

# Exhibition Poultry

The #1 Internet Publication For Information On Showing & Breeding Exhibition Poultry

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**Nutrena**  
What's inside counts:

EPMag February 2023  
Photo Contest winner:  
Pictured Jeff Wilson, Jerseyville, Ohio. Bantam black Old English Game cock owned by Jared Wilson.





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# Exhibition Poultry

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## Exhibition Poultry Magazine®

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### **Exhibition Poultry Magazine**

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## **From the Editor . . .**

Sometimes you have to wonder about 'old wives tales' and how they get started. Much of myth is based in fact, but I think sometimes it is just easier or lazier to decide you believe something is true simply because you don't want to give the subject any further thought.

You may or may not have read the side bar in the last issue that explained the source of the old myth about hatching eggs with round ends hatching as females and eggs with a more pointed end hatching as males. We all know that to be a myth, and it was actually started by the Greek, Aristotle, over 2 millennia ago.

However, when we experience something out of the norm, we look for explanations and these days we have Google and various other search engines to ask questions of. So, when my second Winter hatch back in December turned out to be 100% pullets, I had questions. I had never experienced this before. An online search on the subject led me to an article written by a Professor Ferguson at the University of Manchester (UK) stating that a drop in temperature at a certain point of development in the incubator could change the sex of male embryos to female.

(1997) "*A brief, chilly spell can change the sex of chickens in the egg. If the temperature is dropped by a few degrees for three days during the embryological development of a freshly laid egg, some chickens which should hatch out male instead become female. Professor Ferguson believes the cooling can only work its effect on a minority of chicks (10%) which are "near the border line" of the male-female spectrum. The cooling is thought to work by slowing down the operation of enzymes involved in sex determination. The finding, which has been patented, could eventually lead to big changes in the poultry industry.*"

I imagine me lucking out with so many pullets from that one hatch was just that—luck.

But, I am also wondering about that patent the professor is working on.

Ann Charles, Editor



Hello Friends,

I wanted to pause for a moment to share with you some things that are happening in our club.

The ABA Board of Directors recently met in Columbus and had a wonderfully productive and positive meeting. We sent the minutes from this meeting earlier, but I wanted to review some items of note:

\* 2023 annual dues remain unchanged. US Rates: \$25 Annual/\$70 three years/\$100 five years and \$1,000 for individual lifetime. OUTSIDE USA Rates are set based on the above with a postal surcharge added.

We were able to set these rates amid higher paper costs with the understanding that we will be transitioning to an electronic newsletter instead of a hard copy. For those that require a paper copy, they can request one and we will provide. This approach will yield substantial savings which we will pass on to the membership by holding the dues rate stable. We will review this every year as required.

\* 2023 YEARBOOK AD RATES

Yearbook season is quickly approaching. I hope you consider supporting this annual publication with a yearbook ad or a sponsor donation. These are all

available at [bantamclub.com](http://bantamclub.com).

The full color individual ad rate will increase to \$225. The other rates will remain unchanged. This change was needed to help meet the increasing

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**EPMag Photo Contest Finalist:**  
Photo by Kimberly Underwood

cost of paper. We will continue to provide ad design at no additional costs to the advertiser.

If you are unsure of how to do this or need any guidance, please reach out to me and I will be happy to help you. My cell is 973-271-3335 and texting works great.

#### **WEBSITE UPDATES**

\* Updated Sanctioned show file on our website: The upcoming show file has recently been redesigned. This live version is available so you can see if the show reports have been received. Please note that many shows do not post here, however all show reports, as re-

ceived are added as they are received. ABA Sanctioned shows (current)

#### **New Merchandise Offerings**

##### **Books:**

Breeding and Showing Old English Game Bantams: Making it to Champion Row by Jeff Duguay, Ph.D. and Peyton Igo, ABA Judge. (Spanish and English versions)

Breeding and Showing Modern Game Bantams: Making it to Champion Row by Jeff Duguay, Ph.D.

##### **Apparel:**

We have some new shirt designs. These will be added to the website soon. Check back now and then and place your orders early. Inventory is limited.

Wishing you all the best,  
Michelle Lynch  
website: bantamclub.com

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# EPMag Photo Competition Winners

***Congratulations to Jared Wilson, Susan L. Britt, & Happy Hatchings.***

*Almost 600 entries were submitted! Thank you to all of the participants!*

**Prizes: One year subscription to Exhibition Poultry Magazine (\$52 value each)**





# The Practical Bantam:

## Dual Purpose & Meat Breeds

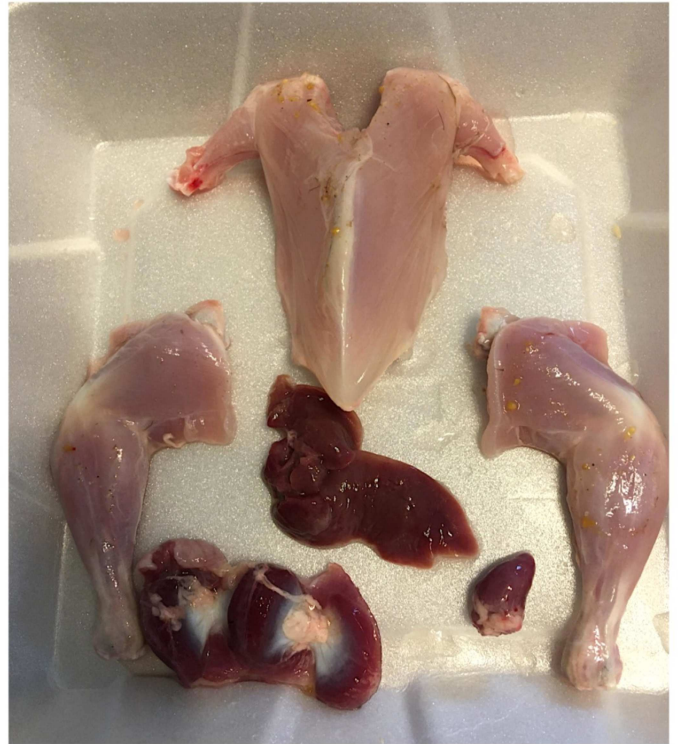
By Ann Charles

For those of you who haven't read the front part of your Standards, the following is the final paragraph and summation of the 'Historical Introduction' to the American Poultry Association explaining why it was founded—a 'mission statement' in other words - *"The aim of the Association has been to stabilize our economic and commercial breeds to uniform size, shape and color, with good production and practicability; with provision that ornamental breeds, including the bantam, be attractive, productive and meet requirements of the Standard breeder."* Also from the APA Standard of Perfection (44th Edition) page 226: Bantams: *"Although they appear to be exact miniatures, actually they are disproportionately larger in heads, wings, tail, and feather size than their weight would indicate . . . Eggs from bantams are (also) relatively larger in proportion to their body size than are the eggs from large chickens"*

If anyone thinks that production is only important from the APA Standard's instructions, the Bantam Standard also points out the significance of a productive bantam. Page 13 of my 2014 edition states under 'Judging Instructions' . . . *"The bleaching or fading of yellow pigment in yellow legged females shall not be penalized if it is the natural result of heavy egg production. Judges must allow for sustained egg production in the female . . ."*

Back to the APA Standard—once again on page 13—also under 'Instructions To Judges' - paragraph one: *"Standard-bred poultry is practical poultry because the breeds originated for economic purposes produce eggs, or meat, or both . . . The purpose of the STANDARD OF PERFECTION is to establish those ideal types that are not only the most beautiful and symmetrical but also the most useful and productive."* There you have it. Statements from your two primary poultry breeding instruction books. Whether your poultry are water fowl, large fowl, or bantams, they are first and foremost - productive—or at least they should be.

Are bantams practical? Yes, and it is a requirement that they be so . . . if bred to the Standards.



This was a 1 year old hen culled for poor lay. Photo: Edgar Mongold. APA Standard: New Hampshire bantam description . . . "Shape and color disqualifications same as for the large New Hampshires".



A Dark Cornish Bantam male dressed out at 30 oz. at 10 months old. Live weight was close to 48 oz. Photo by Wayne Melancon, Chackbay, Louisiana. APA Standard's Cornish Bantam Description . . . "Shape and color descriptions same as for large Cornish".



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## Advanced Chick Nutrition: *The Secret to Great Laying Hens*

by Jennifer Murtoff, Home to Roost LLC

What's in a chick feed, and how does that feed's quality affect your adult birds? There are a lot of chick feeds out there at different price points, but they are not created equal. A lower-cost feed might seem to be a better value, but your chickens will ultimately be healthier if they start life on a nutritionally advanced chick diet. Not only will they thrive as chicks, but as adults they will lay higher-quality eggs in a shorter span of time. In short, chick feed with exceptional nutrition will cost less when you look at the end result: healthier birds and better eggs.

### **Innovation Campus in Elk River, Minnesota. . .**

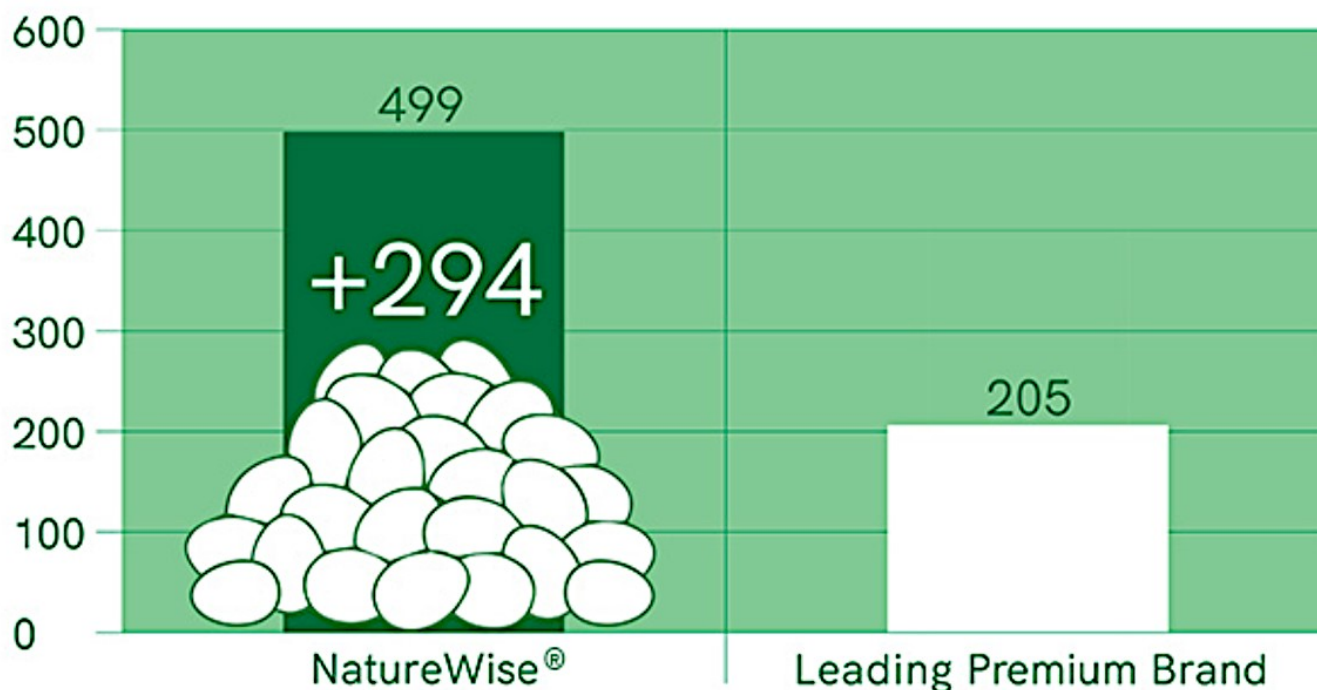
We divided 84 birds into two groups of 42 birds each. Group 1 had been fed NatureWise® Chick Starter Grower, and Group 2 had been started on a leading national brand of chick starter/grower.

When the birds were 18 weeks old, they were transported to a farm in Wisconsin for an in-field trial. The birds were placed in identical controlled environments (housing, lighting, and amounts of food and water). At the farm, all of the hens were fed NatureWise® 16% Layer feed. Once they started laying, we observed them for 14 weeks.

Birds from both Groups 1 and 2 started to lay six weeks after arrival at the facility, at 24 weeks of age, which is typical for Speckled Sussex. Then the remarkable results came in. Over the next 14 weeks, the 42 birds that had been started on NatureWise® Chick Starter Grower laid more than twice as many eggs as the birds fed the national competitor, 499 to 205! On average, the NatureWise® hens produced 34.3 eggs per week compared to 11.6 eggs per week for the national competitor, and the eggs laid by the NatureWise® hens were larger and had stronger shells. In addition, fewer birds died in the NatureWise® group. The farm's owners also noted the birds in Group 1 laid more eggs and were heavier than those in Group 2.

## **Total Eggs – 1 to 14 Weeks**

*Chicks fed NatureWise laid more than double the eggs during the first 14 weeks of laying.*







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**Natural\* plant extracts** to support healthy bird growth and bone formation

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\*As defined by AAFCO

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See reverse side for our  
study data and customer  
testimonials





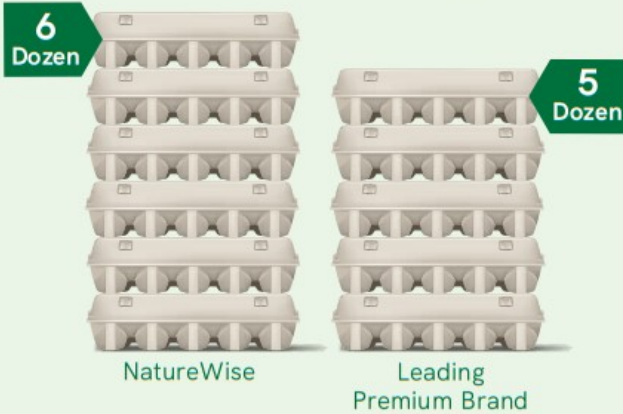
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★★★★★ 5 out of 5 stars reviews

### Hands down the BEST feed we have tried!!

We switched over to this feed about a month ago. We are now huge fans of Nutrena. I have seen a tremendous difference in egg production and overall health in my chickens. My ladies run to the feeder every time! Of course, I can't forget, their plumage looks amazing! If you have been on the fence, try this feed out you will not be disappointed.

### Absolutely love this feed

Started feeding my girls this 2 weeks ago and their egg production has been amazing. I was only getting 3 to 4 eggs a day from my 8 girls and now I'm getting 8 eggs a day, a few have been double yolks. They have had nice hard shells and weight to them as well.

### Amazing Results!

I have been a fan of a competitor brand for years. The Feather Fixer has changed me!! My girls went from molting and looking rough and only getting a few eggs a day, to good looking and getting a dozen a day. Laying picked up after 5 days of this feed!

### Great results!

I'm so happy that my local store ran out of my other brand, and I grabbed a couple bags of this to get by. Wow! I'm very impressed with the ingredients, nutritional values, small pellets, and the smell from the oregano. The results were an increase in egg production, and my flocks' combs and wattles became redder as their health improved. I'm never going back to my old brand of feed.

### They are laying again!

I started my flock on this approx 5-6 weeks ago. Prior to this I tried everything with no results. Went all summer with 0-4 eggs daily. This week started with 5 then 7 and today 9 eggs all within a few days. My heart and hens are happy again.

### My Chickens Loved it!!!

I started my chickens on Nutrena 2 weeks ago! My chickens absolutely love their new feed! They have been laying more consistently and I see a visible difference in the quality of their eggs! The yolks are more vibrant! Also, my chickens just seem happier! They are more active, chatty and healthy.



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# Repurposing Chick Brooders

By Ann Charles

I know that a lot of you are just getting started hatching chicks for 2023 shows, and it is just the first of March, but I am done for the season. I finished hatching everything I needed, or wanted, for this year about 6 weeks ago. I have nine chicks still inside but within a week they will be outdoors with the rest of my grow outs. That leaves me with a total of 12 brooders in three towers that normally would be sitting and gathering dust until next breeding season. That equates to 9 months of unused equipment just sitting around. But, then I had an interesting idea. Why not move my seedlings, small plants, tree cuttings, etc. into the empty space left

behind by the chicks?

My thumb has never been very green but just recently I have developed an interest in gardening. Plus, I have a lot of aged chicken litter compost (old and full of earthworms) that I really need to start using. And then there is the goat barn also. . .

My chick brooders are two TSC tower brooders and one GQF tower brooder. One of the TSC's already has some grow lights installed (see below) and my newest seedlings seem pretty happy.

I was thinking about those heaters that came with the TSC towers that I have never used - could they be used to warm seed trays on the low setting? How about those big tent-like covers that came with them that zip up in the front . . . humidity curtains?

I have nine months before the chicks return to find out what works and what doesn't. I have time to be creative, and I am just getting started.



Navy bean seedling and 6 Burgundy Cherry tomato seedlings in a repurposed TSC tower chick brooder with grow light suspended overhead. Background storage is some frost blanket material and sprouting trays.



# Brainy Chickens

*Excerpt from: 'The Startling Intelligence of the Common Chicken'.*

"It has taken researchers almost a century to figure out what is going on in the brains of chickens. The first inklings emerged from studies conducted in the 1920s, when Norwegian biologist Thorleif Schjelderup-Ebbe established that the birds have a dominance system, which he named the "pecking order" after noting that chickens will enforce their leadership by administering a sharp peck of the beak to underlings whenever they get ideas above their station.

The next major breakthrough in understanding the chicken mind came several decades later. The late Nicholas and Elsie Collias, both then at the University of California, Los Angeles, categorized the birds' calls and determined that chickens have a repertoire of about 24 different sounds. The vocalizations appeared to encode specific information intended to evoke a particular response from onlookers. Yet connecting these sounds and movements with their true meaning proved difficult until the development, in the 1990s, of technology that allowed researchers to test their hypotheses more rigorously.

It was then that the late Chris Evans of Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, and others began to use digital audio-recording devices and high-resolution televi-

sions to test the function of chickens' array of sounds under controlled conditions. In essence, they created a virtual reality for the birds, surrounding a test cage with TVs that allowed them to change what a chicken encountered—a companion, a competitor, a predator—and to record how it responded to a variety of situations. A test chicken might see a simulated hawk flying overhead, or a fox running toward it from the side, or a rooster making a series of dock-dock sounds.

The virtual world also revealed that individual chickens tailor their messages for their audience. A rooster that sees a threat overhead, for example, would make an alarm call if he knows a female is

nearby, but he would remain silent in the presence of a rival male. Females are equally selective, only sending up an alarm when they have chicks.

Taken together, these findings suggested the sounds did not simply reflect a bird's internal state, such as "frightened" or "hungry." Instead the chickens interpreted the significance of events and responded not by simple reflex but with well-thought-out actions. Chickens, it seems, think before they act—a trait more typically associated with large-brained mammals than with birds.

The referential calls showed that chickens are more cognitively

sophisticated than they have been given credit for. The research also raised an intriguing question: If these birds have the ability to communicate information about environmental events, might they also withhold that news or even broadcast misinformation when they stand to benefit from such deceitful behavior? Further insights

have come from studies of other forms of chicken signaling.

"Scientists have known since the 1940s that the birds perform complex visual displays in connection with the discovery of food. The most prominent of these displays is a series of actions collectively called tidbitting, in which

an alpha rooster twitches his head rapidly from side to side and bobs it up and down, picking up and dropping food over and over again to signal to a female that he has found something tasty. This performance is the main way he lures a mate. Scientists thought the subordinate males, for their part, focus on keeping a low profile, so as to avoid attracting negative attention from the alpha. Yet some observations of chickens in their social groups hinted that the pecking order of the birds might not be quite as orderly as researchers initially thought. In fact, mounting evidence indicated that chickens could be devious bastards.

**"Individual chickens tailor their messages for their audience. A rooster that sees a threat overhead, for example, would make an alarm call if he knows a female is nearby, but he would remain silent in the presence of a rival male. . ."**



Human observers initially missed this underlying drama because interactions between members of the flock are short and often secretive; the birds prefer to hide in the tall grass and among the bushes. At the same time, it is just not possible for a single person to monitor all the chickens at the same time. To minimize those difficulties, one of us (Smith) came up with a solution she called “Chicken Big Brother.”

Smith and her colleagues wired the outdoor aviaries at Macquarie University—large outdoor spaces with lots of vegetation, surrounded by nets on all sides—with multiple high-definition cameras and an array of microphones to catch every move and sound the birds made. They then analyzed the resulting recordings.

As expected, the alpha in any group would crow to show he was the master of the territory. He would perform the tidbitting display to attract the ladies. And he would make alarm calls to warn the flock of danger from above.

It was the subordinates that provided the twist. The team expected that these males should keep to themselves, to avoid the harassment of being chased, pecked and spurred by the alpha if they dared to make a play for his girl. Yet the cameras and microphones revealed a more complex story. These lesser males employed surreptitious tactics in a way previously thought impossible for the birds: they performed only the visual part of tidbitting—making the head motions without making the dock-dock sounds—thus creating a new signal that could quietly

attract a mate while sidestepping the wrath of the alpha rooster.

The fact that the subordinate males modify the tidbitting signal in this way to secretly seduce the hens demonstrated a behavioral flexibility that shocked researchers. But they had yet to plumb the full depths of the birds' deviousness.

To examine the animals' behavior more closely, they added more technology to their tool kit. The chickens' vocalizations were often so subtle that Smith and the other researchers were unable to catch them, even with the extensive camera-and-microphone setup.

They needed a way to record every call as it was made and heard by each of the individual chickens.

Ideally, they would outfit the chickens with little backpacks carrying lightweight wireless microphones similar to those report-

ers wear when working out in the field. But where to find the right materials for those packs? Bras, Smith thought, could do the trick. She began a hunt for old ones with easy-to-latch hooks and preferably colored black so they would not stand out against the feathers. Smith cut off the hooks and adjustable straps and attached these parts to the microphone to create a harness. Once strapped to a

bird's waist, the jury-rigged apparatus—affectionately dubbed Chicken Big Brother 2.0—would record what the chicken said and heard.

Smith was particularly keen to take a closer look at how the animals respond to danger. The previous research showing that males would sometimes call out when they saw an aerial predator, such as a hawk, was puzzling because making those squeals would place the rooster at greater risk of getting noticed and attacked himself. Scientists had assumed that the male's need to protect his ma-

te and offspring was so critical that making the call was worth the risk. Yet Smith wondered if other factors influence the calling behavior. It turns out they do. Recordings from Chicken Big Brother 2.0 revealed that males sometimes made calls for selfish reasons. The birds monitored the danger to themselves

and their rivals and were more likely to call if they could both minimize their own risk and increase a rival's. A male calls more often if he is safe under a bush and his rival is out in the open, at risk of being picked off by a swooping predator. If the rooster is lucky, he will protect his girl, and another guy will suffer the consequences. This strategy is known as risk compensation, and it is yet another skill

**“Ideally, they would outfit the chickens with little backpacks carrying lightweight wireless . . . But where to find the right materials for those packs? Bras, Smith thought, could do the trick. She began a hunt for old ones with easy-to-latch hooks and preferably colored black so they would not stand out against the feathers. . . .”**





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that chickens have in common with humans.

### Mother Hen

Research published in 2011 by Joanne Edgar of the University of Bristol in England and her colleagues revealed a softer side of chicken, demonstrating that they are capable of feeling empathy.

In Edgar's experiment, mother hens watched as their chicks received a harmless puff of air that ruffled their downy plumage. The chicks perceived the puff as a threat and showed classic signs of stress, including increased heart rate and lowered eye temperature. Intriguingly, their mothers also became upset simply by observing their chicks' reaction. They showed the same signs of stress the chicks exhibited even though the hens themselves did not receive the puff of air and the chicks were in no obvious danger. The hens also made more clucking calls to their chicks. These findings indicate that chickens can take the perspective of other birds—an ability previously seen in only a handful of species, including ravens, squirrels and, of course, humans.

For its part, the chicken presumably inherited its cognitive prowess from its wild ancestor, the red junglefowl, which lives in the forests of southern and Southeast Asia. There the ancestral chicken society consisted of long-term, semistable groups of four to 13 individuals of varying ages. A dominant male and a dominant female headed each group, and as in many other societies, those in charge got what they wanted, whether it be food, space or sex, mostly by keeping their subordinates in line. Males spent much of their time strutting their stuff for the females and providing them with food; females carefully observed the males, judging them on their actions and remembering what each had done in the past; they shunned the ones that were deceptive or nasty. A rooster's reputation was important to his long-term success with the hens, and competition for the females was fierce.

### The Virtual Chicken Experiments

Sometimes the chickens' intelligence made studying them challenging. On multiple occasions a bird would subvert an experiment by answering a different question than the one the researcher was posing. In a test of the tidbitting display, Smith had cre-

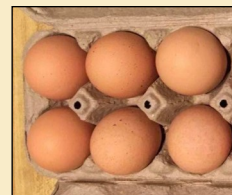
ated a setup in which a hen got a chance to watch a video of a male with food. To do so, the female had to wait behind a door that had been rigged with a remote-controlled servo stripped from a toy car. One hen that wore an orange band with the numbers 07 (and thus affectionately dubbed "007") was notorious for getting into trouble. While waiting for the researcher to open the door via remote control, 007 grew impatient and began examining the release mechanism closely, turning her head from side to side. After a few moments, she carefully plucked the wire that controlled the latch. The door opened, and 007 got what she wanted: to be close to the guy and his food. After that single trial, she would never wait again. Although the researchers changed the latch configuration several times, 007 was always able to solve the puzzle and escape before her turn.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-startling-intelligence-of-the-common-chicken1/>. Authors: Carolyn L. Smith, Sarah L. Zielinski on May 1, 2017

*This article was originally published with the title "Brainy Bird" in Scientific American Special Editions 26, 2s, 46-51 (May 2017)*

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# HIGH ADVENTURE

*A true story, submitted  
by Doris Robinson.*

*Original Art by Julie Graves*

*May 12, 1981*

*Dear Doris,*

*I am typing this up for my  
father Olof Woodruff LeBaron.  
He has such great stories to  
share. . .*

"This was written as I remember it after 70 years. The month was July 1911. My brother Edgar raised fancy poultry. He sent them to poultry shows and fairs all over the country. They won blue ribbons by the dozens. They were real beauties.

One day he came over to me and said "I am going to the Yavapi County fair. I'm taking some chickens and ducks, do you want to go along?" Did I want to go! This could be the chance of a lifetime. I could picture in my mind, adventures in every mile of the way. The year was 1911. Arizona was still a territory and there was some pretty wild and rugged country between Phoenix and Prescott. We were going in a wagon and team of horses: the mode of travel by most everyone at that time. We were to leave in a

week.

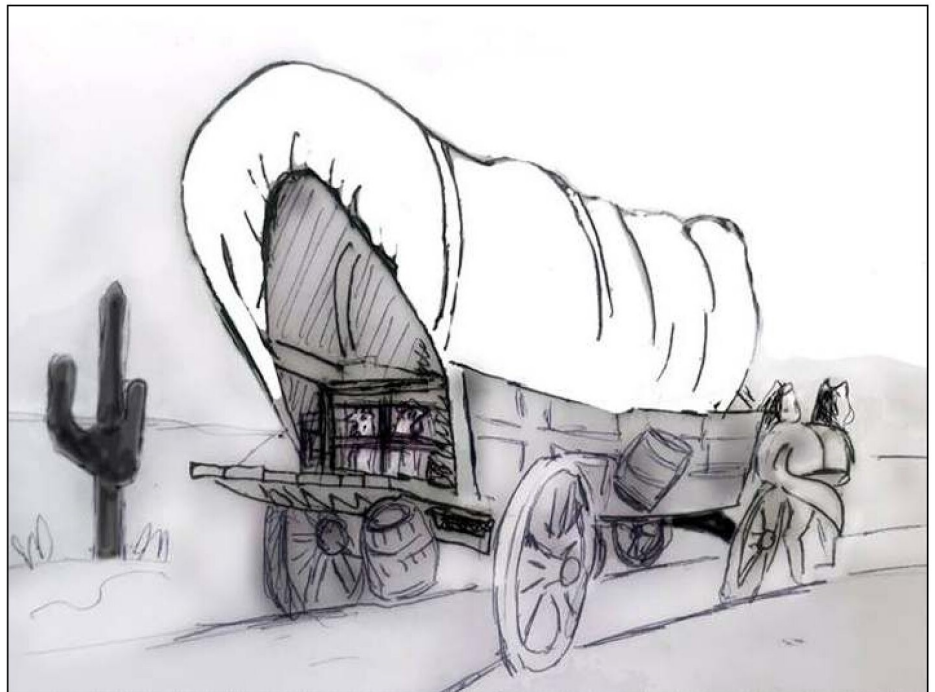
How slow time went after that. Everyday for nearly a week, I could hardly wait to get started. I was fourteen years old at the time and all I could think about was the adventure I was missing. (I wish time would move that slow now. Now a day seems to be about 4 hours). I had been working, hoeing cotton and cantaloupes.

I went to Mesa and bought a suitcase. A real beauty. It had double locks about eight inches apart. The locks were made of polished brass the size of a sil-

ver dollar. They were polished so bright they were almost like two mirrors. I also bought two boxes of shells for my shotgun. One with large shot, one with small shot (nothing like being prepared).

With three days to go I wondered, why does time go so slow? It already seemed like a month!

At last the day to go arrived. Oh, boy! We loaded the hay, grain and a barrel of water on the wagon. Then the crates of chickens and ducks were loaded. We hitched the two mares



**We climbed up on the high seat, waved goodbye to mother and Doris,  
told the team to get going, and we were on our way.**



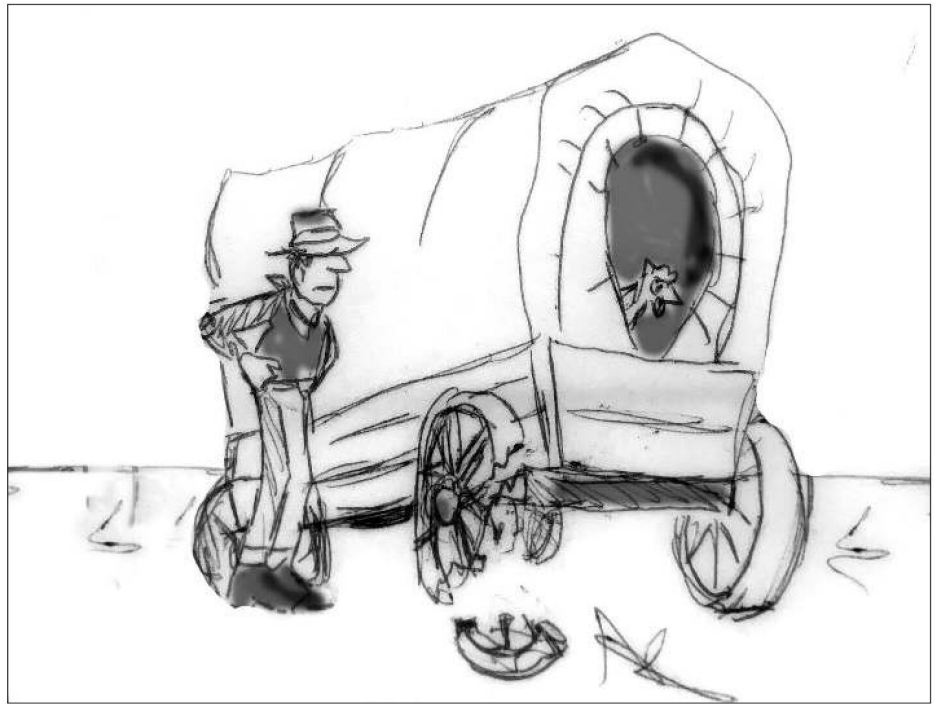
to the wagon and we were ready to be on our way!

One of the mares had a four-month old colt, which of course would have to go along. Now this could be big trouble, for if there is anything a mountain lion likes more than one colt it would have to be two colts, and there was some real wild country to go through. Bears, wolves, wildcats, coyotes and quite often mountain lions were to be seen. We would have to be a little extra careful.

We climbed up on the high seat, waved goodbye to Mother and Doris, told the team to get going, and we were on our way.

We expected to be gone about twelve to fourteen days. We camped that night about twenty miles north of Phoenix. We heard coyotes, a couple of wildcats and several screech owls during the night but nothing that sounded very dangerous. We started out a little after sunup the next morning. After an hour or two of traveling we got into some pretty wild looking country. Some of the roughest country I had ever seen. No telling what was hiding behind those big boulders or hiding in those large caves and holes. Pretty dangerous country to be in. I sure hoped it wouldn't get any worse, but it did. The farther we went the rougher it got. Bigger rocks, bigger caves and thicker brush.

That afternoon, about two o'clock as we were traveling in the roughest part of the country it happened. One of the rear



**We got out and looked the situation over and decided we were in very serious trouble.**

wheels collapsed, broke down, and fell to pieces. We got out and looked the situation over and decided we were in very serious trouble. My appetite for adventure cooled really quick. We had seen no traffic all day. Not even a cowboy on horseback. We were there all by ourselves, I could see no chance to be rescued. I turned from an optimist to a pessimist. We were doomed. This was an adventure I had not planned on. I began to wish I had stayed home and gone fishing. I began to wonder how long it would take for one of us to roll the wheel to Phoenix, get it fixed and roll it back. We were looking the situation over and what we could do about it when down the road came the most welcome sight I had ever seen. Two men in a Model T Ford

touring car. They stopped and saw what had happened and offered to take Edgar and the wheel to Phoenix. Edgar loaded the wheel in the car, climbed in and was gone, leaving me there wondering when, if ever, he would be back.

Now here was an adventure I did not like the thoughts of. All alone in one of the wildest parts of Arizona, surrounded by all kinds of wild animals. I knew I would have to stay awake all night to keep something from eating one or both of the horses, the colt, the poultry or even me! What a terrible thought.

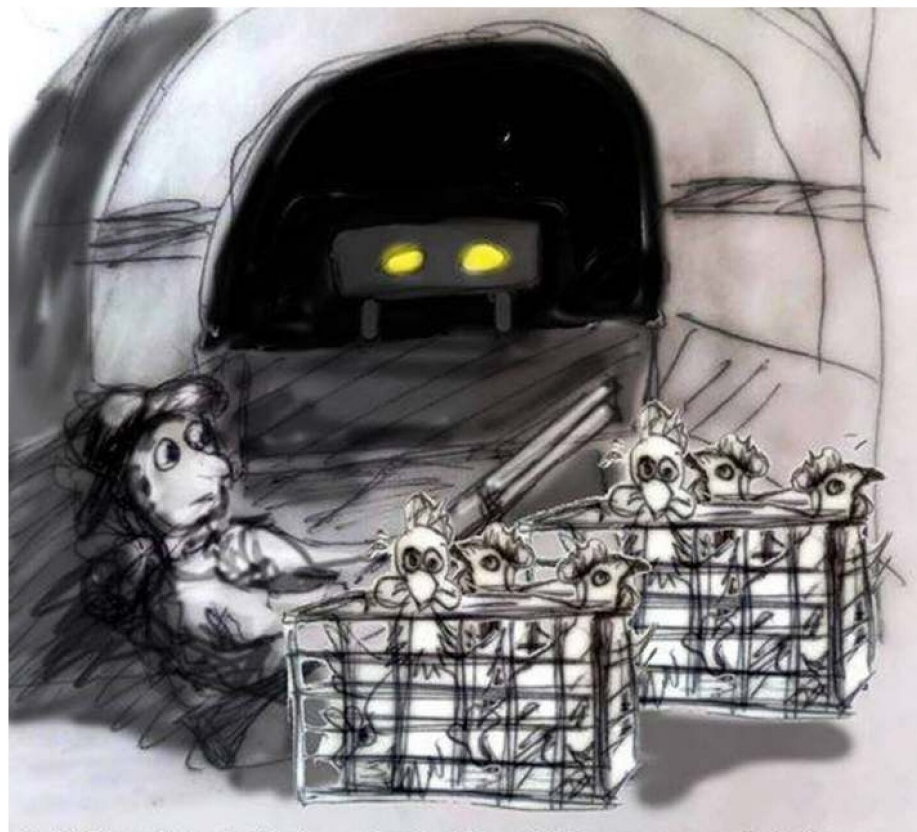
It was getting late afternoon by then and it would soon be night. Already the coyotes were beginning to howl off in the distant canyons, and they would soon be joined by other night prowlers.

I fed the chickens, ducks, and fed and watered the mares and the colt. By that time night was close at hand. I got my suitcase and took out a clean pair of socks and put the suitcase up in the seat of the wagon. Then I unrolled my bed, got my shotgun, put it by my bed and tried to go to sleep. There were so many noises I could not go to sleep. Coyotes were howling in all directions and a wildcat was calling just a little way out. Off in the distance I thought I heard a mountain lion scream. Oh, how I wished I was at home in bed. Home sweet home.

It was the time of day when you could barely see. When in imagination every bush, rock and cluster of grass turns into a wild animal ready to pounce on you the first chance they get. And then it is dark....so dark, one had to depend upon his ears to know what is going on, for you cannot see anything. I did not know it could get so dark in Arizona.

I finally got into a light sleep, for how long I do not know, when I was awakened by the most horrible noise! I set up and grabbed my shotgun before I realized it was only one of the big roosters crowing just a few feet from my head. I tried to go back to sleep but could not, so I just lay there waiting for daylight. The moon came up and it was a little lighter now. It must not be long until daylight.

I dozed again and was awakened by the colt's scream. Then one of the mares let out a loud



**I looked up and there looking down at me from the seat of the wagon was a pair of yellow eyes.**

squeal and I knew that a mountain lion had the colt. One of the mares kicked at something and it felt as though something large had jumped up into the wagon, almost over my head. I looked up and there looking down at me from the seat of the wagon was a pair of yellow eyes. By their size I knew it must be the grandfather of all of the mountain lions in Arizona. I was sure I could see its long tail, the end of it twitching, a sure sign it was getting ready to spring at me. I grabbed my shotgun, aimed it and fired both barrels. I heard something hit the ground, kick a few times, then it lay still. I lay just as still wondering if it had a mate somewhere close by.

When it got full daylight I got my gun, reloaded it and went over to see if it was dead. It was dead all right, just as dead as anything could be.....my beautiful suitcase, with one blazing eye shot out. How could such a thing happen? I finally decided it was because it was dark when I put the suitcase on the seat, and then when moon came out the moonlight turned those polished brass locks into glaring lion eyes. I got down, picked up the suitcase and put it in the wagon between a bale of hay and one of the chicken pens hoping that Edgar would not see it.

The country did not look near so dangerous in the daylight, so I took my gun and set



out to see some of the country. About a quarter of a mile from camp I found a railroad track and some cattle pens and a loading pen where they loaded cattle cars. Also, some baling wire and some old hay. I wandered around until about noon and then returned to camp, had something to eat and settled down to wait for Edgar. How long would he be?

An hour or so later I thought I heard a train whistle off in the distance. I did not hear anything more so I assumed it must be been my imagination playing tricks on me. About ten minutes later it whistled again, a little closer this time. Shortly I could hear a train coming from the direction of Phoenix. About the same time, I heard three loud reports that sounded like heavy gunfire. What could this mean? A new menace of some kind? Possibly a train robbery? A few minutes later I head a train stop by the pens I had visited earlier. What could this mean? Here was a big mystery!

I could hear men calling to

each other but could not hear what they were saying. I must be very careful. The train stayed about five minutes and then was on its way toward Prescott. I watched it go, wondering why it had stopped there. In a few minutes I thought I heard something walking toward me. could it be a man, or was it a four-legged animal? I decided to stay out of sight until I found out what it was. I stepped into the brush but couldn't see anything, the brush was too thick.

Soon, much to my relief I heard a voice I recognized as Edgar's call out, "Is anyone here?" I answered, "Yeah, around here somewhere, how did you get here?" He said he had come on the train, and the wheel was down at the loading pen and I should take one of the mares and ride to the pen. I built a sled out of some boards I found and put the wheel on it and pulled it back to the camp where we made the necessary repairs.

We waited until morning be-

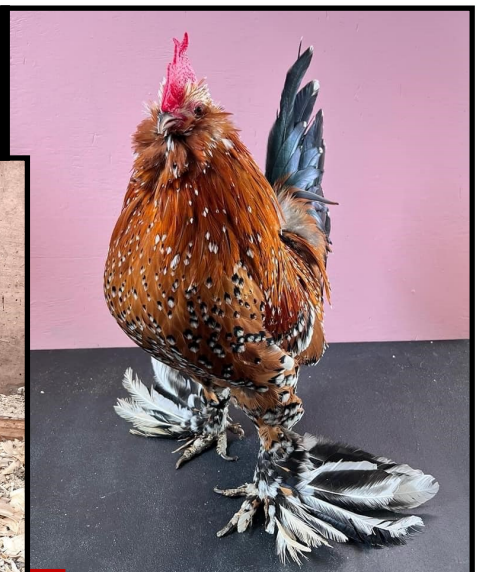
fore starting on our journey. We arrived in Prescott in time for Edgar to take his poultry to the fair. After the fair we had a safe journey home.

On the way home Edgar asked about the suitcase. I tried to convince him that the chickens had pecked a hole in it. He said that did not seem reasonable, so I told him that one of the mares had kicked a hole in it. He didn't believe that either, so I had to tell him what really happened. He said, "I guess I would have done the same thing under the same conditions, but I will bet you one thing, you will never hear the end of it or ever forget it". This had certainly proved to be true. The dangers were mostly from my imagination. I was sure glad to be back home again, my appetite for adventure had been satisfied. The only great adventure I wanted from then on was to go down to the river fishing, or duck hunting.

*\* Reprinted from Exhibition Poultry Magazine Issue 8.1 (February /March 2019)*



## EPMag Photo Contest - More Finalists -



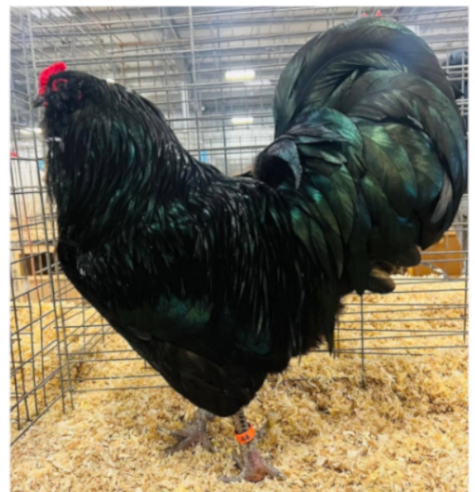


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