

Culling down your grow outs- part 2

Written by Courtney DuCharme, 1st Published July 2017 in PBC Newsletter Summer 2017

A huge thing to watch for as birds grow out is spinal and leg issues. Things like wry tail, kinky back, uneven hips, and knock knees are all major structural defects in a bird. These issues are based off spine and/or leg deformities. Many people believe these may arise from genetic issues, too fast of growth, incubation issues, injury, vitamin deficiencies, etc. Most of the time there may be a bird or two with the issue as you grow them out, if there are many with structure issues you will want to figure out where the issue is coming from and correct it. We are just here today to help identify the issues. These birds may make nice pets for people if their issue is not too severe, but- no matter the reason they have the issue- they should never be bred. Most of these birds will not have a nice fluid movement when walking around, proper structure is very important when picking keepers to show and breed.



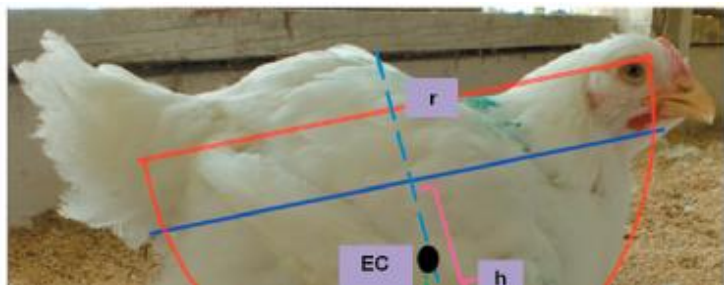
Wry tail is a spinal issue that effects tail carriage. The tail is carried twisted- either held to the side continuously or twisted sideways so one side is facing up more. Birds do have control of their tail carriage and will often hold their tail sideways if in a group when they are feeling nervous or as they are turning more sharply. However, if your bird has a tail that is rarely straight being held to the side when picked up or the bird is relaxed, it likely has wry tail. They may carry their wings differently to adjust their center of gravity to keep their balance.

Spondylolisthesis (Kinky-back) in chickens...

Kinky back is a complex condition that occurs worldwide in young fast growing broiler chickens. It is associated with rapid growth and possibly having a genetic component.



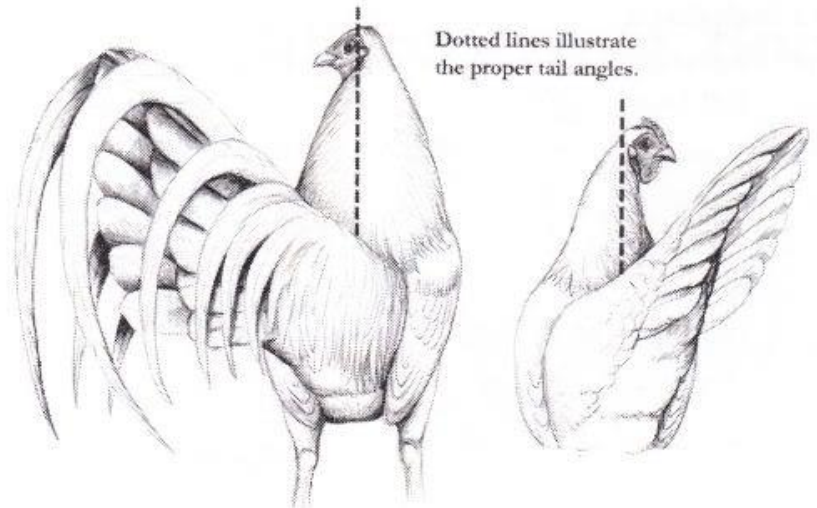
Kinky back is another spinal issue, you can normally see and feel their back is not straight. This is often paired with wry tail as well. Instead of a nice smooth topline, these birds will have a “hump” on their back when viewed from the side, or from above may look like their body has a slight turn to it. If you run your hand down the back you can normally feel where the “kink” is. They may carry their wings differently to adjust their center of gravity to keep their balance.



Uneven hips is another issue that you can feel when you run your hand over your bird. One hip will feel higher than the other hip. Your bird may not look off at all when viewed from above or the side, but the gait might be just slightly off.

Knock knees go hand and hand with legs that have too narrow of a base. Their gait will be off as they walk around because they will have to adjust their gait to not clack their knees together. You want a wider base with nice straight legs- birds should move fluidly when they walk to stay in a breeding pen.

Courtney DuCharme



Wry Tailed Cock and Hen