

MARANS STANDARD

THE FUTURE EUROPEAN STANDARD OF AVIAN BREEDS

The standard of our breeds is presently under review with a view to, in the future, establish a European standard of avian breeds under the responsibility of the CES-V (European Commission of Fowl Standards) of the European Entente of aviculture, for whom the acronym is EE. The work meetings of this commission, as well as of the EE, are normal across all European territory.

It is expected that the European standard of breeds will be translated into several languages and will include color photo illustrations, eventually computer-corrected, and that these photos will be supervised by the standards commission.

The updating work started a few years ago and could continue until approximately 2014. To date, no precise deadline has been realistically set. The future European standard will eventually come to replace the national standards. The discordances between the standard for Europe and the different national standards must be examined by the European commission in order to reach some harmony between them. Meetings with this in mind have already taken place, as well as to harmonize the names of breeds and varieties... in terms of the French commission: it is not lagging behind, on the contrary, in terms of what is being done in Europe on certain points, most notably the adoption of new appellations of breeds and varieties, etc.

In terms of the name Marans, there really is no problem because it's the name of the city which must be respected by all and in all languages. In terms of other breeds and certain color varieties, it's a whole other issue, however, and similarly for the content of standards.

For new varieties...

On the subject of the creation of a new variety in an existing breed, recall that it is necessary to contact the country of origin of the breed (something that is not always done, in practice). In any case, many European countries have adopted a short procedure of one year for the homologation of new breeds or varieties. France, along with others, demands several years. France has reduced its procedure from four to three years. A European harmonization of these procedures has not yet been possible. In Germany, a "tricolor" Marans, as well as a "dwarf leathered-blue" is in the homologation process.

The European standards commission debated the notion of a "country of origin" of a breed and therefore on the notion of knowing if that country



has veto-power in cases of new varieties created by another country. Sometimes the grand breed originates in one country while the dwarf version was created in another! These issues have not yet been settled.

Rewriting of the French Standards

In terms of avian breeds, the standard of the country of origin prevails, defined by the commission of fowl standards of the ANJA (National Association of Avian Judges) with the specialized club of the breed – in other words, with the MCF for Marans. The commission examines, in turn, the propositions of the specialized clubs of French breeds for their breed and rewrites the French standards. This arduous work, which consists of adapting the French standards to the European ones and modernizing them, is progressively undertaken, alphabetically, by the French standards commission for all of the French breeds of which it is in charge. Each breed will be defined at the European level by a

“directing standard” more or less simplified on a certain number of points such as, for example, comb detail; we no longer describe the precise details which constitute a comb of the “straight comb” variety, for example, this descriptions, like that of other types of crests, being detailed elsewhere with its requirements and faults. On the other hand, the standard can stipulate that the required comb is a “straight comb” of medium size, which is a characteristic proper to the breed.

France has requested that the dwarf be considered after the main breed in the cadre of the revision of French breed standards.

In the “directing standard” of a breed figure the enumeration of its different homologous varieties, but these varieties won’t be described at this level with all of the details of their coloration. With the exception of atypical particularities of a breed, the precise description of the different varieties of plumage will be defined separately. The European description of a variety, such as, for example, the uniquely black, will apply to all of the breeds concerned with regard to that plumage color. There will therefore be, in addition to the directing standard of each breed, a standard or description described at the level of Europe for each genetic variety admitted and recognized in terms of plumage color.

Examples:

In terms of Marans, the black-leathered variety is cited as the others, but not described. One must refer to the European standard of genetic coloring referred to as “black with leathered coat,” which is the true, correct name to adopt for this variety, and which avoids confusion with other genetically different colorings.

Similarly, the correct denominations are “black with silvered coat,” “blue with leathered coat,” etc. In Marans, if the breast of NCC chickens must be black and if the plastron (part under the ‘coat of mail’ and before the breast) of cocks can be lightly spotted



with leathered spots, these are particularities which could be specified in the directing standard with regard to that coloring.

The descriptions of the wheat variety for example must be consulted in the European description of this genetic color... except justified particularity applying as necessary to this or that breed.

However, these official descriptions of the different coloring haven't yet stopped.

The description of Marans' eggs is a particularity of this breed and must be defined in its directing standard and henceforth in a more explicit way.

Numberous Meetings of the European Entente

It was remembered by the European commission in 2005 that Marans must always have lightly feathered tarsi, conforming to the standard originating in France, including England and Denmark.

The English Marans therefore has no place to be.

We were able to read similarly with regard to wheat Marans, in order to align the French and German positions with regard to the coloring of tarsi, that the latter is demanded in white-pink colour (tolerated with grayish traces).

Certain debates in the heart of the commission, notably in 2008, explains that fact that for several breeds there exist risks with regard to blue and blue-edged colorings; there are all sorts of intermediary nuances and even more variations from one country to the next and from one breed to the next.

The color blue being genetically impure (heterozygote), one dose of black pigment has a tendency to show itself in edging feathers. In actual fact, each country conserves its proper dispositions – it's a case of a naturally unstable coloring. However, the Belgian representative specified in 2009 that the edging is more or less always present in blues, which seems to want to put back into question the willingness of certain individuals to search, maybe contra nature, for a completely solid blue without the edging.

The French standards commission recommends the presence of light edging in blue Marans with leathered coats in the course of homologation; they shouldn't be black and clean as is the case of the blue edged black (andalou).

Similarly, the variety referred to as “dirty white” in France and which is called “perlgrau-blau-gescheckt” (pearl blue-blue-spotted) in Germany are considered incorrect appellations. After a vote by the commission, it's the English word “splash” that is retained and therefore imposed in all countries, it's the name which we've been using at the MCF for a few years to designate this variety.

Certain participants suggest that the splash variety could be admitted amongst all blue breeds. It would be an immense genetic logic since blue can't exist without splash (BI/BI) which is the pure or homozygote color of this variety.

MARANS

Origin and particularities: France, from the Marais Poitevin, Marans region, close to La Rochelle

General appearance: Fairly strong fowl, of medium height, giving the impression of robustness and rusticity, no heaviness, plumage tight enough to the body, sought-after rectangular silhouette. The whole of the animal fits into a square.

Characteristics of the Cock:

Body: Strong, fairly long, rather large and rooted when seen head-on.

Neck: Long, fairly strong, lightly curved, lush coat covering the shoulders.

Back: Long, flat, lightly inclined towards the back.

Shoulders: Wide.

Wings: Fairly short, tight against the body

Saddle: Wide, without pillow, covered in abundant lancets

Tail: Strong at the base, fairly short, medium height lightly raised without going too far over 45 degrees relative to the ground.

Breast: Strong, wide.

Abdomen: Large and well-developed

Head: Fairly strong, lightly smoothed/flattened and long.

Face: Red, with light duvet.

Comb: Simple, straight, fairly thick and of medium height, slightly fatty texture. Rear lobe not touching the nape of the neck.

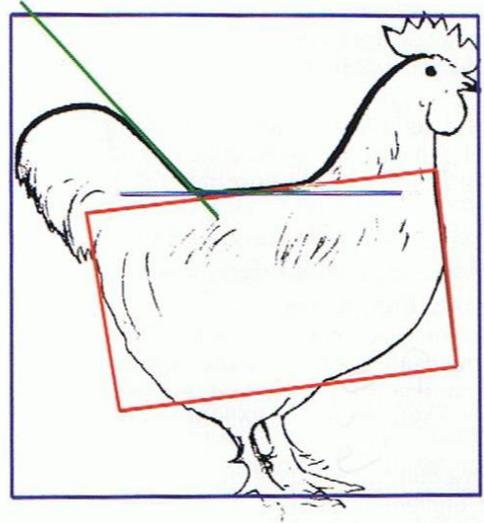
Barbillons: Medium, of fine texture.

Oreillons: Red, medium, long.

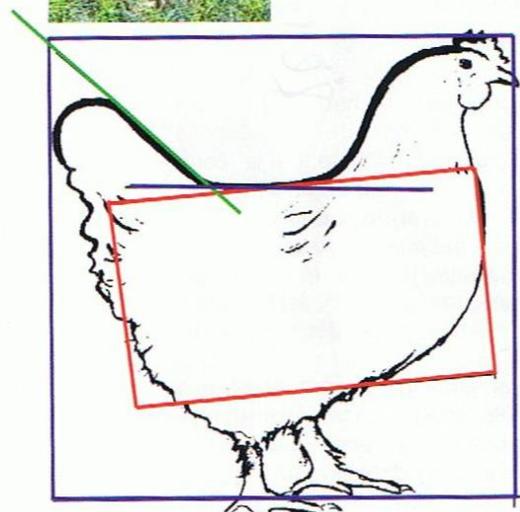
Eyes: Reddish-orange iris.

Beak: Fairly strong, lightly hooked, of clear to dark horn color, according to the variety.

Thighs: Strong, without bouffant or cuffs.



Dessin n° 1 : formes géométriques sur la silhouette du coq



Dessin n° 2 : formes géométriques sur la silhouette de la poule

Markings: Medium, lightly or moderately feathered, of whitish-pink color except for all varieties with deep black, or more or less dark grayish blue, and white bases.

Fingers: 4, of which the exterior finger is lightly feathered.

Plumage: Fairly tight against the body.

Bouffant plumage, long and soft feathers, cuffs.
Cock weighing less than 3 kg. Chicken weighing less than 2.2 kg

Characteristics of the Chicken:

Same characteristics as the male, accounting for all sexual differences.

Line along the back more or less inclined.

Developed abdomen.

Fine comb, straight or lightly inclined in its rear.

Grave faults of characteristics:

Lacking mass, lively, too svelte when examined head-on, triangular or V-shaped silhouette, too vertical shooting-variety, white or yellow oreillons, clear or black eyes, unfeathered tarsi. Bouffant plumage, long and soft feathers, cuffs. Cock weighing less than 3 kg. Chicken weighing less than 2.2 kg.

Color Varieties:

Black with silver coat
Black with leathered coat
Blue with leathered coat (we anticipate the homologation of this variety)
Cocou with golden coat
White
Black
Black with black ermine
Cashew-fawn with black tail
Golden froment

Black with leathered coat:

Cock: black plumage with green reflects and leathered appearance (neither yellow nor cashew); black, lightly edged with leathered-red, coat feathers and lancets; black armbands and mirrors

Chicken: black plumage with reflects, leathered coat, black breast

Disqualifying faults of coloring: cock: brown mirror on wings, yellow coat

Chicken: brown drawings on the body.

Ideal weights: Cock: 3.5 kg Chicken: 2.6 kg

Ring diameters: Cock: 22mm Chicken: 20mm

Minimum mass of egg to be incubated: 65 to 75g



Egg Color and Shape

Large, extra-red eggs are the most sought after. They are only slightly oval, rounder than classic eggs, but we must differentiate each from all angles.

The shell is extra-red and dark cashew or chocolate colored, and with a satin finish that is almost shiny in the best ones. The shells can be one of three types: solid, with specs or with darker spots. Very dark colored shells can even show purplish nuances.

The color should be at least a level 4 on the MCF colorimetric scale.

The colorimetric scale from 1 to 9 of Marans eggs is sent out as an appendix with the standard.

In 2009, a new description was given by the European commission for the “Splash” variety: between the black and the leathered (present or not) being most common in this genetic family.

Writing Proposal of the European Standard of Marans

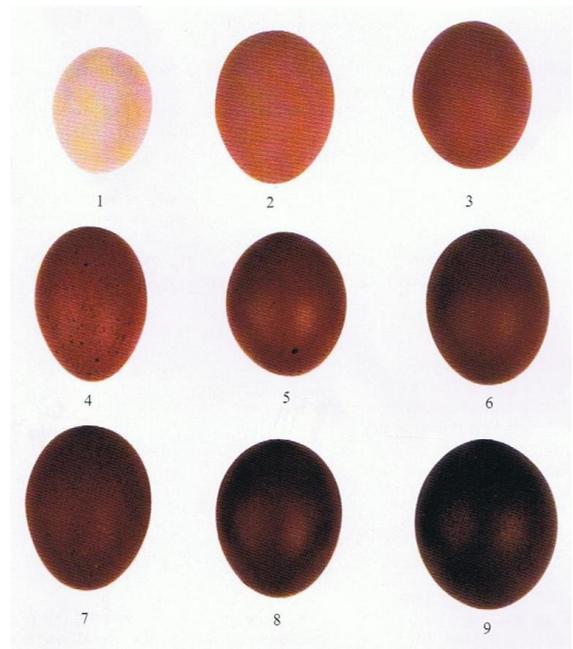
The Marans Club of France was consulted by the standard commission for a proposal to write the directing standard of this breed. The work below was brought about with the utmost attention, with each word having been weighed, and involved our friend Jean Francois Krins, a Belgian judge specializing in Marans and the president of the Belgian Marans Club, with which the MCF is presently working.

The proposal for improvements was addressed to Mrs. Marylene Le Goff, president of the ANJA (National Association of Avian Judges), who is in charge of rewriting our standards for the standards commission.

The future European standard for Marans, presented below, will therefore be examined by the commission at a meeting planned for February 4th, 2011. The blue-with-leathered-coat variety will likewise be examined at that meeting.

It could be that that standard will be amended or several details simplified by the commission. To bring it to completion, it would be necessary to await the publication of the official European definitions of colorings.

The eventual commentaries on the particularities of certain plumage colors (such as the black with leathered coat) remain to be determined



Chicken: blue-gray matte clear base color. Each feather irregularly spotted with dark blue matte, in even distribution across the whole body. Grave faults: other colored feathers. It should be noted that this surprising description, notably with regard to the base color (Splash Marans have white base plumage), only concerns Splash with a base of real solid black from the genetic family E. In Marans, Splash mainly have the “blue with leathered (and silvered) coat” base of the genetic family ER, and therefore reveal the presence of tawny feathers, golden or leathered, that the BI allele can’t erase.

Amongst Marans, we deal with the genetic Splash “a camail” ET and not the solid Splash E – the Splash “a camail” is replete with unexpected coloring habits particular to the ER family, in which it’s almost impossible to find a nice balance, the variability



The eventual commentaries on the particularities of certain plumage colors (such as the black with leathered coat) remain to be determined.

It is possible that this standard could be amended or simplified by the commission. To bring it to completion it would be necessary to await the publication of official European definitions of colorings.

The eventual commentaries on the particularities of certain colorations (in addition to the black with leathered coat) remain to be determined.

Explanation and Comments on these Propositions, Communicated to the Standards' Commission

The origin of Marans is redefined with its base in the “**Marais Poitevin**” (the Poitevin Marsh) since this area encompasses at once the north of the Charente Maritime, as well as the south of the Vendée and the south-west of Deux-Sèvres, which saw the origin of Marans just as well as did Niort, the latter of which is generally considered to have been the birthplace of the species.

In terms of grave defaults, the rejection of triangular silhouettes is insisted upon since we deplore a considerable difficulty of stockbreeders on this subject, and it is always topical.

All the same, it is insisted upon a rectangle that must nearly inscribe itself on the interior of the sought-after silhouette. We've insisted on this important point for quite some time with regard to this breed and notice too many defective stocks in this regard, which is essential for the breed.

Proposition: “sought-after rectangular silhouette. The whole of the animal fits inside a square.” From experience, when are unable to draw a square according to the outside points (i.e. when the result is a horizontal rectangle or, more likely, too vertical) we always notice the presence of a default relative to the sought-after qualities in Marans, and which explains the absence of the famous square of reference. The rectangular shape is evident on the only part of the body when it is correctly typed.

The “**plumage tight against the body**” is equally important since an emergence of certain stocks with long and limp feathers, of bouffant appearance, has actually been noticed amongst Cochin, Orpington and Brahma types (perhaps there's possibility of out-of-breed crosses?... unacceptable, in any case, since it is possible to suspect the presence of the ha+ recessive

allele which must be avoided in Marans (in which must be found the Ha and not ha+). The real type of Marans is totally altered. The careful and regular surveillance of this default should permit the eradication of the problem.

The **tendency for the nape of the neck to point** towards the top of the skull is a reality of the breed and can be noticed as much in the cock as in the chicken but usually remains discrete or poses little risk. It is something to be noticed more than an absolute goal to attain.

The fingers are not especially long – not more so than in other breeds. The suppression of “longs” is proposed.

Tails should above all not be large – “medium size” is proposed. At the least, the ideal Marans silhouette is held in check by the help of the “Langshan,” “Australorp” or still other types. **The plumage of markings is never important.** It's the



mark of the breen but without the inconveniences of an excess of feathers or markings... from whence comes the proposition: “**lightly or moderately feathered.**”

The color of markings is defined for black and blue varieties in such a way that future blue varieties will also be considered in the same way as NCC, NCA and NU blacks with leathered coats, the proble being identical (action of the MI gene).

The MCF insists on the rejection of **bouffant thighs** and above all of **sleevelets** (vulture knee-backs or boots), which are always to be dreaded these days (a very tenacious default since it is recessive, susceptible to reappear and which doesn't disappear but rather expands in a stock).

All the same, on the subject of grave defaults, the rejection of subjects with a body too light and **svelte**, skimpy or **lively** and lacking in shape and **weight**... the actual paragraph being insufficient.

Black Marans should have green highlights as do other breeds, otherwise, what genetic explication could be offered? Their presence alone is sufficient... frantic brilliance, as in certain breeds, is not necessary.

If violet highlights are to be rejected, as with all other classic black breeds, a scientific or genetic explanation would be necessary, which to our knowledge no one seems capable of correctly providing. Despite our researches, we have found no reasonable scientific explanation for the rejection of violet highlights beyond the personal tastes of breeders over time, or the fact that these violet highlights are rarer than green ones are sought-after!

For NCC, NCA, BCC, BCA varieties, the ideal breasts of chickens should have a beautiful coat which should not be marked or spotted – only cocks can be spotted on the breastplate, since it's thereby that they balance themselves with chickens with well-leathered or silvered coats but **without markings on the breastplate**, and without appealing to the creation of parquet cocks and parquet hens. Hens with markings on their breastplate are often chickens that are genetically impure, which we know much better today than before.

In terms of weight, or rather, **minimum required weight**, we no longer speak of the weight of chicks, but of adults, in European standards. In many farmer types of breeds, the weight of chickens is 1kg less than that of cocks.

Accordingly, it would be necessary for Marans hens to adopt the minimum of 2.5kg relative to cocks of 3.5kg. It is proposed to cut to **a minimum of 2.6kg for hens and 3.5kg for cocks**... which corresponds well to the actual standard.

For the actual given weight for eggs to be incubated, we know that it refers to the eggs of adult hens (2 years plus). Following experiences with breeders, 80g for eggs to be incubated is excessive. This is proved by experience to be an error since it's a natural stop for an optimal hatching of chicks and a

lesser number of eggs laid... which Marans don't know more than other breeds. The MCF has proposed **65 to 75g instead of 70 to 80g** (65g for young hens).

In terms of descriptions of eggs, this breed deserves to finally retain a minimum of defining details. Careful that this term 'violet' does not come to constitute a goal **to be attained at all costs** in terms of shell color, since this extreme nuance must be considered as quasi accidental! The MCF has proposed the writing of an egg description in this sense, and in order to avoid excess poaching, which is not the gauge of a serious system.

The MCF has proposed to integrate this description of the egg into the standard description in order to add the **photo of the egg colorimetric** which has become, since 1993, an uncontested reference among breeders, including foreign ones. Moreover, eggs of Marans are so exceptional that their standard

deserves this photo. We furnish it to the standards commission in the form of a high-numerical resolution file. The problem is identical



for the shape of eggs which must not be really "globular" (a term which means a round or spherical shape). **Too-round Marans eggs don't hatch well**, which the breed should not be subject to any more than other breeds. It is thus necessary to adopt another definition for this singular shape of Marans eggs, characteristically observed in all cases to be well-enough balanced in stocks. "lightly-enough oval" has been advised, which is perhaps not yet explicit enough... but **"eggs are rounder than classic eggs but we must still differentiate each of the two poles"** has also been proposed. The colour of eggs, as well as their brilliance and their shape, are characteristics of the breed that the standard must stress.

Christian Herment

SURVEY

Distribution of the different Marans varieties in 2010

In 2010, the black with leathered coat is the most widespread variety, with approximately 40% of the population, followed by the blue with leathered coat (11%), the black with silvered coat (8.5%), the coucou with silvered coat (8.5%), the froment (8.5%), the coucou with golden coat (4.5%), the splash (4.5%), the white (3.5%), golden salmons and silvered salmons (3%), the blue with silvered coat (2.5%), the cashew fawn with black tail (2%),

dwarf Marans (1%),
Marans of the perdrix family (1%),
the solid black (1%),
the white with black hermine (0.3%),

Survey conducted by the MCF in 2010 by survey and votes of 535 breeders on the internet forum. The survey is ongoing and evolves over time – all breeders can participate. It's here: www.marans.eu (then FORUM).