**Report on egg import from Australia**

The spotting and recessive slates genes were once in the U.S. But we unfortunately lost them. If they were still here there has been no evidence of it.

Turkeys with these genes haven't been seen in this country for decades and I wanted to get varieties with these genes established here once again.

Here is a brief history of these genes in the U.S.

**The spotting gene:** In 1947 in a closed flock of Broad Breasted Bronze, thirteen yellow downed poults with brown head spots hatched one year.  These in turn provided the basis of a new true-breeding variety named Nebraskan by the originator R. H. Jandebeur of North Platte, Nebraska. This gene mutation was then labeled the spotting gene.

The plumage color of the Nebraskan variety of turkeys is determined by an autosomal gene which is recessive to non-spotting or solid color such as found in the bronze. The spotting gene appeared to be the only one determining the differences between the plumage color of the Nebraskan and the bronze.

The Nebraskan started the swing to light plumage in commercial turkeys with a uniformity of broadbreast type and size plus superior market appearance, but unfortunately the later development of the broad breasted white may have been their downfall which caused their decline and later disappearance in the U.S.

**The recessive slate gene:** In 1936 V.S. Asmundson received two slate-colored hens from El Solyo Ranch in Vernalis, California which had been hatched out of their bronze breeding stock and had barring clearly indicated on the wings.

This was the start of a new slate factor in turkeys which was determined to be a simple autosomal recessive to bronze. The results produced in experimental breedings by Asmundson left no doubt that the gene for slate was in this case recessive to non-slate. (These slate-colored birds were mated to bronze, bourbon red, black-winged bronze and narragansett. All the first generation progeny were non-slate regardless of which way the cross was made).

These types of slates carrying the bronze color base gene have barred flight feathers and penciled tail feathers.

I had put out a plea on my website for anyone with any info on the existence of these genes in the U.S. to contact me.

Time went by and nothing resulted from that, in the meantime I did internet searches over the years to see if they just happened to be anywhere else.

I happened to run across the website of Deutscher's turkey farm in Australia. I was immediately drawn to the pics of their painted and slate turkeys. With the paints more than likely carrying the spotting genes just on a black base, and his slates which were obviously the recessive slate described by Asmundson.

I was thrilled to have finally found someone raising turkeys with these genes.

And as time went by Daryl and I finally hooked up, first by email then phone calls.

Daryl was willing to ship me some fertile eggs from his birds, but I knew it was going to be a very long and drawn out endeavor to get these eggs to me since there would be so much red tape to go thru to import these from another country.

First we had to make sure Daryl could do all the health testing required by the USDA for them to be allowed into the U.S.

Daryl was able to find a vet to do this so I then proceeded to apply for my import permit from the USDA while Daryl was working on getting the testing done.

We found a shipper to handle the eggs for us that would make sure they were kept in a climate controlled area until they reached the U.S. Border.

So we got all the paperwork put together and Daryl collected eggs to ship.

Eggs were flown from Australia to the San Francisco California airport which is a U.S. port of entry. The eggs were then inspected by a USDA vet at that port to make sure all the paperwork was in order, they passed the inspection so were cleared to enter the U.S. So were then flown to another airport in Chicago and forwarded again to a different airport in Indianapolis Indiana where I then picked up the eggs.

Got them back home and into the incubator the next morning.

28 days later 8 eggs hatched out of the 40 sent.

They must have had a rough trip for so little to make it, that was a bit disappointing but it was enough to get a start in both.

Got them raised up and were able to get them to breed in the same year, hatched in Jan and was producing by the end of the summer.

I now have many birds on the ground from them carrying both genes, so this venture proved to be a complete success.

Eventually these will be made available to others in the U.S. and Canada so these genes will be spread to many places to insure their survival for generations to come.

Kevin

Porter's Rare Heritage Turkeys