

Bobtail - A New Colour in Cochin Bantams and the Poultry World

January 2013, Ardjan Warnshuis

It must have been in the early 1990's that chicks of this colour hatched at Dieter Aschenbach's in Berlin. The parents were blackred from his famous flock. The name Bobtail was introduced spontaneously, because the females are grey and white, the colour of the old English sheepdog, also called Bobtail. The colour is a mutation of blackred and we do not yet have an explanation for their genetics. True bred they do only produce Bobtail birds. If crossed with another colour they do not give any colour to their offspring, but all chicks have the colour of the partner which they are crossed with. Bobtail Cochin bantams have the broadest and fluffiest soft feather of all colours of Cochin bantams. They have nearly the ultimate type. Therefore one can improve feather quality and type of all other colours in Cochin bantam using them to cross with.



Mr. Aschenbach never had the intention to breed them true and certainly did not mean to have the colour recognized. The females are so beautiful that many people wanted to have some of these birds. In the first years only pullets were born. Later he also bred some male birds. Every now and then he used some females to breed from with his other colours. The males were never used in breeding. Mrs. Bärbel Bastian tried to get some of these birds for many years, but in the beginning Dieter Aschenbach did not give away any of these birds. Some five years after she had asked Dieter, who happens to be a good friend of the Bastians, she first only got a cockerel. Two years later she had the first female birds as well. She and her husband Horst, both fanatic breeders of Cochin bantams for many years, started to really breed Bobtail. They started to give some away to other breeders and the colour became more and more popular among European breeders. You will find them in many countries now.



The Bastians wanted to have the colour recognized, but in the German Cochin bantam club Mr. Aschenbach is president and he did not want to have the colour recognized on the German national. So

the club would never give a recommendation to do so. Six breeders, three in Germany, two in Holland and one in Belgium started to work on perfection of the colour and January 2012 they entered the first birds at the Dutch national to introduce them. The judges were very positive about the birds and allowed to enter them for recognition January 2013.

The colour seems to be the most recessive we ever saw. In 2012 many crossings were made with all kind of colour of Cochin bantams. In 2013 these F1-birds will be put in brother-sister matings to see, like in normal crossings, we will be able to produce about 25% Bobtail coloured birds. That would mean one also could introduce the colour in other breeds. We are not sure that that will happen. Up till now we assume that the Bobtail colour is an incomplete form of albinismus with something more. On this something more we could not put our finger till now. The breeding in 2013 might bring some light in the darkness.

Four breeders together entered 15 birds on the last "Noordshow" in Zuidlaren January 2013 for recognition. Today on the 28th of January we got an email that the colour is officially recognized in the Netherlands now.

As soon as we have more knowledge on the genetics of our Bobtails I will keep you posted.

