

Improving The Modern Day Pigmy Pouter

by TALLY MEZZANATTO, Yucaipa, Calif.

Several point features on many of our modern day Pigmy Pouters need to be improved. Globes, legs, waists, tails, wings, size, showmanship, backs, necks, color and markings are the major ones I want to mention.

To improve these features, a good eye for selective breeding is a necessity. You must be able to go through your stock and find valuable features that need to be retained in the genetic pool in order to breed the well-balanced Pigmy. For example: A fancier may get hung up on a current trend such as long legs and breed a loft full of very long limbed Pigmies that don't globe well. This fancier didn't select for globing characteristics and in the meantime had probably culled out the Pigmies that possessed medium legs with round globes.

An opposite extreme example could be the fancier who overlooks body length and leg placement for globe size. This person's loft may be full of Pigmies with beautiful, large round globes but their tails touch the ground, wing flights cross way over in the back and the legs are too far back on the body and bend too much at the knee. The Pigmies in this loft with small globes were culled out but they may have possessed desirable features that should have been retained in the breeding program.

A large majority of Pigmies that I have seen do not possess large, full,

round globes as they should. Many more hens seem to lack good globes as compared to the cocks. Skinny, sausage shaped globes do not help the breed to gain any popularity.

The correct Standard gives 15 points for globe and five points for a long neck. This is one-fifth of the total Standard for points. Elongated globes and globes carried to one side are a disqualification. Keep those hens that globe well that may have bum legs and improve the young by crossing them to long limbed cock Pigmies that may not globe well or vice-versa. A percentage of the youngsters will get the legs and the globe from such matings.

Getting Pigmies with long, fine boned legs that sweep from the waist, that are close together from the body to the knees and spreading out slightly from the knee to the foot with a slight bend at the knee and having a good gait when walking or strutting seems to be a genetic impossibility, but there are some birds that have these sought after limbs. I think they are on flamingos or storks or something of that nature. Seriously though, there are some Pigmy Pouters around that do have these great legs. Some of these great limbed Pigmies can come from long limbed cock birds with legs that are too close together mated to wide set, medium limbed hens.

Look for Pigmies with legs that continue from the waist in a smooth sweep. Hinged legs are to be avoided. Select birds with the finest bones to get away from coarse, thick limbs.

The body of a Pigmy should be held upright, eye to be plumb with the ball of the foot, very slim, tapering from the shoulders to a narrow, short tail. Tails that are too long, too wide, wry or split ruin the bird. Pigmies with horizontal station should be bred away from.

The wings on a Pigmy are very important to the overall look of the bird. They should be narrow, carried high on the body, wing butts tucked in and not to be crossed. Many Pigmies have wide wings which obstruct the view of the waist when the bird is viewed from the side.

The waist on a Pigmy is credited with a good percentage of the Standard's points—15 to be exact. A long, sharp defined keel is to be selected for. Many Pigmies have a tendency to be rounded or short in the keel.



CHAMPION PIGMY POUTER

Mealy Pigmy Pouter hen, Band No. 79-5668, showing good globe size. 1980 Champion Pigmy Pouter at the Great Western Pigeon Show.—Owned by Tally Mezzanatto, Yucaipa, Calif.

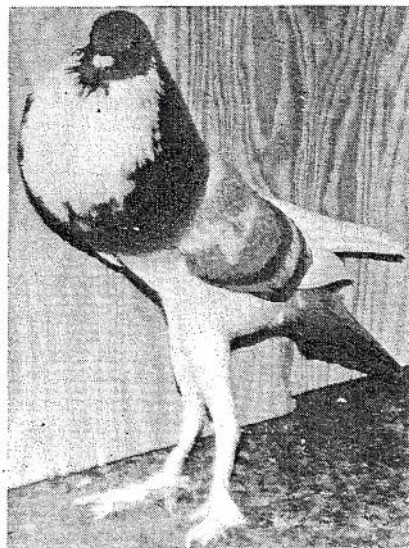
Good color and markings are important features to breed for as they contribute to a much better looking Pouter. These features do not get many point credits in the Standard, but in the showroom rich color with proper markings on a good type Pigmy can be the deciding factor on what wins the color class.

A lot of modern day Pigmies are too large and coarse in size. The Pigmy Pouter should be as small in size as possible while keeping everything in refined proportion; long, fine



BLACK PIGMY POUTERS

Outstanding pair of Black Pigmy Pouters.—Bred and owned by Tally Mezzanatto, Yucaipa, Calif.



RESERVE CHAMPION PIGMY POUTER

Blue Pigmy Pouter hen, clean, well marked. Reserve Champion at the 1980 Pageant of Pigeons.—Bred and owned by Tally Mezzanatto, Yucaipa, Calif.