

Barbu d'Uccle

' a unique booted bantam with a beard '

History

At the end of the 19th century booted bantams who looked very similar could be found in a number of West European countries. In the Netherlands we had the Sabelpoot booted bantams, Germany the 'Federfüßiges Zwerghuhn' and England the Booted Bantams. At the start of the 20th century Michel van Gelder, who lived in the small municipality Uccle at the south-east border of Brussels, started his contribution to this collection of booted bantams.

He wanted to breed a booted bantam with a lower posture and more compact body than the available booted bantams. The new breed also had to have a rather full beard. Most authors assume that Van Gelder started with the Dutch booted Sabelpoot and the Antwerp bearded bantam. We do not know this for sure.

Aside from his large breeding facility, Van Gelder had enough time to visit many large English and German poultry shows. The changes are high that he bought his starting material here. How he did it, still remain the question, but he managed to breed the Barbu d'Uccle.



Barbu d'Uccle hen porcelain

From the year 1905 onwards specimens of this breed have been showed.

In Belgium this breed has known a timid popularity. In foreign countries they were extremely rare because of national competitive breeds. Unfortunately, the breed has now become very rare in the mother country also.

Appearance (type and colour)

If we look at the ideal picture of the Barbu d'Uccle critically, we will see that the breed does not differ strongly from the Barbu d'Anvers. The difference is the booted legs and the single-comb of the Barbu d'Uccle.

A very good Barbu d'Uccle must have a low posture, a short but well developed neck and a rather open tail-feathering. The tail must not be too wide and has to make a triangle on the cock as well as on the hen.

The large tail sickles should not be too long, like the Barbu d'Anvers, and they may not bend and have to end rather sharp.



These characteristics are difficult to achieve on a young cock. With this animal the growth of the sickles is often very fast.

Older cocks show a better tail and these animals in general show a somewhat better type. Judging young animals this has to be kept in mind.

The weight of a cock is 700 - 800 gram.

A hen weighs roughly 550 gram.

Besides that, the Barbu d'Uccle has to have a small single-comb with rather large spikes.

A full tripartite beard also goes with the standard equipment of this bantam.

Because of lack of vitality and lack of breeding animals in some colour there have been crossbreeding with the Dutch Sabelpoot booted bantam.

Barbu d'Uccle cock black

The colour of the Barbu d'Uccle are:

- porcelain and millefleur
- black
- white
- cuckoo.

In theory we also have quail-varieties. Unfortunately, this colour becomes very rare. This colour is only certified in Belgium. On shows in the Netherlands the most common colours are black, porcelain and millefleur.

Barbu d'Uccle hen black



Characteristics and housing

Barbu d'Uccle are very quiet animals with a intimate character. Sometimes cocks can give some trouble in the breeding season by attacking people. The most beautiful animals are often the ones doing this by showing the perty and challenging character we like to see in this breed. In a group these chickens are very tolerant. Therefore it is possible to house several grown-up cocks and hens in one pen. The cocks do not go further than a few skirmishes.

A disadvantage of this breed is that the animals to use for poultry shows need extra care. The most vulnerable part of the animal are the feathers on the legs. Especially the feathering of millefleur-coloured animals is easy broken off. Judges keep this feature in mind, but at the start of the showing season nice and well developed feathers on the legs are wanted.

To prevent this the housing of booted poultry has to be changed in such a way that the feathers on the legs can not touch the walls of the pen and the run. As litter it is best to use chopped straw or very fine wooden chips.

The Barbu d'Uccle hens are not excellent layers. In Spring and in the first months of the Summer 4 ot 5 eggs per week per hen are not exceptional. Also broodiness is present in this breed. Most broody hens can handle up to 9 eggs well and they raise their offspring very good.

