

# The Poultry Show Experience

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This is your first poultry show! How exciting, and how noisy it is. Notice that the birds are grouped by section: large fowl, bantams, waterfowl, turkeys and Guinea fowl. Within each of these areas there is also a Junior show section for those under the age of 18.

This is the proper time of year to show birds, as they are fully feathered and finished out with a full coat of feathers, having recently come through a molt. Most, if not all, have been bathed and primped to look their very best. Yes! We wash birds! Exhibitors each have their own ways of making the birds look their best for the judging process. Watch the exhibitors and see what they do to make their birds shine!

Notice that the large fowl are grouped in classes which are labeled as to their country or region of origin: American, English, Asiatic, Mediterranean, Continental, All Other Standard Breeds. Waterfowl are grouped according to their weights: Heavy, Medium and Light. The Bantam classes are sorted into groups as follows: Old English and American Game, Modern Game, Single Comb Clean Legged, Rose Comb Clean Legged, Feather Legged, All Other Comb Clean Legged and Bantam Ducks.

There are approximately 79 breeds and 200 varieties. The breed descriptions are listed in one of two books: The Standard of Perfection - American Poultry Association and the Bantam Standard - American Bantam Association. The American Poultry Association was founded in Buffalo, New York in 1873 and is the oldest livestock organization in the country. The American Bantam Association was founded in 1917.

It is by these written standards and illustrations that the birds are judged. Each breed and variety (color) has its requirements, which are assessed by the judge assigned to that class. The most important consideration is "Type". This is best defined as a silhouette. Cars and trucks have a distinct silhouette - think of a Volkswagen Beetle and a pickup truck - and each breed of poultry has its own as well. This shape is the prime consideration of the judge. From there, it is condition and color, overall body fitness, station, etc. Watch the judges (from a distance) and see how they handle the birds and how they place them.

This little article is an oversimplification of the entire process, for certain. Don't hesitate to ask questions of those in the aisles; chances are they will be more than happy to talk about their birds.

Enjoy yourself!