



## Gurney Davis Speaks

Recently, I alluded to our Breeder's Directory and commented on the number of breeders willing and able to share stock. For those breeders listed, I indicated what they have to sell (i.e. eggs, chicks, or older birds). I also listed their primary emphasis: exhibition, production, or genetic preservation. I would like to add some comments.

First, exhibition. Poultry shows according to the Poultry Press "are the show windows of the Standard Bred Poultry Industry". Shows are where we hear about and see in real life the various standard breeds of Poultry. If a breed is seen and admired at a show, interest in that breed can lead to new owners and breeders. If a breed is absent then it is not seen and most likely no interest is created. Usually it is "out of sight, out of mind". So I think exhibitions of Dominique's are very important to the growth of the breed. I encourage each of you to find the poultry club in your area, join it and show your Dominique's. Make new friends and have fun. Make sure people have Dominique's to look at when attending shows.

Second, Production. People expect chickens to lay eggs. So from the "Standard for Utility Breeds", which includes the Dominique, we expect production. I had a different breed for a while. They were supposedly a "better" laying breed. They were the show strain and I soon concluded that show was about all they were good for. Didn't lay as good as my Doms so my fling with another breed was short-lived. They just didn't measure up to the Dominique's. So here too I think production is important in keeping people's interest in the breed.

Third, genetic preservation. I'm not a show person at heart. In fact the main reason I show is to promote the breed. If there is a show "by crackie there ought to be several Dominikers there". As for production, so far, the commercial poultry industry has managed to feed us pretty well. I don't feel 100% comfortable with it, however. I think the system may be more fragile than we know, not to mention what the poultry is fed. I'm a homesteader at heart. I like having my own chickens and eggs.

Back to genetic conservation, most of you know we almost lost the Dominique. If not for a very small handful of hard-headed breeders, the Dominique would not be here for us now or for anyone, ever, in the future. Those folks did their part; NOW, now, it's our turn: My turn, your turn. If we don't breed and preserve, it's good bye Dominique's – forever. We need to realize it could happen. Dozens of breeds of domestic livestock have become extinct. So exhibition, production and genetic preservation are all important.

Poultry judge, Mr. Will Burton from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, referred to the Dominique in a recent report on his club's poultry show. He referred to the Dominique as "this magnificent old breed". Let's all take a turn in preserving and promoting "this magnificent old breed".

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