
4-H FANCY POULTRY CARE, SHOWMANSHIP, AND SELECTION

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Livingston County

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CHOOSING YOUR FIRST BIRD

- **Consider which breed is the best for you**
 - Bantams are great for younger showmen. They are easy to handle and typically have a great disposition
 - Don't choose a breed that will be too big for you to handle
 - All showmen will need to be able to handle their own bird! Cloverbuds can have some assistance from an older member
 - Take into consideration the amount of care that may go into keeping certain breeds "show ready"
- **Once you have decided on a breed and are ready to choose your bird, make sure it falls within the Standard of Perfection for that particular breed**
 - Check for disqualifications!
 - If your bird does end up having some disqualifications it can still be shown at the Hemlock Fair in the Pet Class

CHOOSING YOUR FIRST BIRD CONTINUED...

- **You may purchase your bird as a chick or you may choose to purchase an older bird. Here are some things to consider:**
 - Will you be purchasing from a hatchery or a breeder?
 - Both are acceptable options, but a breeder will be able to guarantee the bird falls within the Standard of Perfection. They may also offer to help you with your new project
 - Do you have the facilities to brood your chicks?
 - If you purchase an older bird it may be used to going to shows
 - If you choose to purchase chicks, pullets, or cockerels make sure they will be mature enough to be judged at the fair
 - This is dependent on the breed and not the age of the bird

CARING FOR YOUR SHOW BIRD

- **Housing**
 - Depending on the size of the bird they will require different spacing (larger birds = more space)
 - Fresh water should be provided at all times
 - Make sure their coop is ready for winter! Some breeds do not tolerate the cold well
- **Your bird should be fed a balanced diet appropriate for their breed type and age**
 - There are a lot of different feed/grain options. Don't be afraid to ask a nutritionist or feed rep for help!
- **Check your birds for external parasites regularly!**
 - All birds are health checked prior to entering the small animal barn at the hemlock fair. If your bird has external parasites it will be sent home!
 - If you find external parasites on your bird treat them right away. There are several different sprays and dusts available to treat them.

CARING FOR YOUR SHOW BIRD

- **6-8 weeks prior to the fair/show you should begin to train your bird.**
 - You need to be able to handle and examine your bird for showmanship. The bird should cooperate throughout your showmanship presentation
 - You also need to train your bird to “pose” properly
 - Each breed standard has a particular pose each bird should be able to replicate. They may not automatically stand in pose. You will need to work with them
- **3-5 days prior to the fair/show your bird needs to be washed and groomed (see the video on the next slide)**



Show Preparation

Washing

Items Needed:

- 2-3 tubs or a sink
- Warm, **NOT HOT**, water
- Mild shampoo (baby shampoo works very well)
- Soft, non-abrasive brushes
- Towels
- Blow dryer (optional)
- Bluing (used to make white chickens whiter)

EVALUATING YOUR BIRD

- **American Standard of Perfection**
 - Classifies and describes the standard physical appearance, coloring and temperament for all recognized breeds of poultry in North America
- **This book will tell you exactly what your breed of bird should look like**
 - Study the standard and then compare your bird to the standard
 - These comparisons (good or bad) are great talking points for your showmanship presentation

WHAT IS SHOWMANSHIP?



<https://youtu.be/Mk7e2agO3bl>

COMPONENTS OF A SHOWMANSHIP PRESENTATION – PART I



<https://youtu.be/4Lw8PZ-6vdM>

COMPONENTS OF A SHOWMANSHIP PRESENTATION – PART 2



https://youtu.be/KPcl5upd_gQ

SHOWMANSHIP EXAMPLE - I



<https://youtu.be/ZDmAuhLEb6g>

SHOWMANSHIP EXAMPLE - 2



<https://youtu.be/-BPFQgB6yf4>

SHOWMANSHIP TIPS & TRICKS

- **Know your breed! Especially if you are a senior showman!**
 - Seniors should be able to tell the judge the history of their breed as well
- **Be prepared to properly handle your bird. You will also need to be able to properly place your bird in a cage and remove them from the cage**
- **Know their pose! When your bird is in the cage it should be posing**
- **If your bird has a defect or disqualification talk about it! This is a GREAT talking point and shows that you have studied the Standard of Perfection**

SHOWMANSHIP TIPS & TRICKS

- **Be sure to ask the judge if they have any questions once you are done**
- **Never use a bird for showmanship that is flighty or is too big for you to handle**
 - Hint – use the calm bird!
- **Practice, Practice, Practice**
 - Find a showmanship scoring rubric and plan your showmanship presentation from that
- **Remember to stay calm and have fun!**



- **If you have any further questions please contact:**

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