



**RAOUL & XAVIER VERSTRAETE
TOP QUESTIONS**

How do you eliminate the bad pigeons? do you cull them while they are young?

Answer:

Every pigeon has to be healthy. Sick pigeons will never become good racers. If the pigeon doesn't radiate health, you can eliminate the pigeon. The selection is made on various aspects.

- Check the quality of the faeces in the morning. When the faeces is liquid, the pigeon is sick and it's better to kill the pigeon. If you are not 100% sure, you can put the pigeon in quarantine, for 1 or 2 days. Only 1/100 pigeons cure. Don't be afraid to kill! You will never kill a champion!
- Check the general healthiness

A ace champion, is also a champion in health.

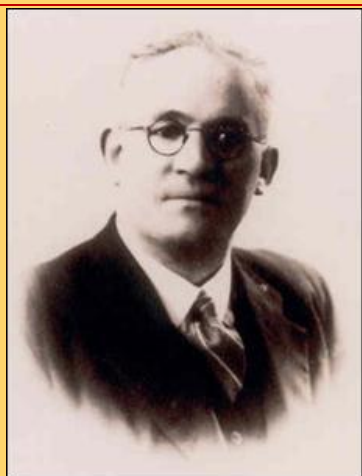


We all want to give these **babies as great a start as possible**, and I'd like to share with our readers some valuable recommendations from Professor P. De Backer, a pigeon veterinarian at the University of Ghent in Belgium,.....page # 13



Picture 1

"The History of the Belgian Racing Pigeons"
Varied opinions of the wing theory after 20 years of pigeon racing.
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Jan Aarden Biography
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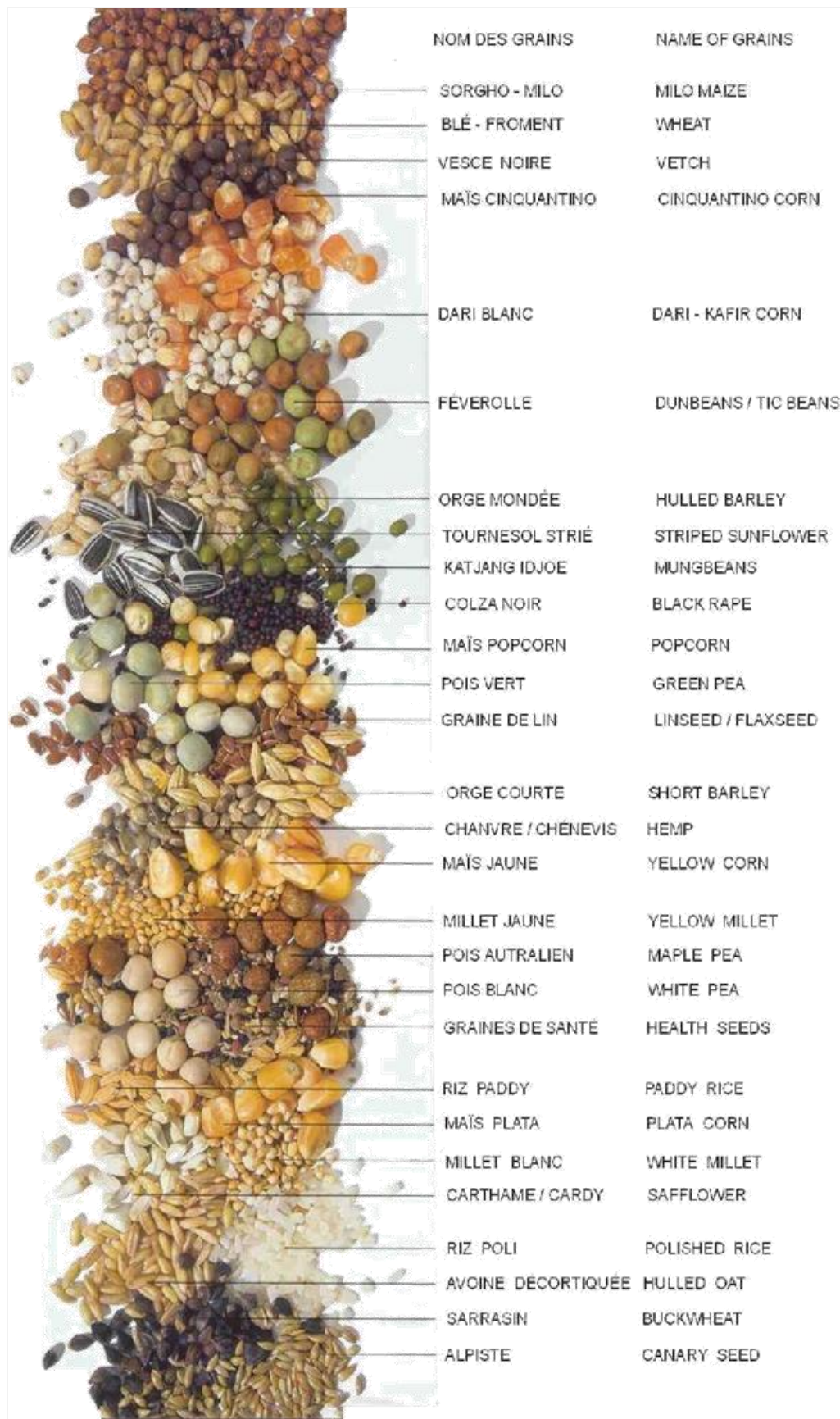
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NOMBRE DEL
GRANO

TRIGO

MAIZ

MILO MAIZ

CHICHARO

CEBADA
SEMILLA DE
CALABAZA

COLZA
MAIZ PALOMITAS

CHICHARO VERDE
LINAZA

CEBADA/CON
CASCARA

MAIZ AMARILLO

MILLO AMARILLO
CHICHARO
AUSTRALIANO

ARROZ

MILLO BLANCO
CARTAMO

ARROZ PULIDO
AVENA

TRIGO SARCENO
ALPISTE

SECRETS OF THE MASTERS



RAOUL & XAVIER VERSTRAETE
TOP QUESTIONS

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A ace champion, is also a champion in health.

I fly five races between 600 and 800 km in a season with the same team, my question for you: is better to breed youngsters or not before I put the bird on total widowhood? Thanks you, Dan

Answer:

I think it's better to couple the pigeons before the season. And +/- 7 days on their eggs. The start of the moulting comes one month later. This is important for the last long distance races.

Breed with the race pigeons after the season.

Dear Sir, How you select pigeons to put in breeders? What first characteristic of pigeons quality you look, what second what third..... You are use imbreeding or linebreeding for stock birds or pair best to best? You are keep your best pair of breeders some years together or change partners every year?

Answer:

1th: The race results.

2th: The quality of the feathers.

3th: Deep and small troath

4th: The total picture. Balance, body, everything...

Not all good pigeons are extremely beautiful

What do you think is it better to train pigeons, train car 30-50 miles /once or twice a week/, or fly around the house/hour morning and afternoon hours/ during the race season?

Answer:

It's best you train by car. How more, how better.

Orientation has to be trained, not the muscles in particular. If the pigeons train at home, and they are gone for like half an hour, that's very good, and it isn't necessary to train by car.

Some sprinters are often only good to fly 4 or 5 hours. Would you pair such pigeons with overnight racers in the hope to have a pigeon capable to fly all day or will it be a waste of time with such pairings.

Answer:

The mix of pigeons for long distance 1000 km and middle distance 500km won't give you good pigeons for 750 km. That won't work and it's better that you don't waste your time with it.

Every pigeon has its limits. You have to select/buy pigeons for 750-800 km if you want to race that distance.

An all-round pigeon is not easy to find. We have the mix of the Topstar-Xtra line, but we had to search and try for 30 years. **My name is Basilis from Greece i have a question for you what happens when we pair up 2 simplings can they give us good pigeons or not. When we pair up 2 pigeons with same eyes what happens then can we get good youngsters from them?**

Answer:

Breeding with pigeons of the same family can be good to amplify good qualities. I don't think that it's important to look at the eyes. There are more important things than the eyes. The wings, the will, the character, the muscles, the body, the brain, the quality of the feathers, the healthiness...

Hallo Mr.Raoul and Mr.Xavier, the my question is very simple, what is possible stay at the top level for 30 years? good pigeons of course, but you have a secret? Many greetings at you Xavier and veel gooi prizes met duiven!!!! Ciao Sergio

Answer:

The basics are of course good pigeons. Build a good loft where you can change the conditions depending the weather. You can also race with the hens as youngsters, yearlings or old birds. Hens are more important than cocks. Not at all, 1st prize winners are born from 1st prize winner families. Selection always starts at races from 450 - 500 kilometers minimum.

Think like a pigeon and you will understand the needs. You can bring motivation into the game.

I wish you and your Italian sport friends all the luck over the next years.

The origin and history of American Racing Pigeon Union

To appreciate the reasons for the formation of the American Racing Pigeon Union, you must first know something about the history of pigeon racing in the United States.

In the 1860s, homing pigeons were imported from Europe. By 1872 the first club was formed to conduct races, but most fanciers flew pigeons individually or in challenge matches. The largest concentration of fanciers was in Philadelphia where in 1880, the Red Star Club held a pigeon show at which those in attendance agreed on the formation of "The Atlantic Federation of Homing Pigeon Societies" to conduct a concourse race. The first race in 1881 was a success. The following year one club won a majority of prizes and there were many losses, resulting in termination of the annual race.

In 1883, the Federation was reorganized as "The Federation of Homing Pigeon Fanciers of America." The new organization was designed to maintain a permanent registry of the speed records at each distance and to administer all flights for record purposes.

The Federation race secretary controlled all flights for record. He appointed the liberator, obtained surveys, confirmed proof of arrival, and either checked or computed speeds. Individuals shipped their birds to him for countermarking and he forwarded them for liberation. In areas where sufficient numbers of fanciers resided, he appointed race committees under his supervision to handle countermarking and confirm arrivals. The Secretary published the annual records and recognized the fastest speeds obtained at each distance on a cumulative basis. In 1886 the first seamless band was manufactured, and in 1887 the Federation began selling seamless bands. The bands were marked with a letter of the alphabet, which indicated the year of issue, and were consecutively numbered.

Initially, a stamp with identifying marks was placed on a primary flight of birds entered in competition. Later, metal countermarks were introduced. Arrival of a race bird was confirmed by either carrying the bird, if a flight stamp or countermark was used, to a telegraph office and asking the agent to telegraph the time, and the stamp or countermark as displayed to him, to the National Secretary. An allowance of six minutes per mile was granted to transport the bird or countermark from the loft to the telegraph office, but bicycles or other means of transportation were prohibited. Where available, an individual known as a "timer" would be assigned to wait at the loft and record the time of arrival using a watch supplied to him by either the District Race Committee or the National Race Secretary.



HISTORY COLOMBOFILIA

G.I. Joe

(March 24, 1943 in Algiers)

G.I. Joe was a racing pigeon noted for his service in the United States Army Pigeon Service.

During WWII, G.I. Joe saved the lives of the inhabitants of the village of Calvi Vecchia, Italy, and of the British troops occupying it. The village was scheduled to be bombarded by the Allied forces on 18 Oct. 1943, but the message that the British had captured the village, delivered by G.I. Joe, arrived just in time to avoid the bombing. Over a thousand people were saved.

In November 1946, G.I. Joe was presented the Dickin Medal for gallantry by the Lord Mayor of London. After WWI, he was housed at the U.S. Army's Churchill Loft at Fort Monmouth in New Jersey along with 24 other heroic pigeons. He died at the Detroit Zoological Gardens at the age of 18, and is mounted and on display at the U.S. Army Communications Electronics Museum at Fort Monmouth.



BIOGRAPHYS



Jan Aarden Story!

The Dutch overnight long distance pigeons are the best in the world! Decades of selection and specialization did the job! The pigeons of Jan Aarden played an important role in the development of these almost unbeatable Marathon pigeons. In the next weeks a well-known Dutch long distance champ will tell you everything about the details! A must for every top fancier in the world!

Introduction Jan Aarden

Although the race results of Jan Aarden were good, they were of not of top-level! A few good results but no consistency in the results. Jan Aarden was a real gentleman. He runner together with his wife the Aarden Hotel in Steenberg. He also had a job as bookkeeper. The Aarden Hotel still exists and every year a lot of pigeon fanciers from the whole world visit this place with historic value! The main question is: where did the famous long distance pigeons of Jan Aarden come from? The answer is clear and simple. Piet de Weerd brought him the best material of the world of that moment and advised him where to buy pigeons! Jan Aarden had the patience and skills to build with these pigeons his famous breeding loft! Racing is silver, breeding is gold! Pigeons of Oomens (Delbar-Deguffroy), Delbar (oa via Dusarduijn and Wagemaker), Stichelbaut and Meesters (from Zesentachtig maal het Silvervosje) and later on Burgemeester Boels, were the main source.

Why became the name of Aarden so famous, even more than 50 years after the top-period of his own loft?

The reason is simple. A bit of PR and a dozen of top fanciers in the neighbourhood of Steenberg were extremely successful with the Aarden pigeons and a few built up their own Aarden based strain. The quality and successes of these pigeons were distributed like a "snowball" through the country. It was especially a **few golden couples that made Jan Aarden famous**. Here they follow. They were extremely important for the successes that had to come and for the further story.



SILVERVOSJE

SECRETS OF CHAMPIONS

THE JANSSEN BRO.

The feeding of the birds is by far the most important part. Most of the fanciers give their birds too much food. It is extremely important to feed the birds in a way that they always have their ideal weight. Their feeding-schedule for the short- and middle-distance races is as follows: On Monday and Tuesday, very light grains; after that, bit by bit, some more energy in the food; and on Saturday morning only small seeds. Charel gives an extra tip by telling that you must be sure birds, when shipped, do not have too much food, otherwise they get thirsty in the basket. The Janssen Brothers mix their own food; all kinds of grains stay separated in bags in the attic, and daily they turn it by mixing it with a stick. The feeding time is adapted to the season. According to the Janssen, it's not important if you feed them at daylight or with electric light, but for them, they stay with nature as long as they can. Important, however, is that the birds get fed always at the same time of the day.

The birds get in the winter: 31% corn, 38% barley, 15% wheat, and 15% beans. In the summer: 30% corn, 25% English peas, 27% wheat, 13% barley, and 5% beans.

Special Things

The well is, as you have read, the secret weapon for the pigeons. The pigeons always get this water, and one time a week also as bathing water. In the bathwater is always a big spoon of salt. At first they gave Aviol in the drinking water, but later on they stopped that. The whole year long, the pigeons get on Sunday honey in the drinking water. Once a week they give carrots cut in very little pieces; other vegetables they never give. In all the sections the pigeons can eat Vitamineral as much as they want, also grit with a spoon of salt mixed in. Pickstone they also give, but never on the day of shipping because otherwise the birds would get thirsty in the basket.

"Strong Jan" Grondelaers

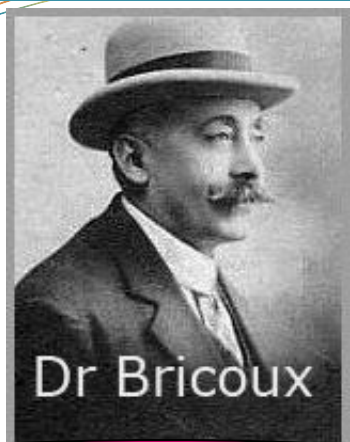
"All you need are good pigeons, and the rest is secondary to that. You should give them as little medication as possible. Personally, I've been a regular visitor of my own doctor, but I certainly never spent any money on a veterinarian. However, I did put some Ridsol or Emtryl in the birds' drinking jar depending on the weather, their condition on returning home or after they had been in their lofts for 5 nights on end. But of course, if your racing pigeons do well rumors will start to spread. In 1963 the police searched my house looking for performance enhancing drugs. I thought it was ridiculous, but had to put up with it nevertheless.

I do, however, believe in the use of vitamins. I use Supradyn, an effervescent tablet. It's easy to apply and you don't have to worry about dragging along little bottles and such. I also vaccinate my pigeons against chicken pox and paramyxo. In 1960 I did a large test and had the droppings of each of my 150 pigeons individually examined. Birds that had coccidiosis were quietly eliminated. I learned quite a bit back then. One could say that I had 5 cracks during my career. My pigeons never had any problems. A good pigeon is always healthy. If you ask me, it's the pigeons that put themselves to their limits that are most susceptible to disease.

"witbuik"
superbreeder
Jan Aarden.
Batenburg



NL81-1533120
©Foto: Martin Kwskemaat



FRANCE DR. BRICOUX
7/03/1909-21/6/1985



Bricoux

The strain to be looked at in this piece is the Bricoux strain which reigned supreme in Belgium in particular between the two world wars i.e. approximately 1919 and 1939. During that time Dr. Bricoux was unbeatable based upon the truth that he was an outstanding breeder of racing pigeons, the base of which arose from the exchanging of young birds with the great French champion Paul Sion. And as time passed, the intelligent Doctor won 14 Nationals, was 2nd in Nationals twelve times and scored in the top twenty on approximately 125 occasions.

Being a doctor, however, Bricoux had his critics arising from the phenomenal results of his pigeons even to the extent of being accused of using drugs to increase his loft's potential. His superiority, though, arose from the fact that he was a maestro at the widowhood method and held the reputation of being one of the first to use it in Belgium. As for his young birds they were never raced but well trained and given time to mature. The yearlings were raced from the nest whereas those two years and older were sent as widowers to the long distance races, for he was of the belief that there were horses for courses and that one had to specialize.

Inbreeding was his preferred breeding method although he acknowledged that a cross had to be brought in at sometime. The outcross had to be from an inbred or linebred family, in general, preferring well built pigeons with sound constitutions coupled with broad and rounded backs and rigid vents. This was the standard of what he required in a pigeon; nevertheless, he would not adhere to it rigidly for there was always room for pragmatism in Bricoux's thinking.

When one looks at the results obtained by this great strain under the tutelage of its founder one realizes that this was a master of his art for he produced champions like the great 'Kleine Geschelpte' which was sent on five occasions to the Pau National and won on the five occasions. A super pigeon! Then there was the famous 'Rode Libourne' which was 4th National from Angouleme in 1930 followed in 1932 and 1933 with National wins from Angouleme and Bordeaux respectively. Another of his great birds was the 'Goede Rode Bricoux' which scored a 2nd and a 4th National. Of course, the master breeder was the world famous 'Jules Caesar', a red cock of magnificent physique. Red was one of Bricoux's favorite colors because quite a number of the strains winners were of this hue and as such were nicknamed 'The Red Locomotives.'

THE DIGESTIVE APPARATUS - THE DIGESTIVE FLORA by Ing. Duchatel J. P. -

The digestive apparatus - the digestive flora

The digestive routes of the birds, as well as those of the mammals, they lodge a microbiological flora hard. In the birds, one has frequently studied the flora of the hens and the chicks. This it is in fact a profitable animal and the investigations on its digestive system, have had as it puts, the reduction of the production costs. Although the digestive system of the hen, difference of the one of the dove (the dove has in contrast to the hen, single two rudimentary blind coats), can be extrapolated some Of this form, the digestive microflora can be divided in three groups:

- A flora, that can be denominated like dominant, because it is 90% of the total flora. Among them is specially the Lactobacilos.

- A flora, which is not "dominant" and single he is 1% of the total population. In her we found, among others, to Escherichia coli and the Estreptococos.

- Flora, that is rest, because the values of the population in tracto digestive are 1/10,000 and among them they are the leavenings (Candida), fungi and inclusively bacteria, that have a determined force, to cause disease. These are general animal determinations different, are individual variations, specially because determined bacteria they have not been possible to determine. This flora, which practically lives in a free oxygen atmosphere, forms the digestive ecosystem. For her survival, she uses the nutrients that there are in the digestive routes and are certain, by different factors. So that the bacteria that acquire themselves to the birth, are those that have the greater opportunity, of colon

This digestive ecosystem is in balance and normally remains constant, during all the life of an adult animal. But this balance can be disturbed, when the bird undergoes aggressions: nutricionales stress, imbalances, massive antibiotic provision and substances that disturb the value of pH of the intestine (salts of the bath, among others). In these cases, it is reduced to the resistance to bacteria and certain bacteria, like for example the Escherichia coli, which single delay, can get to be active. Then, the factors that disturb the balance of the intestinal flora, have a repercussion in the health of the animal.

As conclusions can be said, that the digestive microflora protects against infections and that certain fault in the balance of the populations of microorganisms in the digestive system, can be responsible for a diminution in the resistance. This is for example the case, in the industrial production of birds, which moves away of the natural conditions and break that balance.

It is had by this, immediately begins the birth of new doves, to foment the formation of a protective and useful intestinal flora. For that reason we avoided, before and during the reproduction, the provision frequents and unnecessary of antibiotics and antiseptics. When the treatments are necessarily indispensable, then we must allow, who the intestinal flora, first of all the one that is very important for the dove, as is it the one of the crop, is possible to be recovered before the mating.

The massive antibiotic use can be said definitively, that in the reproducers, has an indirect negative effect, in the future generations.

This is perhaps an explanation, by which some colombófilos never are successful, inclusively when they gather eggs, of famous colombófilos.

By: Ing. Duchatel J. P.

Taken from the magazine "gut Flug", published June 1,978 in Belgium and translated of the German by Silvia Toro Trujillo.





March in the Loft

Breeders that have been carefully paired in lofts all across the U.S. are reaping one of the most exciting rewards of the time and money and effort that they devote to our sport, and that is babies hatching. American fanciers everywhere acknowledge the legendary status of Belgian pigeon racers, and the enormous contributions that Belgian avian veterinarians have made to the health regimens that keep our birds breeding and racing.

We all want to give these **babies as great a start as possible**, and I'd like to share with our readers some valuable recommendations from Professor P. De Backer, a pigeon veterinarian at the University of Ghent in Belgium, along with my own commentary and suggestions. The following seven recommendations focus on what the savvy fancier can do to make a baby pigeon's start as strong as possible and give it a great advantage in future competition.

#1: From age 5 to 6 days until they are 25 to 26 days old, **each baby should get an Ideal pill every other day**. This gives them an excellent mix of mineral and vitamin supplements that improves their health tremendously. Wean your youngsters at the age of 25 to 26 days, because feeding youngsters is a big job for the parent birds. If they are going to be as vigorous in raising their third and fourth rounds as they are with their first, they need to have each round taken away from them as soon as possible.

Separation from the parents is very stressful for the young birds, so make sure that everything possible is done to make the new babies feel completely safe and at home. Since at this age they cannot fly, they will spend all of their time on the floor of the weaning loft. Place some straw or bedding material (tobacco stems are excellent) on the floor so that the babies can pile on and snuggle up. This close contact with other babies will help to ease the stress of being removed from their parents. The straw will help to keep them warm and the tobacco stems can help to keep parasites away.



"The History of the Belgian Racing Pigeons"**Varied opinions of the wing theory after 20 years of pigeon racing. Part I**

We have not departed from our costum to investigate every conclusion beforehand, and have never made a rash decision and also have never been strongly influenced with the different theories put forward with much publicity, hoping to find a ready market and financial gain. Up to the present time, as we are writing this, we have never, after being in the pigeonsport for over 20 years, rued the day of our innate caution on this point.

The wing theory, as all preceeding theories, have had, from the first moment they were proclaimed (1936 - '37), our fullest attention.

In that period, one talked a lot about the lengt of the wing (shoulder to wing top). For two years we have visited many lofts, were we examined many good short, middle and long distance pigeons. The main reason for our visits were, to measure the length of the wings. The loft visits, we undertook for our own instruction, have once and for all confirmed our opinion concerning the value that can be attached to the length of the wing and by the fact that neither the prophets of the wing theory nor the many sportsman, that followed them head over heels, have never been able to prove the correctness of the percepts which must have formed the foundation of the wing theory school to prove results.

I don't like to be cruel to give any names but many fanciers, some with big names still proclaim this theory. The war interfered, many fanciers held up their expectations. But some of the partisans of the wing theory, had the opportunity to try out pairings which bred youngsters with much longer wings than the already know medium sized ones. We have visited lofts in one town where the wings of several pigeons - properly measured - exceeded 26 cM.

Before the war, there was not enough time to have real " efficient " pigeons ready for racing. But now that the war was over, one should experience how the " efficient " pigeons would overshadow their rivals which were not endowed with the same wings. The efficient pigeons, since ten years bred with so much perseverance, should dictate the law in all races.

But what did we see at the resumption of the pigeon sport in the first years after the last war ? Don't misunderstand me but my memory is rather strong.

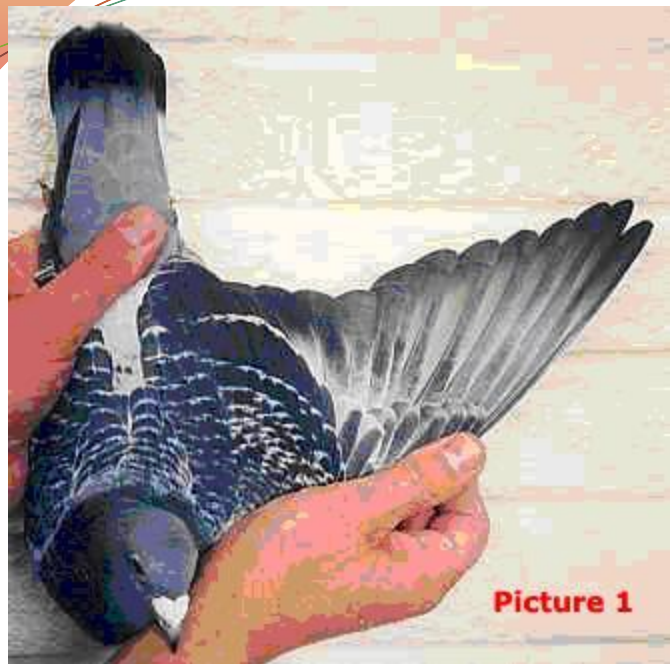
We have seen it happen, that all those long flighted pigeons of which one made such a upheove were easily beaten on all distances. The promoters of the wing theory made a laughing stock of themselves during the racing season and we are really still waiting for a revelation from of the many fanciers that sacreficed everything to this theory.

Confirmation in practice, since long prophetically proclaimed but could not be proved during the war years, did turn out to be a disaster for all apostles who had sworn on the efficiency of the wing theory as on a god.

After this, the promoters of the wing theory paused and collected themselves and them proclaimed, that the wing length alone was not sufficient and to make the performances more complicated and to have escape routes handy, they then drew up twelve points for the wing theory.

It started with a short fore-arm, a rear wing as short as possible with flat smoothed cover feathers which must be of a good quality, the last four flight feathers must not be too bread on the base, but with broad ends and as much as possible of the same length so that they form a four headed wing.

Those last four flight feathers must be very straigth and the last one must beslightly bent outwards. An to conclude, the lenght of the wing must reach for the cocks 25 cM and for the hens 24 cM. So the followers of the wing theory could start all over again. Firstly they had to obtain a pigeon which fulfilled those twelve points and then they could start a new culture. For the doubting Thomas, like we are, because we take nothing for granted without proof, this ment new experiments and observations, more complicated than the first ones. The IVth " Salon van de Belgische Reisduif " (The fourth show of the Belgium Racing Pigeon), that was organized in that period gave the right opportunity to continue the so necessary confrontation. The best 25 pigeons were weighed, measured and photo's were taken from different angles. And what was the result of this investigation, that was executed with all the objectivity and impartiality ? Its showed that the weight, stubborness and body structure of one champion to the other can be so different, also the form, position and direction of the flight feathers.



When we took the chance to measure and photograph the wings, we came to the same conclusion and we are forced to put exactly the same blame to a theory that was supposed to make every thing as plain as daylight. The obstination with which the wing theory was defended, the always repeated affirmation of its infallibility, the talent with which it was explained to us, did not fail to convince us and although we are on guard, we have never been a real opponent of it. But we don't like to be dictated, no matter what the idea is. We investigate everything personally and will always stay master of our own assessments of value. Nobody can alter our own opinions and will always make our own choice, we will never say, neither by force, accomodatingness or on order, that white is black. The promoters of the wing theory were not easily defeated, on the contrary, they continued their crusade with a greater stubbornness and went so far that they trew everything over board that did not concern the wing.

It was the wing and only the wing was the motor of a pigeon that determined the performances. If it was only obstinacy and the self-complacency of some of the theorist and their misguided followers, we would let it pas with a shrug of the shoulders. But we knew too well how many fanciers and especially the young ones and novices among them were put under the banner of this illusion and we knew also of the considerable harm this theory could do to our sport. That was the reason that we gave it the finishing blow. Young fanciers came to our aid, fed with the illusion about the wing theory and confronted with the reality, disillusion, discouragement and at the end, desertion followed. The result of the investigate made in the Fourth Belgium Racing Pigeon show,



must for that reason enlighten all the victims of an already at the beginning still-born school, that more factors than the wing alone make a champion. There was no better remedy than to try to obtain the advice of some of the greatest champions, and put this question to them : Which are the three best qualities you require of a pigeon ? This question was already put to some Belgium champions in 1939 and here follow their answers, which are, from more than one point of view, very important.

TAKING CARE OF THE YOUNGSTER

In our loft, we dip our youngsters in a mild solution of 57% Malathion and warm water just as we take them from their parents. This warm water solution is not stressful to the babies. In fact, it seems to have a calming effect on them. Since they are wet, it is necessary to keep them in a warm environment, but the **Malathion keeps them free of all external parasites for months**. In less than an hour, they are dry, clean, happy and all snuggled up with their loft mates.

#2: About 14 days after separation from their parents, **all baby pigeons should be treated for canker**. 1-1/2 teaspoons per liter of water of Ridzol-S, or Turbosole from the Australian Pigeon Company (1 1/2 teaspoons per gallon of water for 3 to 5 days). Either of these should go far in taking care of any possible outbreak of this most insidious disease. Make sure that several drinkers are placed on the floor of the loft, where the babies can easily access them. We place three one-liter drinkers on the floor of our young bird section, which is 5'x 9'.

Be very mindful of the youngsters that stay in the corners of the loft or those whose eyes are constantly squinting. These youngsters have not found the drinkers yet and need to be assisted with their first drink. (When we find a "squinting" youngster, we take its head gently between our thumb and forefinger and place the tip of its beak in the drinker. As soon as the baby's tongue gets wet, it will drink like mad, and will never forget where the water is.)

#3: For the first fourteen days after a baby has been weaned from its parents, it should be given the same feed as its parents, for example, a breeding mix, or breeding mix with added corn. After fourteen days, the mix can be switched to a standard young bird mix of about 14-16% protein. Keep in mind that pigeons should "go to bed with a light meal," not the other way around.

It is also important to remember that **young pigeons should be fed lightly and sparingly**. To overfeed a youngster leads to disaster. This concerns their health as well as their discipline in the loft, as young pigeons should be taught to listen as soon as they are weaned. Always use some method of calling to the birds when you are feeding them. In this way, they associate the call with the feed and learn to listen to the fancier. Some fanciers use whistles, some shake a tin full of feed, some whistle with their mouth and others just talk to the birds.

Whatever method you decide to use, **do it at every feeding**. This can only serve to help create the bond of understanding that is so necessary as the babies grow up and take to the air.



BASIC FUNDAMENTALS TO BUILD A GOOD SOUND RACING PIGEON LOFT

1. Ventilation. Your birds need fresh air as much as food and water. Study existing loft photos, diagrams in books and visit with fanciers in your area to talk about the best ways to keep your loft ventilated. Some type of opening (roofline vents, sidewall vents or exhaust fans) in the roof or near to top of the loft will allow hot air to escape in the summer. The aviary will also serve to get the birds fresh air, as well as the much needed sunshine. No one knows better than Mother Nature how to keep your birds healthy and happy.

2. Dry. In everything that you do, as yourself, will my loft stay dry? Moisture is the number one culprit when it comes to sick birds. Nothing good comes from dampness and wetness in a loft. Do everything in your power to keep the inside of your loft dry at all times. The best way to get a good start at this is to keep the loft elevated off the ground. Using a pair of stacked cinder blocks will get your loft about 18" -- 24" off the ground and this is good. It allows air to circulate under the loft, and thereby helping to keep it dry. Also, a wood floor (plywood, etc) will help absorb moisture from the droppings, and that goes a long way in keeping the loft dry.

3. Easy to clean. For most people, it will be important to keep the loft scraped clean several times a week, if not every day. There are other techniques, such as deep litter, that can be explored later, but to start, keep in mind that you will clean almost every day, and make sure the loft is easy to clean. Wood floors are easy to scrap clean and as they absorb moisture. Dry droppings are easier to clean than wet ones, and as in #2 above, dry is important. DO NOT use a formica type material for floors, perches or any area in the loft where birds will walk, sit, etc. The smooth surface, while easy to scrape, will not allow the droppings to dry quickly and will end up being more of a mess than they are worth.

4. Sunshine. If possible, try to locate and orient your loft so that the aviary or front of the loft faces south or southeast. This will give your birds the maximum exposure to sunshine, and especially in the winter time when the sun is short and low on the horizon, will help keep the loft warm, dry and as enjoyable for the birds as possible.



Vitamins and Medications

(Article By Craig @ Breakaway Loft)

With the birds on the darkening system, I feel they need plenty of vitamins to help in the production and growth of feather and body structure (size). I give vitamins 2 to 3 times per week to all my birds, breeders, old birds and young birds, all year-round.

I use Windsmore vitamins and an electrolyte poultry vitamin. I also use Red Cell, which is an iron rich horse vitamin. I purchase the Red Cell at a Farm Supply store. I also use apple cider vinegar and minced garlic. I buy these at the local grocery store.

The past two years, I have been using Acid Pack. I have been using it in place of the apple cider vinegar, that I used to use. It neutralized the PH in the water. I use it only with my young birds during the summer while I am training them.

All of these are added to the pigeons' water. I don't worry about mixing them together. The birds will drink the water no matter what is in it.

I am also using the Chisolm Train Health Blend. It comes in a powder form. I mist my feed with corn oil from a spray bottle, then sprinkle the powder on the feed and shake it up so that the powder is disbursed throughout the feed equally. I have been using this every day all year long with all of my pigeons for several years.

You need to be careful with medications. I have heard of people over-dosing their birds and killing them. Stay with the recommended amounts on the package. If it does not say, call and find out. Don't take a chance of killing your birds or hurting them for life.

I use Emtryl and Ridzol-s for canker, alternating them. For E-coli, coccidiosis, canker and paratyphoid, I use Dacoxine. This is a four in one medicine. For respiratory, I use Spiradac. With young birds, canker is the biggest problem and then coccidiosis.

Quality Birds

For many years, I flew pigeons that I obtained from local flyers in my club and from friends, for free. These birds were helpful to me in getting started in racing pigeons and I even did quite well with them back in the 1970's. Since I was a teenager at this time, my parents were financing most of my pigeon costs.

Later, after I was married and attending college, I couldn't afford to spend money to buy pigeons. I barely had enough money to keep the birds fed. I flew each season, but I wasn't successful anymore and that frustrated me. I knew I needed some better birds to compete, but was unable to get them at this time.

After I started my teaching career and had a family to support, I still didn't have much money to spend on birds. Good quality pigeons are expensive and we just didn't have any extra money to pay for them. I knew there had to be a way for me to get some good birds.

My wife and I decided that the best way for me to get pigeons was to receive them for gifts, so each year for Christmas, my birthday and Father's Day I have been receiving pigeons as my gifts. This has let me purchase some of the finest pigeons available so that I can fly competitively.

Most of my birds have been acquired from Frank McLaughlin. He has traveled to champion lofts all over the world where he has purchased the best strains of pigeons as close to the source as possible.

I have been more successful flying since I started purchasing quality birds. You will be too. It is worth the investment. The competition is much more intense now than it ever has been before. If you are still flying the same birds that you were flying in the 1970's, you are most likely just flying for fun. If you want to win, you need to add some new breeding stock to get quality that can be competitive in the 2000's. Flying pigeons is much more fun when you are winning. I would be happy to help you get your hands on some excellent pigeons. Call me or send me an email.

By Craig @ Breakaway Loft

GOLDEN GIRL

AU 2000 NPL 2240
Janssen



Breakaway Loft

Josef Hofmann, a German eye sign enthusiast, shares many ideas with Jack Barkel, our South African pigeon friend, such as the need for breeders to have a small pupil, a well developed circle of adaptation (preferably with serrated edges), and the usefulness of eye sign for finding the breeders in one's loft. Both concede that it is possible to breed very good racing pigeons without ever considering eye sign. However, both maintain that the percentage of good racing pigeons can be increased substantially by breeding only with birds with the eye sign common to good breeders.

Nevertheless, both fanciers also emphasize different aspects of the eye sign concept which does not make one right or wrong. One could look at the same eye, as I have done here, and see the attributes emphasized by various eye sign enthusiasts. Just because Josef Hofmann does not pay attention to Jack's 5 circles does not mean that the 5 circles are not there or just because Jack Barkel does not look at the "breeding grooves" of Josef Hofmann does not mean that they are absent. There may therefore be more than one road leading to Rome. This is why I try to present each eye sign concept as a whole, to present the total package and not just excerpts.

Mr Hofmann likes a small pupil as already mentioned, a well developed circle of adaptation with serrated edges as well as speed and distance lines, and a very thick iris with "breeding grooves" which are black or dark in color. The circle of adaptation can be white, grey, black or yellow in color. Mr Hofmann advises to pair birds of similarly colored circles of adaptation together but his friend, Gerhard Blum, does not endorse this idea entirely. And what is the earliest time to evaluate eyes? The bird should be at least 14 to 15 months old. (I would assume that this is the age when breeding grooves become differentiated enough to be visible.)

Neither Josef nor Gerhard believe that health and vitality can be read by looking at a pigeon's eye.

Eye sign is useful for getting a higher percentage of good flying birds than by using some other methods. The problem with pairing birds with a well developed iris together is that the iris of the offspring begins to overflow onto the eye sign circle and eventually obliterate it. It is therefore best to pair a breeding eye to a racing eye which will produce many good racers and the odd good breeder.



Circle of Correlation
(Eye Sign)

Circle Of Adaptation

GPS & RACING PIGEONS

The pigeons are not any other pigeon, but specially trained racing pigeons that have been trained to fly long distances at high speed and to come home reliably. The project also employs what they call 'embedded reporters' which are also [pigeons](#), this time carrying a small cellphone camera and a microphone as opposed to a pollution sensors. The embedded reporters are planned to be sent along with the pollution sensing birds to send reports during flight time. [Photos](#) will be sent to the blog and humans will be able to call the pigeons to listen to the audio at any given point in time.

People in charge of the project hope to raise awareness of air [pollution](#) problems in the Southern California region and provide a fun and inclusive experience of air pollution data gathering while interacting with animals often regarded as urban hazards.

For those who are wondering if they can [track](#) any other animals using their methods don't get your hopes up because their system is only capable of lasting a few hours...



How do racing pigeons navigate?

Racing homing pigeons navigate incredible distances with apparent ease. A champion racing pigeon can be released 400 miles from its home loft, in a place it has never been before, and return within 1 day. The last 40 miles of its journey, the bird navigates by sight. But over the other 360 miles, the pigeon determines its way home by "sensing" the Earth's magnetic fields. We are not yet sure exactly how this mechanism works, but it does work -- extremely well.

How can the Sun affect racing pigeons?

When there is especially strong activity on the Sun, such as a Coronal Mass Ejection (CME), unusually strong surges of solar wind (charged particles from the Sun) can create a geomagnetic storm which distorts the Earth's normal magnetic field. The pigeons can no longer rely on their normal guidance system and may become lost. Thus wise pigeon racers, especially those in very northern areas, keep track of solar activity and do not fly their birds under certain geomagnetic conditions.



COMO CONSTRUIR UN BUEN PALOMAR

Por Oscar Truebano (Q.E.P.D.)



Palomar de Reproductores

COMO CONSTRUIR UN BUEN PALOMAR

Un buen palomar, independientemente de sus dimensiones, ha de cumplir unos requisitos básicos, a saber, una buena orientación, bien ventilado y completamente seco.

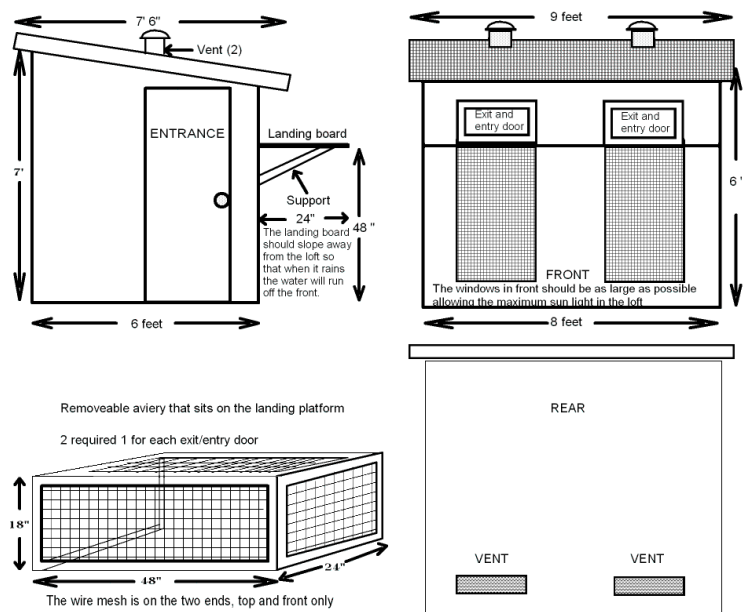
Tanto el tamaño como los demás requisitos que aquí se exponen, cada uno habrá de adaptarlos al espacio que dispone, evidentemente no es lo mismo una terraza que un jardín amplio.

El frente del palomar debe orientarse hacia la dirección del sol a las 10 de la mañana (hora solar), de esta manera lograremos que a la salida del sol, este entre hasta el fondo del palomar, y a medida que a lo largo de la mañana el sol va tomando altura, el palomar ira pasando progresivamente a la sombra. Los vientos dominantes y la lluvia vendrán normalmente por la espalda del palomar, evitando con esta orientación que las palomas tengan que soportar la humedad y el viento, dos enemigos mortales para la salud de la colonia..

En el palomar de reproducción, aparte de los nidos se pondrán suficientes posaderos para que las palomas puedan reposar sin que las molesten.

También es recomendable que el palomar de reproductores disponga de doble puerta para entrar al mismo, esto evitará que alguna paloma se nos escape al entrar, con el consiguiente disgusto si no esta acostumbrada al palomar y se nos va.

El palomar de vuelo variará según el sistema de concursar que se elija. Si se vuela al natural, será de aplicación lo mismo que al departamento de reproductores, con la salvedad de que estas palomas si vuelan. Si se vuelan machos viudos, su palomar tendrá nidos pero no posaderos. Esto obligará a cada macho a posarse en su nidal. Las dimensiones de los nidos, tanto si se vuela al natural como en viudez pueden ser algo mas pequeños, 60 ancho X 40 alto X 30 fondo es suficiente.



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