

# THE BRAHMA CLUB OF AUSTRALIA

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi to Everyone,

Preparations for our first Brahma Club Show are going well with us retaining last years venue, Castle Hill Showgrounds and setting up alongside The Belgian Bantam Club, which worked quite well in 2000. Carol (and her better half) have organised some attractive trophies, sashes and prizes for all of the major awards and Champions. Also some very much appreciated supporters (not Sponsors as this incurs a GST rating) are organising and designing a "Best in Show" Perpetual Trophy, that exhibitors would be justly proud to be awarded.

I was able to attend the Sydney Royal Show again this year, for four days, but only showing Angora Goats. Last year I exhibited both Angora and Brahma at The Sydney Royal. Unfortunately time constraints this year didn't permit the same. I inspected the fowls in some detail this year, but numbers were well down from last year including the Brahma sections.

Congratulations to the Brahma exhibitors, especially Bruce Raines, who achieved Best Brahma in Show.

In my previous report I regretfully omitted to Thank Ken Bergin for the content and quality of his judges report and favourable comments concerning the 2000 Brahma feature which appeared in the Feb/March issue of Australasian Poultry (Page 81). Some judges have told me they are encountering Brahma (mostly miniatures – Andrew they're called Bantam –ed.) more frequently at shows these days, with most being of good type and colour.

I received a letter recently from a renowned Poultry fancier, Gerry Coady, giving the club words of encouragement and also enclosing a mass of Brahma articles and lessons from past American Brahma Club Year Books. These articles will be permitted for use in later editions of our Newsletter. Many Thanks Gerry. (Gerry is of noted Araucana and Belgian Bantam Fame)

I had Leigh and Nev Kowalski visit from Queensland recently and they took home large Lights and bantam Golds to add to their Brahma Collection. I wish them well in their breeding program.

See you all at the Show,

Andrew

# SECRETARY'S REPORT

Hi Everyone,

Well Easter has come and gone. I hope everyone had an enjoyable time. Ours was a quiet Easter, we had a late surprise though, as Khri was feeding my Brahma up in the top yard, he found some Buff chickens running around. It was an even bigger surprise for me as I thought that the eggs were duds (another job to be done). I have four young ones again inside, but it wasn't long before Khri added another six young Lavender d'Uccles to my lot. We thought having chickens inside was finished until next season, but alas here we are again.

We have been getting along with the show preparations. I sent away to some Feed Merchants in surrounding areas to Castle Hill for sponsorship but to date there has not been a response. I've managed to get more of the clubs banner done and it looks quite the part so far. Also we now have two prizes for our raffle which should be enjoyed by the winners.

You will find the show schedule at the back of this Newsletter. If at all possible please try to get the entries in early. The closing date is the Tuesday before the show, so that we have the time to put it altogether by the Thursday night as we are leaving here early Friday morning. If need be fax or email them to us.

A special Thank you must go to Irene Hannan of the Belgian Bantam Club who came to the rescue just prior to Easter. We had flyers made up which needed emailing to Irene who was going to print them for us, and deliver them to the Royal Sydney Show. Unfortunately our modem for the computer died, so not only did Irene print the flyers, she was good enough to design them as well with only two days to do the whole lot. So to Irene, Thank You.

Time to close for now, see you all at Castle Hill.

Regards,  
Carol

# TREASURER'S REPORT

Opening Balance	\$195.90
Deposits for Memberships	\$ 20.00
Donation towards Show	\$ 50.00
Total	\$265.90

Expenditure	
Australia Post Newsletter No 3	\$ 14.95
Card for Prizes	\$ 14.00
Maylor Office Supplies	\$ 17.95

Balance \$219.00

Outstanding Cheques  
Crazy Prices (Raffle Prize) \$ 9.98

**A Special Thank You to the member who was kind enough to donate \$50 to the club to go towards the Shows costs.**

## FOR SALE

### FOR SALE

I will have some Bantam Brahma for sale at the show. They are mostly Buff Pullets and Black pullets. Unfortunately I did not do well with the cockerels.

### WANTED

I am looking for a Bantam White Cockerel, and a pure Black cockerel. If anyone has any to sell please contact me on 03 5476 2758 or email me at

[brahma@telstra.easymail.com.au](mailto:brahma@telstra.easymail.com.au)

### FOR SALE

Limited stock of Light Brahma Bantams. Available now or at Show.  
Contact Ron Smith **02 6368 1081**

**Continued on Page 7**

# HOW I GOT STARTED

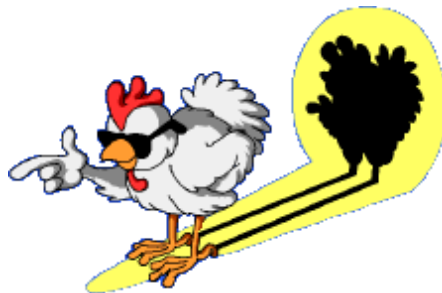
By LANCE HICKS

There was nothing unusual about the way I got started with Brahma. After all who can resist the appeal of a large stately fowl with an almost regal bearing and dignified unflappable manners – much like the Queen Mother, but with longer legs.

My good friend Cathy McCartney had a trio of Light Brahma, Large; which traced back to the stock of Andrew Rathbone. The male bird was so tame that Kathy's daughter, Annette, would enter Agricultural shows with him on a lead in the child and pet section, and sometimes they would win. The time came as it does to all fowl fanciers, when Kathy had to many birds for where they could be kept and some, including the trio of Light Brahma, had to be sold. I did not hesitate and bought them from her immediately. Hardly had the glow of satisfaction from this coup receded from my mind when I realised that, with my Crele Bantam Wyandottes in a township house block, I had no room for the Brahma either.

Who would look after my birds, it had to be someone from out of town -- with plenty of room and who had an enthusiasm for breeding rare Breeds of poultry. Vicky Mayne had these qualities and she had bred plants, animals, fish and birds over many years. She has a thorough understanding of genetics; and her husband Peter, was kind and indulgent, allowing her to breed whatever fowl she fancied.

Soon the Brahma were on their way to Greta, but not before they had laid two or three eggs from which hatched a pullet that became a foundation bird in Bryan Jon's Stud. Vicki Mayne has enjoyed some success; one of the cockerels she bred won Best Standard Softfeather Heavy Breed at the Australian Rare and Minority Breeds Show at Wangaratta, with Ian Pollerd judging. The original old rooster went out to Major Plains where he founded another family for Jane Barclay. So although I do not keep any Brahma at home, my interest and enthusiasm for them is kept active through the kindness and efforts of my friends.



# BREEDING BRAHMA

By MEGG MILLER

It's confusing being a Brahma breeder. Photo's of breed examples in overseas publications bear an uncanny resemblance to Cochin. Recently I came across a comment made by Dr Batty in his book, *Breeds of Poultry and their Characteristics*, that the plumage of both the Brahma and Cochin was fluffy with a wealth of feather. He also indicated that both breeds had short, broad backs with distinct cushions.

I can find no support for saying that these breeds have similar feather quality. Brahma plumage is considerably tighter and harder than that of the Cochin. It's closer to Leghorn feather quality than to Orpington. The Cochin has always been one of the most profusely feathered breeds and it has passed this characteristic on to the Orpington and Faverolles. Another trait that is quite different between Brahma and Cochin is wing size. The latter have small, closely tucked up wings while on the Brahma they should be of medium size with the lower line horizontal with the ground. It is important for the breeders to know where the standards differ so they can develop a picture of the breed they're working on, in this case, Brahma. Details like wing size help tremendously.

One action that leads to Brahma looking like Cochin is allowing stock in breeding sets that show an inclination to bending at the hocks when they stand. Another way of saying this may be that such birds don't stand tall. Brahma must have straight shanks well set under the body. Birds with a tendency to bending at the hock also show an inclination to bend forward or tilt and drop down at the breast.. If you have *Poultry for Everyone* by Victoria Roberts look at the photo's on pages 34 and 35. The Dark Brahma is not standing up and you can see signs of bending at the hocks. (It also has vulture hocks.) The overall look is an unbalanced bird, whereas the pair of Light Brahma are good examples of the upright stance and well positioned legs.

What about vulture hocks? How many breeders understand what is meant by the term vulture hocks? The British Poultry Standards define them as stiff, projecting quill feathers at the hock joint, growing on the thighs and extending backwards. Surprisingly the stiff feathering of vulture hocks results from a gene recessive to normal feathering. If this gene is appearing in re-created Brahma, it may well have come from the Belgian d'Uccle, vulture hocks being a feature of this breed. The gene is also present in Booted Bantams, Breda and Sultan. There doesn't seem to be a lot of information around on vulture hocks, and while it is agreed the trait is a recessive autosomal gene (ie. Normal, not sex linked) it appears to be linked to feather shanks. At present both characteristics are thought to be independent traits. "The basis for this relationship is not known but the geneticist Danforth (1929) suggested that the vulture hock gene may merely require the genetic background of shank feathering before it can manifest itself". (Crawford, R, *Poultry Breeding and Genetics*, Elsevier, 1990)

Foot and shank feathering, called ptilopody, may result from one of three genes. The feathering characteristic varies greatly in expression: Faverolles and Langshan show the least expression, feathering being limited to the outer surface of the shanks and the outer

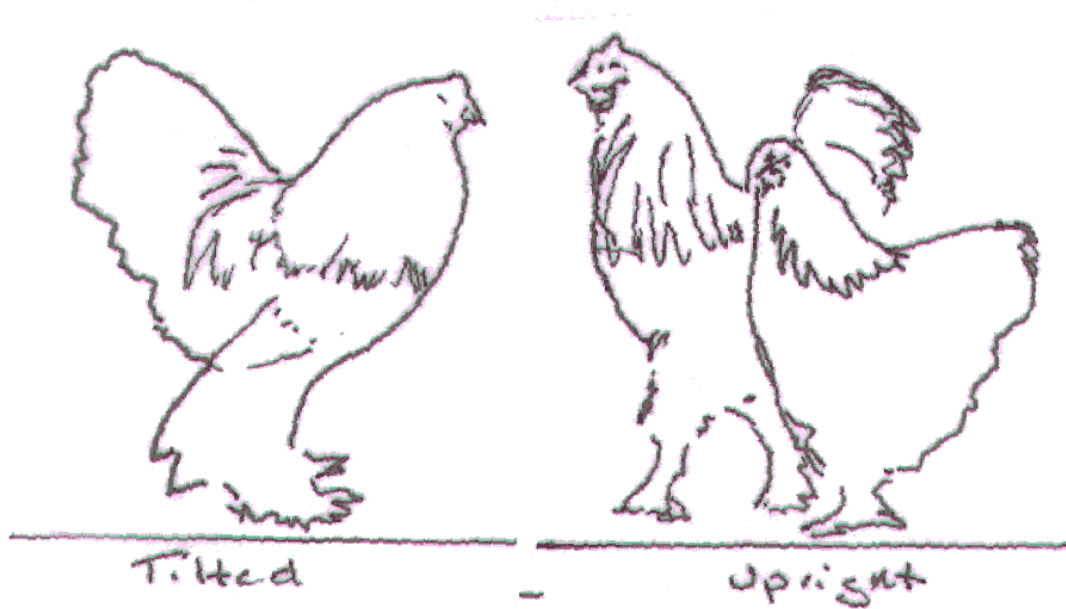
toe. The Brahma and Silkie have greater feathering expression, on the outer shank and also on the outer and middle toes. The Belgian d'Uccle, Booted Bantam, Sultan and Cochin have profuse feathering, both the outer and front of the shank is feathered and the front, middle and outer toes. Research indicates the heavy ptilopody of the Cochin – d'Uccle group results from two dominant genes at separate loci (positions on the chromosomes) working together. One of these genes (researchers are not sure which) on its own causes the weaker leg feathering seen on Langshan and Faverolles. The increased ptilopody on Brahma and Silkies have two possible explanations, from a different allele at one locus or due to segregation at the two loci. With regard to the different allele at one locus, this is when two or more genes have the same relative position on the chromosome and display opposite characteristics.

Somes, the American geneticist who carried out research on this subject and is also the author of *International Registry of Poultry Genetic Stocks* (Bulletin 476) for the university of Connecticut, USA, lists ptilopody in this book under the feather distribution mutations and assigns it to 'modifying factors' rather than a particular gene/genes. If your not confused by now I certainly am!

Considering all this, what comments can be made on the Brahma and ptilopody? First, it seems sensible to avoid using breeds carrying the gene for vulture hocks, namely the d'Uccle Belgian. The Langshan, despite its black leg colour, should be considered. It has scant ptilopody, which can be increased with later refinement, and it has height and size, both being highly desirable. The Silkie and Faverolles have five toes, the extra digit being difficult to eliminate. Cochin and Pekin have heavy ptilopody (undesirable in a Brahma) they also have short legs, the Pekins especially. Although genetic investigation into conformation differences is minimal, Cock in 1969 demonstrated that genetic influences determine the size of the different body parts. Selection experiments into leg bones enabled six factors to be identified. These included a factor, which increased leg bones in relation to the rest of the body; a factor, which increased the length of the tarsometatarsus (bone in the lower part of the birds leg); and a factor which increased the thickness of all long bones. Leg length and thickness of source stock going into the recreated Brahma should be considered along with other characteristics.

I would like to leave members of the club with an increased awareness of the role of genes. Most of the characteristics that are displayed in the Brahma don't occur randomly but have a genetic basis. Some result from dominant genes, others recessive, their effects often appearing as a surprise. Don't forget there are also modifying genes and other factors which rely on the presence of particular genes. Finally, there is Murphy, No matter how hard you try and how specific your breeding plan, it can backfire. It is simply Murphy's Law.





Outline of Brahma from Poultry for Everyone.

## **FOR SALE** Cont.

**FOR SALE** Limited Stock (Large) Light, Buff Columbian. Dark hens only also available, still in the making. Contact Bryan Jon **03 5668 5258 W/E only or leave a message.**

**FOR SALE** Brahma Bantam Gold, Pullets, Hens, Cocks and Cockerels.  
Large Brahma, Light, Buff and Black available Cockerels and Pullets.  
Contact Andrew Rathbone **02 6337 3840**

**These members will all have stock available at the Show.**



# BREEDERS MAIL

Hi all Brahma Breeders,

Well after that long hot summer down here, we managed a perfect Easter, sunny days, lots of food and drink with family and friends. But since then it has not stopped raining, 116 mm in the last 3 days, that's in South Gippsland. Still we needed it, lucky I put the spouting on the small poultry shed last week.

All of my cockerels and pullets of various colours are coming along well, some a lot better than others. My Dark Brahma program is starting to take shape, but lack of numbers is the problem as I only have a few to choose from. I am still trying to get more size into my birds as they are a very large fowl and their tails are in need of a lift, still this is early days.

In late March I headed up to Benalla to stay at Lance Hicks place, to get motivated and to draw on his knowledge. We went and visited Alan Goodwin to learn and see how he goes about his breeding of poultry. I picked up lots of very helpful hints, and what I did not understand, Lance explained to me. We then went off to visit Vicky Mayne, one of our Brahma club members. Vicky won First Prize with one of her Brahma at the Rare Breeds Show, and I could see why. They are very clean lined and well defined Brahma. Vicky has used Light Sussex, maybe she could tell us how she got started in a later issue of the newsletter.

Next, we were off to Carol and Khris Abuid's at Welshman's Reef where we caught up with Megg Miller and had a great weekend with plenty of brahma talk. We put a few notes down to form an Agenda for our AGM eg:

- Naming of colours, Partridge, should they be Gold Pencilled,
- Buff, should Buff Columbian be called Buff, Define!
- Vulture Hocks, The Australian Standards state they are undesirable but not a disqualification. The Americans don't have them, and the mail from Holland is that the Dutch say No vulture hocks.

I still have a few birds with Vulture hocks, but as I get the numbers I will slowly eliminate them eventually. All Brahma should look like what is on the front cover of our Newsletter. They look great in any colour you choose to breed them in.

- Do we follow the Standards of the Wyandottes as they originated from the Brahma in America and as our Australian Standards has followed that line, or do we make our own minor changes.

Anyway it will make an interesting discussion at our AGM.

I am looking forward to the Show, so that we can all see how our Australian Brahma are taking shape.

Kindest regards to All  
Bryan Jon