

TRACKING YOUR EGGS & CHICKS

By Micheal Tarvin (January, 2024)

Now looking onward to 2024 it is time to set goals for the next upcoming 12 months. I would like to share my process in how I like to move forward. Starting, I believe it is important for every breeder to set goals in order to move their flock onwards in coming closer to perfection and preserving the integrity of this great breed and its varieties. Taking into consideration judges' comments on coop cards during the previous year and own expectations for improvements a few personal goals I have for my flock is watching the size on my black bantams with making sure they are not getting to large, continue working on the white bantams especially on the female side with type, feather quality, and figuring out how to not have them bleach out as bad with experimenting if a marigold powder supplement could help when show birds are laying or if it is a lost cause. Additionally, am going to isolate my Columbian and Birchen pop outs and see what the next generation of those look like and possibly begin working with these varieties.

Once goals are set, next is finding the pieces to put together to try to achieve those goals. I am a huge advocate that single mating and find it to be the best way to make and see improvements. You know exactly who is contributing what traits and where those traits are always at. So, for example, if my goal was to improve skull size, I would take the bird that needs the improvement and breed it to the biggest skull bird I had and if I did not have the breeding piece I need, I would seek it out to find it. No bird is ever perfect and therefore there is always something to work on improving in breeding the highest representation of the breed. This method has proved to be able to see goals and progress quicker than breeding similar traits together and hoping for something different to come out.

Once eggs start to be laid from mating, I collect and use a pencil to write on the large end of the egg the IDs of the birds of the mating i.e., 310x590. Here lately I have started setting eggs for 1st and 15th hatches instead of weekly hatches that I have traditionally done just to make for bigger hatches. When I go to set eggs, I will make a mark on the end of the egg with a different colored marker for each mating. This helps visually see the different matings in the incubator. When it is time for lockdown, I will place eggs in separate pedigree baskets for hatching. Following the hatch, the same marker color per mating used to mark eggs going in is used on the chicks coming out. I color in the tops of their heads with the marker and notate in my incubation records the mating, corresponding color, number of hatch, date of hatch, any notes like down color, etc.

Date Started Collecting	Date End Collecting & Date Set	Breed	Mating	# of eggs set	1st Candle Date	# of eggs fertile	2nd Candle Date	# of eggs fertile	Lockdown Date	Hatch Date	# of hatched	Hatch Rate (#hatched/#of eggs from 2nd candle)	Hatch ID Marker	Notes
11/28/2023	12/11/2023	White Cochin	31x290	11	12/18/2023		12/25/2023		12/29/2023	1/1/2024		#DIV/0!		
11/28/2023	12/11/2023	White Cochin	31x551	9	12/18/2023		12/25/2023		12/29/2023	1/1/2024		#DIV/0!		
11/28/2023	12/11/2023	White Cochin	31x636	7	12/18/2023		12/25/2023		12/29/2023	1/1/2024		#DIV/0!		
11/28/2023	12/11/2023	White Cochin	541x85	9	12/18/2023		12/25/2023		12/29/2023	1/1/2024		#DIV/0!		
11/28/2023	12/11/2023	White Cochin*	08x535	5	12/18/2023		12/25/2023		12/29/2023	1/1/2024		#DIV/0!		

The color last long enough for the chicks to become big enough to hold a wing band, typically about 3 weeks of age. Once the wing bands are placed, documentation is made in my flock records (personally like Google Sheets to be able to use app on phone).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	NUMBER	DOB	BREED/VARIETY	MATING	M/F	CHICK DOWN	NOTES
2	20	1/1/2023	White Cochin	CF221xCF288	M	Dusky	
3	21	1/1/2023	White Cochin	CF221xCF288	F	Yellow	
4	31	1/1/2023	White Cochin	CF221xCF104	M	Dusky	
5	32	1/1/2023	White Cochin	CF221xCF104	M	Yellow	
6	40	1/1/2023	Silver Penciled Cochin	CF353xCF117	M		Male line pattern
7	44	1/15/2023	Black Cochin	PetexCF270	M		
8	76	2/1/2023	White Cochin	CF206xCF290	M		
9	79	2/1/2023	White Cochin	CF206xCF290	M		
10	83	2/1/2023	White Cochin	CF206xCF228	F	Dusky	
11	84	2/1/2023	White Cochin	CF206xCF228	F	Dusky	
12	85	2/1/2023	White Cochin	CF206xCF228	F	Dusky	
13	87	2/1/2023	White Cochin	CF206xCF228		Dusky	
14	92	2/1/2023	Silver Penciled Cochin	WxSPxCF239	M		Columbian

☰	2024 Hatch	2023 Hatch ▼	2022 HATCH	2021 HATCH	2020 HATCH	2019 HATCH	+
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From here I watch the chicks grow out while providing the best possible environment to enable them to reach potential and patiently wait for them to develop to see if the goals set are reached or if progress has been made.

This is the method to my madness, although there is always more than one way to skin a cat as the saying goes. Most importantly I do believe goals have to be set to provide the direction a flock needs in where it is going. So, I wish you all luck in the upcoming year with your set goals, hatching, raising, conditioning, and showing.

