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The UK Spanish Chicken Breeders Group Newsletter 2

As previously advertised to breeders (apologies for delays)

1ST SPANISH BREEDERS GROUP MEETING

Wednesday 25th September 2019

@ National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Warwickshire. CV8 2LZ

10:30 - 16:00

FIRST SPANISH BREEDERS GROUP MEETING / WORKSHOP

You will remember that the 3 year Spanish Breeding programme was agreed at a kick off meeting in April 2018. This follows on from the success of the 3 year Andalusian Breeding programme which finished successfully in April 2018.

Their breeding programme was so successful it was extended at that meeting held at The National Agricultural Centre. At that meeting it was also agreed that a further 3 breeds would start a 3 year breeding programme using the Andalusian programme as a template. North Holland Blue, Marsh Daisy & Spanish were the 3 breeds chosen.

In July the Marsh Daisy group had their first breeders meeting. It was agreed to use the facilities of The Rare Breed Survival Trust at National Agricultural Centre. This location was chosen as it was located centrally within the UK thus making access "easier" for all.

I am sure the breeders who travelled from Cornwall & Kent still didn't feel it was very "central" but they showed great spirit by supporting the event.

The format of our day will follow more of a Workshop than a meeting. The sponsors of the Spanish Breeding programme and this meeting are Rare Breed Survival Trust (RBST) & Rare Poultry Society (RPS).

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Draft Agenda

Update from RBST including progress on their new Rare Breed Poultry database which once we have numbered our birds we will be joining. This will enable us to produce a pedigree for each bird (as already exists for cattle, sheep etc.).

Update from RPS including progress on their discussions with the Poultry Club of Great Britain (PCGB) of their acceptance of wing tag numbering (which some members already use) as well as the well-established leg ring system. (Update in RPS Newsletter)

We will be joined by long established Spanish breeder & Judge Andy Marshall who will "assess" our birds.

YES THAT IS CORRECT we are encouraging breeders to bring birds, this will allow us to learn about the good and not such good points of our birds. It would be great if we could have a selection of Large Fowl black, blue & white & Bantams black & blue

Andy will also comment on the breed in general with useful tips and advice on keeping Spanish.

We will also be joined by a geneticist who will comment on traits and advise on "the way forward"

We will have a short review of how the breeding program is progressing with experiences from breeders.

Finally, we will finish with "Next Steps", what support do you need as breeders? All comments / suggestions invited.

I have recently had some requests for birds to buy or sell or swap. If you have any requirements please let me know so I can try to match up people with the stock that is available. This is an ideal opportunity for transactions as we meet in one place, this helps avoid further long distance transactions involving time and travelling costs.

PLEASE PLEASE E-mail me **NOW** before you forget!

To: spanishchickens@gmail.com

I hope you will feel able to support this event. Please also advise how many birds you would be prepared to bring.

Poultry show cages will be set up we need to know how many cages will be needed.

This is another reason that meeting in maybe a hotel in another part of the country would be impossible to organise

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Can you imagine

Currently there are no poultry breeds on the breeds at risk register ! [Farm Animal Genetic Resources Committee \(FAnGR\)](#)

Which could be very bad news for many breeds including the Spanish.

I have registered our interest to get the Spanish registered via RPS. There is a working party RPS & FAnGR, expected to finalise the process in 2020.

The Spanish breed is categorised by the RBST as a “Priority Breed”

The [Farm Animal Genetic Resources Committee \(FAnGR\)](#) publishes the [UK breeds at risk list](#)

So it is once again time to do our census so that when FAnGR start adding poultry to the list we can be one of the first .

They will need numbers of breeders, numbers of birds and locations, exactly the census information we have been asking for from our breeders. Such information may help save our birds in the event of a disease outbreak in future if the Spanish UK Flock was notified and registered.

The RPS website is being updated. A new write up for Spanish has been sent

Pedlars Prints

Colin Clark has some beautiful prints of UK Spanish chickens and are available to buy. Please call him on 01760 724169.

The photos are on our website. Here is one example



White faced Blue and White Faced White Spanish Fowl

(By Gareth Gough)

Blue and white Spanish fowl are not a new phenomenon, they've been around as long as the more familiar blacks but in much fewer numbers. The Cottage Gardener 1859 makes reference to blue and white Spanish fowl which were most numerous in the south west of Britain at the height of poultry showing in the 1800's, when there were large classes for Spanish fowl which were very popular.

Blues and whites can be more a challenge to produce than blacks if you intend showing your birds. White and blue feathers are more brittle and prone to breaking than black and can fade in the sun and show up dirt more easily.

As with blacks it is important to adhere to the breed standard, birds are often missing a good depth of slate colour in their legs and their eyes are pale rather than a rich brown as in Andalusians and Minorcas. Care needs to be taken when

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selecting birds to breed from as any defects in your foundation stock are likely to be passed on to future generations. However, as Spanish are so rare it is almost impossible to find perfect birds in black let alone blue or white.

Blacks, blues and whites can all be bred together in the same flock and will produce solid coloured progeny rather than mismarked chicks. As in most poultry breeds the blue gene is not stable and will not breed true 100%. This is the case for other breeds such as blue Andalusians and Copper blue Marans. The table below gives an indication of what you can expect to hatch out from your Spanish depending on the colour of the adult birds.

Parent Bird Colour	Predicted Chick Colour
Black x Black	100% Black
Black x Blue	75% Black; 25% Blue
Blue x Blue	50% Blue; 25% Black; 25% White
Blue x White	75% White; 25% Blue
White x White	100% White

The depth of the blue colour deems to be dependant on the colour of the parent birds. Blue to Blue matings often seem to produce the best blues as is the case in Andalusians.

As Blue and White Spanish do not have as much pigment as blacks they will not be quite as dark in the eye and leg as a really good Black Spanish. This point needs to be taken into consideration and with a great deal of perseverance and dedication it is possible to improve these very rare colours of an already rare breed.

Blue and white poultry seem to sell more easily than black birds and it is surprising that more people don't keep these colours. They are exceptionally rare and just as eye catching and unique as Blacks. A flock of mixed colour Spanish really stand out and look amazing when in good condition and you don't need to run the colours separately so are worth considering if you want to add some interest to your flock of White Faced Black Spanish fowl.



Young Black and Blue WFS



3 week old Blue Spanish chicks, note the pullet on the left is more promising and has

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a better depth of colour than the cockerel on the right.



White Faced White Spanish hen.



White faced Blue Spanish hens.

Future events:-

Breeders meeting with RBST & RPS @ Stoneleigh (CV8 2LG) on September 25th

This the first of the planned annual progress meetings of the breeders group.

National Show The 2019 National Show is to be held at the International Centre, Telford (TF3 JH) Saturday 30th November & Sunday 1st December 2019.

The National Federation of Poultry Clubs (Federation Championship Show) is to be held at Bingley Hall which is part of the Staffordshire County Showground (ST18 0BD) Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd December 2019.

Entries open for both shows in September. Class information from Paul.



Did you know.... (by Margaretha Gault)

Spanish were possibly the first birds to be taken to America? Chickens came from two routes but it is thought that the Castellana negra from which the Spanish and Minorcas are derived came first.

Archaeological research in Florida found chicken bones with the same DNA as those from 14 & 15th C sites in Spain. Their primary importance was for eggs and the Spanish are non-sitters so likely to have been favoured.

The Florida Keys is full of Spanish ship wrecks from the time. They later came via South America from Jungle fowl and Polynesia.

I had a place in the Florida Keys for most of my life and heard about the archaeology that was being done.

Chicken bones do not survive well as they are so fragile so they can't really tell if would be Castellana, a Minorca or a Spanish.

Alice Storey also did a lot of work and she established the Polynesian South American route.



This photo was published in a German book and is dated 1908

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Registrars Ramblings

- Are we losing track of eggs and birds? & therefore new breeders to our cause?
- Do you notify your customers of our breed group when selling eggs or birds?
- Do you send me their contact details so I can offer our support? Some people sell eggs and birds via E-bay / Preloved etc. (Members will have their own opinion of using this route).
- Why not sell via our website?
- People are then selling their own eggs or chicks or birds without being able to explain the breeding.

For example I was asked by a new breeder for help to get a new bloodline, they had not read the articles on the website where it explains how few bloodlines there are.

SO.... we will be adding a business card containing our contact details to the website. This you can print off, cut out, and give to new owners of eggs or birds or pass to any prospective new breeder.

Family Tree

We have also devised a family tree which we think would help breeders keep a record of their breeding. We will be uploading it to the website which you will be able to download and complete. We feel this could be a helpful tool with regard to the breeding programme.

Contact details :-

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