

White And Silver Ameraucana Bantams

By Jerry Segler

The whites are the foundation of my flock, and I couldn't have come this far with my other colors without them. Both colors were purchased from J. Ralph Brazelton, of Axtel, Kansas. I received fourteen started chicks of mixed colors in which I had hoped to receive some browns. He had sold all of his browns except for a couple of hens and put them in with some silver hens, and I believe, a white cock. Most of the chicks were a white X silver cross, and uniform in size and would prove to be uniform in egg color as well. You could see the work that Ralph Brazelton had put into them. The first chicks that I raised from these were silvers, mixed silvers with white, and white. To improve comb, I then purchased a pair of whites again from Mr. Brazelton. I liked the male from this pair so well, that I line bred him and although the original birds had yellow legs, I started to get willow legs from this mating.

Last year I purchased a white cock with white shanks. I had thought willow to be a combination of yellow and slate and reasoned that white would lighten the yellow pigment and allow the slate to show through. It worked and that is how I got slate legs on the white birds. This was a big plus for me because the whites have good beards and combs and are a recessive white, unlike Leghorns. This enables me to use whites on my colors to improve beard and comb without getting yellow legs into these bloodlines.

I had gotten rid of all of my silvers except one of the original hens from Brazelton that laid such large eggs for a bantam that I wanted to keep her. I mated this hen to the white cock and from this mating produced two good silver pullets, which were bred back to him the next year. I got a number of faded colors, but kept the best colored pullets and a well colored silver cockerel. He has slate legs, while the pullets have willow, so I should get some chicks from this mating with slate legs.

I would also like to touch on getting good combs. I have found that tall, floppy combs usually carry some single comb genes, but can be bred back to good type with proper selection. Whatever the reason for floppy combs, if you select for low combs with a good base at the skull, it will help. You need a broad base from skull to comb and if this area is narrow, combs will flop over at maturity. It would be wise to check hens and pullets for this defect as well, since they are half of your bloodlines.