

Tips for New Poultry Exhibitors

First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is Mark Beasley, and I am an A.B.A. general licensed judge and the District 12 director for the American Poultry Association. I have been showing Bantams for over 25 years. I am writing this article to share a few tips with our new members.

Let's get started!

When you decide you want to raise and show standard bred poultry, you need first of all, to decide what breed you like. This is very important! Don't raise a variety of poultry because some else does, but look around and find the breed or variety that YOU really like, and get it from a good breeder. Once you've acquired your birds, get a copy of the "Standard of Perfection" and study the standard for your breed. Raising exhibition birds without the "Standard" is like going to church without a Bible. You'll have to read and study the "Standard" to find out the good and bad things about your birds. Then talk to adult breeders of the breed you have chosen and see how to correct the bad things and keep the good things when you are ready to raise your own flock.

Don't be discouraged. It's almost impossible to buy the best of anyone's stock for of course they are going to keep them to show or use as breeders themselves. If you talk with them and explain you want to start raising your own flock and need good breeders they are sure to help you along the way. After all, if they sell you good birds and you begin showing some nice birds in the showroom it will only be a compliment to them to have helped you along the way.

Take good care for your birds; make sure they have plenty of fresh feed and water. Make sure they have shelter away from predators such as an owl, hawk, coon, etc. Keep them free of any parasites, such as worms, mites, and lice. You don't want them scratching and pecking at their feathers and making them look ratty or broken when you take them in a showroom. Condition your birds for the shows. You don't want to take your birds to a show if they are dirty or have broken feathers. If all of these are done you should have good luck at the shows. Of course you never take a sick bird to a show and if you even think it might not be acting quite up to snuff, leave it home.

Whether you win or lose, a proper attitude is necessary to have good success. Be a gracious winner when you win and don't tease your competition if they lose. Tell them you enjoyed showing with them. However, if you lose, also be a gracious loser! Congratulate your competition and get ready for the next show. You won't lose all the time; your winning will come. Win or lose, thank the judge for judging your birds. Usually the judge show does this for little pay, but does it because he loves the poultry hobby. So thank him for his time away from his family and efforts in judging fairly and honestly.

I have noticed in the past few years that the junior exhibitors seem to be getting more knowledgeable and inquisitive. Keep asking questions and learning, and you will succeed in the showroom. Invite your friends to come to a show or to your house to see your birds. You never know, they may get hooked on showing poultry too. The more people we have, the stronger our hobby will be.

I hope to see you at the shows and good luck.