

Belgium bantam

' small and graceful, but unknown and unloved '

History

In her history the Belgium bantam shows a clear parallel with the, in the Netherlands very popular, Dutch bantam.

Since long times extremely small, mostly partridge coloured, bantams could be found on farms in Western Europe. From the beginning of the previous century a severe selection and breeding was used to create a new breed out of the mentioned bantams on the farms.

In the Netherlands this has led to the still very popular Dutch bantam.



This has failed for the Belgium bantam. Perhaps the strong resemblance with her Dutch cousin is to blame. The very strong aim to profit the production qualities of our southern neighbours can also be a reason.

In the Netherlands they early started breeding for fancy purposes. For sure is that the Belgium bantam is one of the most rare breeds on our shows.

Belgium bantam cock partridge

Appearance (type and colour)

The type of the Belgium bantam shows a strong resemblance with the Dutch bantam.

The first impression is therefore small, pertly and graceful.

The Belgium bantam also belong to the light original breeds. The cocks need to have a fully feathered tail. This means long and wide well developed sickles. The smaller tail sickles are also very present and the saddle hackle is properly developed.

In comparison with the Dutch bantam the Belgium bantam is a bit larger. Still they belong to the smallest bantams. The weight of a cock is approximately 650 gram and the hen weights 550 gram. A typical difference between the two breeds is that the Belgium bantam has red ears. Some white colour in the ears will be punished. Another difference between the breeds is the type of the Belgian bantam; the pype is a little bit more horizontal compared to her Dutch cousin. This leads to a somewhat higher opgetrokken vleugels. The crest is a little bit lowered.

In the Dutch Poultry Standard the colours partridge and silver partridge are certified.

In practice we see in the Netherlands only partridge Belgium bantams.

In Belgium we can see sometimes also other partridge-varieties:

- blue partridge
- silver partridge
- a partridge-variety not known in many countries: a pattern the same as in partridge where the rich goldbrown has been replaced by lemon
- silver duckwing.

These colour varieties often origin from cross-breeding in large groups of animals. These varieties are for sure not genetically embedded well.

In judging the partridge colour we have to remember that the basic colour in Belgium is wanted a bit more red than the basic colour of partridge Dutch bantams. Also the quill marking with webbing in hackle and saddle is less prominent than with her Dutch cousin.

Belgium bantam hen partridge



Characteristics and housing

Because of her small size the Belgium bantam can be kept easily on a small area. In a run the cocks bear each other well.

The hens of this breed are not typical laying hens. Still we can expect enough white eggs of 30-35 gram of vital hens in the breeding season.

The hens become broody late during the breeding season. But if they are broody, they do it very well.

Unfortunately the term 'vital' is the nowadays problem. Because of her rareness the breed is threatened by to strong inbreeding.

We need to adjust the feeding method to this unique small animals. The most suitable food is a small pellet with a maximum diameter of 2.5 millimeter.

