

BREDA FOWL and BREDA BANTAM



Text and photos:
Rolf de Ruiter.

The Breda Fowl is one of the oldest Dutch breeds. As far as the type is concerned, it is a very striking bird. This is caused by the leg- and foot feathering, but above all by the absence of a comb and other head ornaments.

Many articles have been written on the Breda Fowl. There even used to be a column: the NHC Breda Fowl Column. Articles were written by famous Dutch writers like Van Gink, van den Berg, van Omme, Berghuys, van de Heuvel, Aalbers and Boks. (also in Aviculture Europe, see <http://www.aviculture-europe.nl/nummers/10N02A08.pdf> ed.)

I am not going to write a comparable story; this might lead to repetition. I will give you a personal view on the Breda Fowl and Breda Bantams. In my history these two breeds belong together. The Breda Fowl and Breda Bantam are unique; you love them or hate them.

In the early 1900's the Breda fowl was chosen as a symbol of the NHC (Dutch Poultry Association). The drawing of the Breda head got a prominent place as symbol of the NHC, and it still preserves its privileged position.



The biggest among the old Dutch breeds

The Breda fowl is a large and calm breed, high on its feet. The largest among the old Dutch breeds. A remarkable appearance because of the long back, broad shoulders, a nice tail and a peculiar head with white ears, no comb, with particular-looking open nostrils. Behind the nose, the feathers on the head start, first with some frizzy feathers. Sometimes some comb rudiments are located here, but this is a serious fault. Furthermore the breed has vulture hocks. These must not be too large.



Head study of a Breda cockerel.

What has been mentioned above applies to the Breda Bantams also; except for the size. The Breda Bantams tend to get larger hocks; a not wanted tendency which requires full attention.

The Breda Fowl is recognized in the following colours: black, white, cuckoo, blue laced and mottled. The Breda Bantams appear in the same colours, except for mottled.

I have bred Breda Fowls and Breda Bantams in all colours, but I prefer the Black and the Blue laced. At present I am breeding these two colours.

Blue Laced

My first encounter with the blue colour was in Flevo Parc in the Flevoland province; in the past all Dutch poultry breeds could be seen there. I used to have black Breda Fowls, but I was impressed by this blue colour. At home I deepened my knowledge on this colour, as described in the Dutch Standard of Perfection. It appeared that it was a strong wish to have blue laced birds.

I read several books on genetics etc. and I came across a book by Houwink, 'De hoenderrassen in hunne vormen en kleuren' (1909/1916). In this book Houwink describes his creation of the blue Breda Fowl by using Andalusian Fowl. My thought was: I can do what he did. At that time I started to create blue laced Breda Fowls and Breda Bantams. It is really my addiction. An acquaintance of mine had Andalusian Fowls, so soon the first cross was a fact. The big difference between me and Houwink lies in the fact that he already stopped creating blue laced Breda Fowls after a few years. I have been working on it for more than 30 years now.



In all clearness I like to say the following: Blue chickens will not breed true, they carry two colour genes: black and splash. When crossing Blue X Blue, you will get 50% Blue, 25% Black, 25% Splash. When crossing Splash X Black = 100% Blue (theoretically). However, there are different shades of blue and some come out darker than others so if you need the birds for showing, not all chicks will have the desired shade of colouring.

Meanwhile I do have good blue laced Breda Fowls and Breda Bantams, as you can see in the photos.

Breeding

Breeding Breda Fowl gives no problems. The fertility is mostly 85-90 %. The result in the incubator is about 85%.

These statistics are also influenced by other factors, but I am satisfied.

The chicks grow well. The Breda Fowl does not grow fast; a cock is at his best (beautifully feathered) in the second year.

If you want to participate in the Shows, it is necessary to breed chicks early in the year. The Breda Bantams can be bred a little later.

Dwarfed breeds tend to grow bigger if you breed them too early in the season. Bantam pullets need 5-5,5 months to mature. Cockerels need 7-8 months.



Dual Purpose Breed

The egg-laying capacity of the Breda Fowls and Breda Bantams is good. I have 2 to 3 eggs in four days per hen. Originally it is not a laying breed, but a dual purpose breed; eggs and good meat.



Future of the Breda LF and Bantam

The survival of these two breeds fully depends on hobby breeders. Luckily there are some breeders of the Breda Fowl. There are only a few breeders of the Breda Bantam though. More breeders are required.

All in all, an enjoyable breed. It is fun to sit outside, drinking coffee and watching the birds strolling around.

Are you interested? For more information see www.bkuclub.nl. On this site you can also find the contact address of the secretary of the Brabanter, Breda Fowl and Dutch Owlbeards Club (BKU Club).



Copyright ©2015 All rights reserved by the Aviculture-Europe Foundation.

This is a publication by the online magazine www.aviculture-europe.nl

English edition ISSN: 2352-2445

You are not allowed to copy, distribute, send or publish these texts or photos without our prior permission in writing.