Brakel Fowl was almost nearly extinct in Belgium about 1970. Thanks to the efforts of Walter Terryn and some friends the Brakel Fowl – and the Izezem Cuckoo Fowl – was gloriously restored.

A record of Brakel Fowls, and related breeds, entered this European Show. The annual show in Brakel is the largest show for Brakel fowls anyway, but the number of entries at this European show exceeded all expectations. Only tens of years back the people of Izezem had seen these numbers.

As expected most Brakel fowls were registered in **Silver**. Some years ago all titles (including the European Champion-title) were won by praised breeders, now these titles were won by others.

Right: Bart Dellaert won European Champion with this Silver Brakel male, 97 points.

Below: Cyriel Adriaenssen won European Champion with this Silver Brakel pullet.



The **Golden** Brakel fowl does not have the same high quality as the silver-coloured. In particular the marking of the tail of the hens is less defined compared to the tail of the silver hens.

This aspect is also seen in other breeds that come in these two colours; the golden and silver colours.

Right: Paul Dumont won European Champion with this Gold Brakel pullet.

Surprisingly we saw some Brakel fowls in **Lemon**. This colour is only recognized in Belgium. Also in this variety it is difficult to achieve an even lemon colour.





**Left: Lemon cockerel.
Owner: François Duhem.**

Next to that we saw Brakel Fowl in **White barred**; the colour of the bars is normally black. If this is replaced by white, we speak of Golden White barred, Lemon White barred and Silver White barred. It is difficult to achieve a good contrast between the colours. In particular this is difficult in the Lemon White barred variety.

Right: Nicolas Nachez won European Champion with this Silver Brakel White barred pullet.

**Below: Gold White barred male.
Owner: Nicolas Nachez.**



**Below: White cockerel.
Owner: Marc Volkaert.**

Apart from the barred varieties Brakel fowls are also recognized in Self Black, Self Blue, Self Blue Laced and Self White – but this is only in Belgium! At this European Show, only Self White was present. I heard a breeder saying that he has some Self Black and Self Blue at home. However, these were too young for a show. With these colours it is very important to pay attention to the true Brakel type. (I still recall that tens of years ago some Bresse Fowls had to pass for black Brakel fowls!)





Brakel Bantams were only entered in Silver. In particular the females had a very good body type. The colouring of the bantams approaches the colouring of the standard Large silver Brakel. Although it is more difficult to achieve the preferred barring in the breast in bantam-sized birds. Also the combs of the hens are not lopping (yet).

Left: Willy De Bock won European Champion with this Brakel Bantam, Silver, cockerel.

**Left:
Silver
pullet.
Owner
Simon
Verbiest.**



**Right:
Silver
male.
Owner
Bart
Dellaert.**



**Left:
Silver
male.
Owner
Eddy
D'haen.**

**Right:
Silver
male.
Owner
Eric
Henau.**

**Left:
Gold
male.
Owner
Paul
Dumont.**



**Right:
Silver
male.
Owner
Hubert
Smet.**





Left:
Gold male.
Owner
Luc de Winne.



Right:
Gold hen.
Owner
Luc de Winne.



Left: Gold white barred hen.
Owner
Bjorn Schamp.



Right:
Lemon white barred hen
Owner
N.Nachez.

At this European Show we also saw some colours which are not (yet) recognized; mainly in Brakel Bantam. Apart from the Gold Brown barred bantams, the Gold Blue barred bantams stroke me most. There were also Silver Blue barred bantams and mottled Gold bantams (Gold black barred feathers ending in a white spot). These colours do show us the effect of colouring on barring.

Above, right and middle: Mottled Gold bantams.
Below: Gold blue barred bantams. Owner: B. Driessen.





Above and below, left: Gold blue barred Brakel bantams.



**Right: Zottegem bantams.
Owner: B. Driessen.**



Above: Zwalm Valley bantams, also not standardized. Owner: B. Driessen.

Zottegem Fowls were represented in silver, gold and lemon. Looking at the Zottegem fowl we see that the upper part of the hackles is black. Another feature is that they have black ear feathers. In general the Zottegem fowl makes a darker impression than the Brakel fowl, with other characteristics being the same.

Right: Linda van Steenberg won European Champion with this silver Zottegem pullet.



Left: Zottegem Fowl, gold, male. Owner: Nicolas Nachez.



Right: Zottegem Fowl, gold, female. Owner: Koen van den Noortgate.

The latter also applies for the **Zwalm Valley Fowl**, created by Frank Okerman. (This man was also one of the creators of the Gold White barred Brakels).



Above and right: Zwalm Valley Fowl. Owner: Ronald Goethals.



The Zwalm Valley Fowl is in fact a golden Brakel with cuckoo marking. Due to this cuckoo gene, you get different colour of the eyes, beak and legs, i.e. red-brown eyes instead of black eyes and a white beak and legs instead of slate-coloured.

The **Zingem Layer Fowl** is only recognized in Gold. The breed is very rare. The breed has less black marking than the golden Brakel, in particular the breast of a rooster shows hardly any black marking.

Right: Hubert Benoit won European Champion with this Zingem Layer Fowl, Gold, male.



**Left: Zingem Layer Fowl, pullet.
Owner: Leo Vermeir.**

The specialty club 'Braekelclub Nederbraekel' did a very successful job in organising this Show. In particular secretary André van Damme has put a lot of effort in this show and I thank him cordially for his activities.

See also <http://www.brakelhoen.be/>

and <http://www.braekelclub-nederbraekel.be/europa.html>

Of course, at this Show also other breeds were entered and with pleasure we show you a few eye catchers in the poultry section.

Araucana male, Owner: Elien LambRight.

Araucana pullet, Owner Gust Mermans.





Above and left: Izegem Cuckoo cockerel and pullet. Owner: Luc Timmermans.

Right: Bearded Silkie, pullet. Owner: Patrick Lanckmans.



Left: Ardenner pullet, black goldneck. Owner: Marc de Temmerman.



Above: Antwerp Bearded bantam pullet. Owner: Eddy Engels.



Left: Head study Araucana cockerel.



Left: Cochin bantam, white pullet.
Owner: Sven Engels.

Below: Malines Cuckoo bantam, pullet.
Owner: Marc de Temmerman.



Below: Moder English Game bantam, brown red, pullet.
Owner: Pierre Sadaune.



Recommended reading:
Brakel breed special
<http://www.aviculture-europe.nl/nummers/11N04A05.pdf>

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