President’s Message

Well, there used to be a saying, “... will work for chicken feed”, that spoke of economy. Apparently those days are now gone as corn, fuel and so many other things have experienced price increases. I hope that each of you can find ways to minimize the costs of feeding your Dominiques while providing a balanced diet. In the midst of all of this, I thought about something that David Hyman shared some years ago. He suggested that I add some grit and whole oats to the diet of the flock and it was amazing how it cut the demand for laying crumbles. It might not work for everyone, but I was assured of his wisdom once again.

We all are looking for such tidbits that not only will save our money but will help us with all phases of raising Dominiques. I took the time to read through a set of past Dominique newsletters over the winter. Not only are there feed suggestions in those past editions (including David’s tip), there are breeding and selection tips, a chance to learn the history of the breed and “meet” past giants of our club membership, etc. If you would like to have that experience, be sure and order a CD or one of the few remaining paper copies of past newsletters. Oddly enough, many of the battles of the past are the same hurdles we still face as a club and breeders of a treasured breed.

Our club has had a change in officers since our last issue. Ms. Tracy Allen has resigned as club
treasurer. Tracy has been a strong, active officer for a number of years and one of the “behind the scenes” workers who never get the honor or respect they deserve. Let’s all thank Tracy for her dedication to the DCA and wish her the best in her continued membership with the club. The remaining officers have accepted Mr. Daniel Handley’s offer to be the new interim club treasurer. I’ll stop there and let his introduction appear in a separate article. Welcome, Daniel. We also have a follow up article to the question and answer section with David Hyman. I do not let the man rest!

Let me know if I can be of help to you.

Eddie

Eddie Martin holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Clemson University and currently works with the United States Department of Agriculture as an Agricultural Engineer. Eddie and his wife Pam own a farm in rural Anderson County, South Carolina, where he enjoys raising donkey, beef cattle, St. Croix sheep and the Dominique chicken.

New Member’s of the First Quarter, Welcome!

22 New Members!

22 Renewing Members!
Successful Hatches by Mary Ann Harley

Can you feel spring in the air? It’s just around the corner and that means fresh eggs in abundance, the peeping of baby chicks and the joy of working with your poultry without having to chip ice out of the water and your body freezing in the process. My incubatory has been going full force since the middle of February and the chicks are taking over my life right now. I have learned over the years the correct way to use an incubator. Someone said the other day that they had no success with an incubator and had thrown theirs away. I say you can use an incubator successfully if you read the directions and follow a few simple rules.

First you have to keep your incubator clean. I mean REALLY clean. If you have the type that hatches forty or so eggs at a time you should clean it thoroughly after each hatch. If you have a large unit that you can set eggs each week with a hatch each week then totally cleaning it is sort of out of the question. But you should wipe the hatching tray and all parts of it with a good cleaning solution. I use Clorox wipes on the inside of the incubator and Clorox water to clean the hatching tray.

Always set clean eggs. If you set dirty eggs you take the chance of contaminating your whole hatch. I have scrubbed dirty eggs, incubated them and they hatched. Some people routinely wash the eggs before incubation. If you wash the eggs you have to use hot water. If you wash them in cold water the membrane inside the eggs will shrink causing toxins to enter the eggs.

Place the incubator in a spot that has a constant temperature with little or no fluctuations. For instance, don’t place the incubator near a sunny window where the temperature will be very hot and then cool. Never place the incubator near a heater or air conditioning vent. A room or area that has a constant temperature is best (like a cool basement). You have to watch the temperature and humidity of the incubator. If it’s too humid you could drown your baby chicks and if it’s too dry they will be cooked. You can buy a temperature and humidity gauge in almost any large store. They cost around $15.00 and are well worth the investment.

Most people can’t use an incubator because they can’t seem to leave it alone. Once it’s set with the correct temperature and humidity it’s not necessary to do anything but check the gauge a few times a day. Don’t fuss with it. The worse thing you can do when using an incubator is to open the top when you see baby chicks have hatched. Please, please do not open the incubator until the hatch is complete. Here’s why. If you open the top you have just let the warm, humid air out. If the hatch is not complete you have just weakened the chicks still pecking through their shell. It will take much longer for them to hatch because the incubator has to start over to get the same environment for chicks to properly hatch. So, hands off until the hatch is finished. Chicks have a hard enough time getting out of their shell, don’t make it harder for them than necessary. Using an incubator is not rocket science, it’s mostly just common sense. Read the directions for your incubator and follow them. If you follow a few basic rules, you should have great hatches. Good luck and let me hear how your hatches are going.

Mary Ann Harley, Second Vice President of The Society for the Preservation of Poultry Antiquities and supportive Dominicque Club of America member, lives in North Augusta, South Carolina with her husband. Mary Ann offers ‘down to earth’ knowledge to poultry enthusiasts on a regular basis and we really appreciate her contribution to our club. Mary Ann welcomes your thoughts and you may contact her in writing at: 195 Old Macedonia Church Road, North Augusta, SC 29860 or maryann4@bellsouth.net.

2008 National Meet/Show – Mark Your Calendar

The Dominique Club of America will hold the 2008 National Meet/Show at The Ohio National, November 8th & 9th in Columbus, Ohio. For additional information concerning this show please visit www.ohionational.org or contact Bryan via e-mail (bryan_k_oliver@yahoo.com) or telephone (864-638-5650).
Dominique Club of America - Treasurer’s Report, April 2008

Deposits:
$358.00 First Quarter Dues & Merchandise sales

* New account established with SunTrust Bank, Atlanta, GA.
Total transfer from previous account: $2,600.40 ($2,000.00 on 02/08/2008 and $600.40 on 03/18/2008)

Debits:
- $81.60 First Quarter Printing & Postage cost
- $9.15 New Check printing cost (02/20/2008)
- $45.60 Shipping cost (transfer of club material/property from previous treasurer, 03/18/2008)

Balance as of March 27, 2008: $2,822.05

Donations this quarter include a $3.00 donation by Bobby J. Allen, thank you Bobby!

Your membership dues and donations allow this club to continue to serve ‘America’s Oldest Breed’!

Cider Vinegar for Chickens:

From Countryside and Small Stock Journal 77 (1): Jan/Feb 1993: How Vinegar Helps Chicken. Letter to the editor: “Is there a magic ingredient in vinegar?” A correspondent asked in Volume 76 (6) - if anyone knew how vinegar helped chickens act more peaceful. I had just finished reading an article in New Farm 14 (7) which had information regarding giving vinegar to chickens.

“According to the New Farm article, entitled ‘Feed the Microbes’, giving chicken’s vinegar lowers the pH in their intestinal tract which makes it harder for pathogenic bacteria to grow. This, in effect, is having a good strain of bacteria control the bad bacteria that cause disease. The mix suggested in the article is 1 ounce of vinegar in a gallon of water. They also use a 20% vinegar solution to disinfect the chicken house. The author specified cider vinegar, though I have used white vinegar.”

“A quote from that article which has caused me to do some research in disease control is, ‘Farmers miss the point by not studying bacteria more closely’.” By Linda Folden, Elm Grove, LA. (Article submitted by Carolyn J. Christman, my good friend and DCA member from Mebane, NC).
Question & Answer by Eddie Martin and David L. Hyman

Answer from David (additional reply):

(This is an additional reply from a question in the January 2008 ‘Dominique News’. Several of Carter’s birds were the subjects used for the classic Schilling artwork.)

Eddie,

One more reply today regarding Mr. Carter's birds. Mr. Carter writes on p. 250 of the book, "The American Dominique" that he purchased two males from two different sources and females from three sources and mated them in two pens. This suggests to me that he never bred in any big time commercial way but, at the same time, boasted of both their table quality and egg laying ability which, of course, is supposed to be the advantage of all American breeds. He compares them with other breeds on his farm and assures us the Dominiques excelled in both egg laying ability and in quality of meat, one man willing to pay him two cents per pound more for Dominique roasters. As for egg laying ability, he kept records for the entire year. The Dominiques averaged 195 per hen whereas another breed (he does not say which one) averaged 164. Mr. Carter was clearly concerned about production as much as for exhibition.

My suspicion is that, in Mr. Carter's day, the very early twentieth century, the commercial qualities and the exhibition qualities of poultry were more in balance for the purebred breeds. Purebred breeds were also production breeds. Today, the purebred birds are only sought after by the commercial breeders when they are looking for more genetic material. Otherwise, they cross up just about anything for the sake of the desired eggs or meat.

Meanwhile, we who are interested in saving the pure varieties are doing all we can just to keep them going. Most of us are not geneticists. The showroom is what keeps our interests high. Thus, we aim for exhibition. That does not mean we should give up on, or not try bringing back, all the qualities of whatever breed, that were its characteristics in its heyday.

David

Letter to the Editor:

Hi Bryan,

Just came indoors from sitting out in my coop for an hour. My hens like to jump up on my lap and spend time talking to me (so to speak).

Anyway, I’m just dropping a line to let other members that are new to Dominiques, know that I am too. I’ve only had this breed going on 4 years. I started out with purchasing a couple dozen eggs, all the way from Minnesota in March. Out of the 2 dozen, only 6 hatched. I kept the 3 best, 1 cockerel and 2 pullets for breeding.

(Continued on page 6)
The cockerel had good type and color, but the comb that started out good, only to end up sloping down towards the back of his neck. The pullets had good combs and color, but didn’t carry their tails up like they should have, plus they lacked weight.

I took my chances anyway and hatched out a couple dozen chicks from mating this trio, just to see the results. I only kept the birds that showed improvement. I had some with inverted combs and a few with hollow or indented combs. Needless to say, I was only able to keep 4 and used these as breeders of third generation. I did butcher the cockerels and kept some of the pullets to give to a friend that just wanted some egg layers, and not for breeding. I kept one cockerel that has a fair comb, but is lacking in the nice full sweeping tail sickles.

My birds do have good leg, eye and feather coloring, although one is a little darker than I like. Their type is up along with weight and carriage.

So, for those just beginning with Dom’s that are getting a little disgruntled or disappointed, remember, keep reading and studying the standard and keep working towards it. If not, then you might cull all you have and start over with a different strain.

This breed, I’ve come to realize takes a lot of patience and work. Sure, I’d like to put some in the shows and fairs, but I want to be sure of my breeding skills that I may take pride in what I’ve produced.

I am also working with bantam Dominiques, Elva Hemphill and Mark Fields strain, along with the Casazza strain. Hope to have some to show this year. I hatched from some eggs I got from Monte Bowen in Kansas.

Anyway, to end this little article, the message I want to relay is don’t give up so easy. I am sixty-two years old and have been raising and breeding birds for fifty plus years. Now I am devoting my remaining years to the Dominique breed, after all they deserve the attention in order to keep them going. The Dominique is historical and they deserve to be kept from going extinct like so many other forms of fife on this planet of ours.

This breed signifies determination and a willingness to stay with us for some time to come. They evidently have not given up on us, so why should we give up on them.

May everyone have a good year and a good hatching season.

Yours truly,

Mike Supak
Fowlplay Farm, Flint, MI

Michael Supak is an active Dominique Club of America member who contains vigor and determination as noted in this article. Members like Mike are vital to the preservation and promotion of this wonderful American breed. Thank you Mike for all the work you have done and are currently doing to stabilize this rare breed of poultry. If you would like to contact Mr. Michael Supak, you may do so in writing; use the following address: Fowlplay Farm, 2140 Algonac Drive, Flint, MI 48532-4402
Let’s meet our new club treasurer, Mr. Daniel Handley of Atlanta, Georgia.

Dan was born in Atlanta and graduated from Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. His prior work experience includes AT&T, private and public accounting, and MCI/WorldCom. Dan is currently a Senior Financial Analyst for Verizon Business, specializing in Government/Education accounts. For relaxation, Dan enjoys gardening, focusing on heirloom vegetables and native plants. He discovered the plight of older breeds of livestock while researching heirloom vegetables and was then immediately sold on the Dominique. He convinced his wife, Honora and daughter, Falyn (born May 2007 and who took less convincing), of the importance of the breed and that chickens were a good idea. The Handley’s 1920 bungalow in downtown Atlanta is on a lot less than 1/5 of an acre, but is also home to five hens and a rooster! He hopes to hatch some chicks this year.

Dan looks forward to meeting you and appreciates the opportunity to assist this organization.

* Member’s are encouraged to submit pictures of their birds for future newsletter’s *

Dan holding his Dominique cock, supplied by Bryan K. Oliver of Walhalla, South Carolina.

The Handley’s yard at 965 Ralph McGill Blvd. in downtown Atlanta, GA. Pictured here are four of the five hens along with their boss.

Dan has a nice coop for the birds, but they prefer being out in the yard. During my visit these birds seemed so peaceful and happy, even while keeping a keen eye on a Cooper’s hawk which circled above.

It’s pleasing to know that purebred Dominiques are residing in the city of Atlanta, just blocks from Emory University.

Visit our new web-site @ www.dominiqueclub.org
Dominique_Chickens
This group is for discussing the Dominique (aka ‘Dominike’), both standard and bantam, in every aspect of keeping, breeding, showing and preservation. We encourage you to join this group and interact with fellow Dominique breeders. To join this group, please use the following link:
http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/dominique_chickens
This group was founded in November of 2005 and currently has 73 members. Lily Branga, our club webmaster moderates this group.

In closing, a message from the secretary/newsletter editor

The Dominique Club of America truly welcomes and appreciates all of our new members, not to forget each of our old members who continue to support the club with their annual renewal. If any member has a question or concern please contact me via my e-mail address or feel free to contact me by telephone (864-638-5650), before 9PM EST. If you have had a change of address, telephone number, or e-mail address please contact me either by phone or e-mail and I will record that change. Lastly, be sure and make your check or money order payable to ‘Dominique Club of America’.

This club is very fortunate to have a new treasurer with such impressive credentials which actually pertain to the office he holds. I first met Daniel last year, soon after he joined. He quickly contacted me about obtaining a small flock of birds which I just happened to have at the time. Since then, he has really enjoyed that group of Dominiques and he plans to add more birds to his flock this year.

The officers really appreciate Daniels willingness to accept this position and serve our club. He is willing to answer any related questions that members may have, feel free to contact him at any time.

Our club membership has grown well and it continues to grow. We now have two hundred members, plus or minus a few. Our future today seems sound, but we must continue to support the breed in shows, increase club interaction and remain diligent in preserving this wonderful breed through quality breeding practices. DCA members, you can lead the way in the preservation and promotion of the Dominique. May each of you have a great summer, take care.

BRYAN K. OLIVER, Secretary/Newsletter Editor