

POULTRY SHOWROOM BASICS

(Reading a coop tag, How the showroom is set up, How birds are judged and Champion Row)

WHAT DOES EACH NUMBER OR LETTER MEAN ON THE COOP TAG?

Numbers 1 - 5 on the coop tag: This designates the top 5 birds in that particular *age group by sex and variety*. These birds must be of *good type (confirmation)* to be assigned a 1st through 5th in their breed. Example: top 5 Best Black Cocks (C), top 5 Best Black Hens (H), top 5 Best Black Cockerels (K), top 5 Best Black Pullets (P)

BV = Best Variety: Is the best color bird in it's breed color group, he must be of *good type (confirmation)* to be considered for Best Variety (Example: Best White Male , Best White Hen, Best White Cockerel, Best White Pullet (only one of them can be *Best Variety* in that particular color & sex group)

RV = Reserve Variety: Is the second best colored bird in each color group of a breed.

BB = Best of Breed: Is the best bird for its *type (confirmation)* in the whole class of your breed. Only one Old English, one Brahma, one Silkie, one Plymouth Rock, one Favorelle can be Best of Breed out of its breed class.

RB = Reserve Breed: Is the second best bird for its *type (confirmation)*

HOW IS A SHOWROOM SET UP?

First you have to know how a showroom is set up. *All shows are set up by classes*. It's important that you know your breed, the variety (color) of your birds and what classes they belong in.

In order for the judge to do his job the showroom must be organized and all the birds of that particular class must be in the same area of the showroom. If your bird is not in the correct class it cannot be judged with that class. Any birds not in the correct class will be marked "out of class" and not judged.

It is the exhibitor's responsibility to have his birds in the right place at the right time. Therefore, you must know your breed class and variety. Once the birds are all checked in the judge can begin his work.

All exhibitors are expected to be out of the area where the judge is judging with only the show clerk accompanying him. Most judges prefer not to be interrupted during judging so if you have questions about your class or how he judged the birds please wait until he has finished for the day, unless other arrangements have been made. Judges will be happy to answer your questions when the work is done.

WHAT DOES A JUDGE LOOK FOR AS HE'S JUDGING YOUR BIRD?

First comes TYPE (confirmation)!!

1. First of all everyone that breeds, raises and shows chickens has a book we call our "chicken bible". One is put out by the American Poultry Association, "American Standard of Perfection", and the other is put out by the American Bantam Association, "Bantam Standard". These books tell the breeder and exhibitor what he should be looking for when he buys or breeds a bird for show. It also tells the judges what they are to judge when they go to a poultry show to judge birds. Most judges have to memorize these books in order to take exams and become a certified poultry judge by either group. When judging birds this is the book he uses for reference if he has any question on the variety or the breed.

2. The judge will walk down the line of birds he is going to judge taking in at a glance, the condition of a bird in regards to it's *type (confirmation)*, health, cleanliness and brightness of feathers, condition of combs, wattles, head parts, legs and feet, wry tails and the overall size of the bird. He is also looking to be sure there are no "out of class" birds. By this time he knows from an outward glance which birds are right for their breed and which are not.

3. The judge will go to a cage and take each bird out that is of *good type* to check for feather quality, looking at wings for size & discoloration's, the width of back, size of the keel, tail feathers, checking for lice or mites, color of legs, counting toes, the width of the head, the color of the undercoat, the color of the ears, the color of the eyes, checking the beak, checking any foreign colors that do not belong and the general weight of the bird. There are many other things the judge checks for such as split wing, split tail, ticking, twisted feathers, pinched feathers, etc. etc. There are many things that will disqualify a bird and owning a Standard of Perfection will help the breeder and the judge to know these problems, they are well defined in the book for each breed and variety. Unless there is a glaring problem you won't see many birds disqualified at a sanctioned poultry show. One problem that might cause a disqualification is faking, such as someone trying to darken a tip of a white feather with black ink or perhaps there are toes missing on a five toed breed, etc. It's hard to get any cheating past an experienced judge, he's seen it all. He will check all the cocks, individually, the hens individually, the cockerels and the pullets individually. There may be times when a judge doesn't remove a bird from its cage to check it. This is rare but if it happens it is because this bird is so out of type for its breed that it will go no further in competition or out of a class of perhaps 30 birds it is lower on the scale. He will mark this class with his 1st through 5th place birds in each sex and variety.

4. The judge does this the same in every breed class including Waterfowl, Turkey, Large Fowl and Bantams.

5. He will first mark the coop tags with his 1st through 5th place choices.

6. Then he will mark the tags with his choice of Best Variety and Reserve Variety in each breed. In the Best Variety and Reserve Variety he is taking into consideration the *type of the bird*, the outward color of the bird and the undercoat color of that bird. Best & Reserve Variety is chosen from the whole class of each breed variety being shown. Out all the varieties in a breed (partridge color, black, white, Columbian, mottled) only one of them can be Best Variety or Reserve Variety.

7. Next he will then mark the Best of Breed and Reserve of Breed in that particular breed class. Example: There can only be one Old English that is the Best of Breed no matter which variety it is or only one Plymouth Rock that can be Best of Breed in it's class and so forth.

8. When the *whole* breed class (do you know your breed class and the other breeds that you are competing against?) is finished he will pick Class Champion and Reserve Class Champion, most times the tags will be marked Champion Feather leg, Reserve Champion Feather leg, Champion Asiatic, Reserve Champion Asiatic, Champion English, Reserve Champion English, Champion Waterfowl and etc. These birds will be moved to *Champion Row*.

9. Out of all the Class Champions and the Reserve Class Champions the judge will pick the Champion Large Fowl of Show, Champion Bantam of Show, Champion Waterfowl of Show, and Champion Turkey of Show. Out of the 61 purebred bantam breeds only one can be Champion Bantam of the Show, out of the 53 breeds of Large Fowl only one can be Champion Large Fowl of Show and so forth.

10. Some shows pick an Overall Grand Champion of Show. This bird will be the "Best of the Best", the Best Variety, the Best of Breed for it's type and comes closest to be the most perfect overall bird in the showroom, according to the American Standard of Perfection and the Bantam Standard.

11. Normally the Show Champions and the Overall Champion of the Show are not picked until the show management is ready to hand out the awards, which is the morning before your check your birds out to go home. With exception are the local and state fairs. It is usually done at the end of the day following judging at fairs because the birds may stay for several days and the winners are displayed on Champion Row during their stay.

Always remember !! Type is the most important in breeding and showing chickens – Variety comes later.

"You must build the house before you paint it. "