

COCHINS INTERNATIONAL 1992 - 2012 A Celebration of 20 Years!

Here is a memory of the first show I attended and the first official club meeting of Cochins International:

It was 1992 and I was just beginning to think about showing my cochin bantams in open shows. So my dad and I decided we would make the four hour drive to Columbus, OH and take in a big show, the Ohio National. Now the show was not held in the Voinovich Center as it is now, but just south of that building. It was a cold and gloomy day as most November days are. It was also cold in the show hall, but it wasn't gloomy. When we walked in I was amazed at all the birds. I came looking for the cochin aisles and exhibitors, but I could not keep my eyes off of some of the other breeds as well. Never had I seen such an array of waterfowl! As we were just taking our time wandering through the aisles, my dad spotted a poster with information pertaining to a meeting. This meeting was going to be held in about 30 minutes from then and the objective was to form a new breed club for cochins! My dad and I quickly found the room where the meeting was to be held and went in early to get a good seat. What a wise choice this was! There were a few in there already getting some materials organized. Some had been officers and members of the World Cochin Family and others members of the US Cochin Bantam club. Both clubs had fallen on hard times, and a few forward thinking exhibitors and breeders thought it was time to form one new club for the promotion of large fowl and bantam cochins. I had read various articles and had tried to join the US Cochin Bantam Club that year, but I didn't really know if I had become a member or not. No information was ever forwarded to me, and I could see why. Both clubs had basically folded. So I sat there with my dad. I was a 22 year old novice that had read everything I could get my hands on about cochins. As people began to come in and fill the chairs, I could sense that some knew one another well and others just by name to face. Some did not associate with others, while many were outgoing and friendly.

One of the first items on the agenda was the introduction of those in attendance. I could hardly believe my ears when some of the names from the Poultry Press and the other news articles and yearbook information began popping up! I recognized the names of Craig Carroll and Pat Lacey who had outstanding bantams. Keith LeGrand from Wisconsin was there as was Elton Minnich from Pennsylvania. Both of these gentlemen had their share of wins also. From Minnesota was a gentleman named Don Juliar who later sold me some nice barred bantams. From Alabama was Luther Vines who filled the room with his booming voice and southern drawl! I believe Jimmie Currens from Kentucky was there, but I am not sure. It seems I hardly attended a show in those early years without Jimmie being around. Robert Hawes from Maine was in attendance. If memory serves me right, the Petersons of Minnesota were nearby. I know there were at least 20 others whose name did not stick in my mind after 20 years. But, like the Founding Fathers of this country, they cussed and discussed the details of governance and awarding achievements. This meeting took a long time, but there was a lot to organize. Both sides were cautious to not allow the club to look too much like either predecessor for fear of alienating former members. So the best details of these former

clubs was used, but many had to be brainstormed on the spot! For example, no official name had been chosen for the club ahead of time. So one of the first duties of those in attendance was to name the newly formed club. Topics such as the printing of the newsletters and the rewarding of achievement points were discussed. I think the issue of master breeder points and the actual nuts and bolts of the system was set up by the officially elected officers at a later time.

The first breeders directory was published in 1995. Jeffrey Ryan of Maine was in charge of this publication. He stated in the preface that "...little did I know how much work it would be." I am sure our current editor would agree! Some names advertising in the directory included myself, Pat Lacey, Elton Minnich, Mac-Harp Poultry, Don and Sue Rutherford, Bob Anderson, Robert Hawes, and William West. The directory was mailed by Craig Carroll from Villa Park, Illinois. Pat Lacey, longtime club president, comments in the directory that the goal is to republish it every two years with corrections and updates being made in the meanwhile. Newsletters have been edited by Karl Rau of Maine, Tom Roebuck of Virginia (California and North Carolina!!), Jay Smith, and now Lisa Clark. Dennis Wollard of Louisiana was secretary-treasurer of the new club and he also took care of the membership roster. In the late 90's, it was decided to take the membership duties away from the secretary-treasurer and I agreed to take over that facet of the club. Jamie Matts became the secretary-treasurer after Dennis decided to pass this duty on to someone else. Craig Carroll was the first VP, if my memory serves me right, and Tim Hooker of Illinois, Dawn Ware of Tennessee, Charles Anderson of Connecticut, and Bill Ziehm and Bill Ryan of New York have also held that job. I almost forgot that Scott Adams of Nebraska was President during the early 2000's. I hope I haven't forgotten any other important volunteers. I perused all my old newsletters to find information and could have missed someone.

The club, like all others, has had its growing pains. Some of us poultry lovers have a hard time keeping up with the latest technology. So finding someone to keep up with the times has been difficult. Coordinating deadlines and making decisions with directors from coast to coast is still challenging today. But from that little room in Columbus, Ohio and from the minds of a few interested breeders sprang a club that has grown and expanded its offerings over a 20 year time period. Many thanks to all those listed here and to those that worked hard behind the scenes. As we know, a club is only as strong and vibrant as its members. Let's keep growing and I hope to be around to include your name in a 40th anniversary article as a leader in Cochins International!

~Matt McCammon