

COCHIN BANTAM TYPE by Arthur O. Schilling

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First of all, I wish to remark that what I may say, is solely for the purpose of benefit to the beginner, and if my years of experience in connection with breeding Cochin Bantams may result in some benefit to the newer generation of fanciers I shall feel well repaid for my time and effort.

The marvelous Buff Cochin Bantams that I bred and won with at New York, Boston, Toronto and other leading shows as far back as 1903 and 1904, were not birds of leggy appearance, and legginess is something to be discarded wither in the breeding pen or in judging practice.

If the Cochin Bantam is to be made the exact replica of the larger Cochin it must be bred with moderately short thighs and the faults to overcome are not shortness of thigh. It is lack of thigh plumage and looseness and length of feather that must be developed in this section.

If you will reproduce the large Cochin in type, pay more attention to wing carriage and body carriage. These two characteristics are the chief points why Bantams do not appear the counterpart of the larger Cochins.

Legginess is also a great fault in the large Cochin, and the very best winners in the days of Oakland Farms, Nevius and other prominent winners were not leggy birds. The leggy birds were generally defeated and the finest typed winners were the roundest, loosest feathered, having that desirable forward tilt, so characteristic of the highest developments in Cochins.

If you wish to improve your Cochin Bantams in type, and if you wish to produce them as near like the larger Cochins, select the birds that have wings tucked up to sides of body. Aim to produce profuseness in thigh feathering, and never breed from a bird that moves around with an upright breast carriage, and head carried high.

There are in existence today Cochin Bantams that have these desirable characteristics and that have the Correct Cochin Temperament, and if you can secure this class as breeders, you have the foundation stock to carry on a breeding program to produce Cochin Bantams that will be the duplicates of the very best large Cochins.

There is no need to allow a longer leg than we now have in the best specimens. The faults lay largely with low loose wing carriage, short tight feathering and upright body carriage.

Correct these faults and you will quickly see how your Cochin Bantam type will improve. Do not try to produce your Cochin Bantams too small. Smallness when carried to excess, is very detrimental to producing desirable feather profuseness, and feather quality. It also does not lend itself to maintaining vigor and stamina, and results in much infertility during the hatching season. Beware of excessive smallness. The Standard weights are correct.

Please do not cultivate the thought that you must have more length of leg in your Cochin Bantams if correct Cochin Character is to be attained. While the larger Cochins have considerable length of leg, and our Standard of Perfection requires that the Bantams are to be the counterparts of these, yet the Standard does not demand that the Bantam must be the exact counterpart. There is a leeway suggested in the paragraph as set forth in the Standard of Perfection, which reads as follows: "The general shape and color of all Cochin Bantams shall conform to the description of the corresponding variety of the larger Cochin." The word "general" is used here, advisedly. Bantams are dwarfs of the larger fowls and dwarfs either in man or animals, suggest a character of distortion, and usually the head is relatively larger, the legs relatively shorter, and generally a dwarf is never a perfect example of a larger or normal size specimen. Therefore, I say, Cochin Bantams must not have the same relative length of legs that the larger Cochins have, neither should we cultivate such a type. I am not an advocate of the "Creep Type of Cochins" but I believe that our best Cochin Bantams today are long enough in leg and the chief defects to overcome are to develop higher wing carriage and more fluff feathering, and eliminate the sprightly upright Bantam body carriage which is so common in all breeds of Bantams. When the Buff Nankins were injected into the old fashioned, original red wings Cochin Bantams, this sprightly body type was also injected and the difficulty today is to eradicate this character, if true Cochin Type as we recognize it is ever to be attained.

It is inspiring to realize that there are so many fine young breeders of Cochins coming up especially among the Buff Fanciers. I recall a number of them as I meet them from year to year in my visits to the Boston Show. There is considerable good seed stock in that part of the country and I hope the boys will make the most of what they have.

I do hope the Buff breeders will keep right at it for I am sure we will see the Buffs improve to meet the highly developed Blacks as we have them today. All this reminds me of the days when my brother and I were showing Cochins at the Garden and Boston Shows. What wonderful times we had up in the galleries of the Old Garden. What a fine lot of fanciers there were then, and I am sure we have as many or more even today, for the spirit of the fancier seems again to be asserting itself. It is something in our nature that will not be downed, and what a glorious thing it is.