



## ***Breed specific Europe show for Silkies, Polish, Bearded Polish & their bantams***

December 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 – Massa Carrara (Italy)

### Show report

During the second weekend of December only the second European breed championship in Italy was organised in Massa Carrara on the West-coast of Italy in Tuscany. It was the fourth EBC for Silkies and their bantams after Sebnitz 2007 (D), Bruges 2008 (B) and Epinal 2017 (F) and also the fourth for Polish and Bearded Polish after Edè 2005 (NL), Bruges 2008 and Enschede 2017 (NL). For the bantams of the last two breeds it was the fifth edition because Sebnitz 2007 didn't include the large breed since the German breed club only patrons the bantams.

Unfortunately the participation didn't turn out to be very big. Only around 250 birds were entered of which around 10% didn't show up. This was partly due to some Italian breeders choosing to stay at home because of internal politics within the Italian organisation but also because only few foreign breeders found the way to Italy. We can only guess what the reason for this is. Maybe it was the distance and the fact that the Alps in wintertime are an obstacle to be crossed which is of course a fair reason. The very strict veterinary rules for foreign participation will have certainly contributed. Maybe it was also because people are unfamiliar with shows in Italy and how they are organised and there was a certain fear of what conditions they might find themselves into. I can honestly say that if this was the case, that fear is completely not justified. Italian shows (and I have visited many over the years) are always very well organised and the animals are always very well taken care of. This show took place in the modern and very spacious exhibition halls of Massa Carrara. All the cages were very spacious and the halls were very clean and nicely decorated with plants and aviaries with ornamental birds. The cages of the EBC were separated from the rest of the Italian national show. In total there were almost 1.800 cages with poultry, that is not counting all the ornamentals and a large demonstration show of rabbits, making a total of well over 2000 animals.



The 31 breeders (20 from Italy, 6 from Austria and 5 from France) who participated in the EBC brought together around 250 birds (but as said quite a lot of cages staid empty). Before judging, the international jury consisting of 5 judges from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, France and Italy, made a round between the cages and decided on some key points to make the judging as uniform as possible. A very important factor was animal welfare and visibility with oversized crests being unwanted. In the end birds of every breed present were disqualified because of this reason. Moderation is the key word when it comes to crest size. We can only hope that this signal is taken back to every country and selection and judging will happen accordingly in the future.

Only 12 large non-bearded Silkies were present in only two colours, all coming from France. They could however not please the judge. The 20 bearded whites were of a better level but still not where we'd hoped them to be at a European championship. Several animals were disqualified for various reasons, wing structure abnormalities being an important one. The animals with the higher marks



didn't usually reach the ultimate marks because of being just a little too small in size and at the same time having a crest that was just a little too big. Europe champion became an old white hen from Enrico Cecchin (I) with 96 that should have been a bit more rounded in the tail to get the ultimate highest score. The second largest series were the bearded blacks. Unfortunately there was a mix-up with the registries and two of them ended up being chocolate bantams which made the blacks just below the required number for being entitled the title of Europe champion. The mean quality was OK but a lot of the birds were disqualified for wing problems once again. All the other colours present, lavender, blue,

black-flecked white, silver partridge, cuckoo and chocolate cuckoo were often on the smaller side and often didn't show optimal feather conditions. Europe champion of all the other colours in the roosters was a lavender of Emmanuel Prieur (F), the only rooster with 95. In the hens there were only 3 times 95 in blue, cuckoo and chocolate cuckoo. The Europe champion became a young cuckoo hen of Enrico Cecchin with very good colour but too white ears kept her from scoring higher.



In the large Polish only 5 animals were present so a European title could not be awarded although Stefan Eigener (A) brought a nice white-crested black hen with 95 in the cages. In large Bearded Polish there were 28 entries and this was by far the best series of the entire championship. Most animals got 93 or more but 4 were disqualified because of too large crests. 7 colours were present : white, black, laced blue, black-laced silver, black-laced gold, white-laced chamois and tolbunt. Europe champion became a very nice white hen of Stefanie Wolf (A) with 96. The budding spurs just didn't allow for the highest score. Her collection of whites was the only collection to obtain a Europemeister title.



The Bearded Polish bantam was represented by 45 cages in 6 colours : laced blue, white-laced chamois, dun, black, cuckoo and black-laced gold with 8 cages being frizzled. With the exception of the blacks, the level couldn't persuade the judge with a lot of animal being very upright in position and a lot of them showing tails that were either carried too high or too low and/or too closed. Also some of them just showed too large crests. One of the best hens, a

very nice shaped dun with a very nicely rounded crest, unfortunately showed a wry tail. In the black hens the type was generally good and a young black hen with 96 from Daniel Giuseppe Antonicelli (I) became Europe champion. None of the roosters obtained the



minimal score of 95 to be declared Europe champion. The frizzled scored generally better than the non-frizzled. Just 20 Polish bantams in 3 colours (white, white-crested dun and white-crested black) allowed for one Europe champion. This became a young white-crested black hen with 96 from Nicholas Dragoni (I). The other birds often showed long and narrow bodies with a too upright position.



Also 45 cages of bearded Silky bantams in a variety of colours : white, blue, buff, black, lavender, silver partridge, black-flecked white and chocolate. The last two however are not accepted by the EE and therefore got the NA score. A lot of the birds were really too big and some of them got even disqualified because of this, some less exaggerated ones just got low scores. A large part of the birds also had problems with wing structure which led to either low scores or disqualification. The best series were the white hens were a few nice shaped birds could be admired. Unfortunately some of them had some other problems not allowing for the highest marks. Europe champion became a nice white hen with 96 from Nicolas Fontana. In the roosters only one got 95, a lavender from Massimo Prignacca (I) despite being also maximal in size.

Judging in Massa Carrara was not easy because in general the level was a bit lower than usual and as a judge you just always want to find something to award. Unfortunately sometimes it just is not possible because certain problems cannot be overlooked. The show on the other hand was well taken care of certainly promotion for our hobby. The Italian Silky Club did its best and took very good care of birds, participants, judges and winners. The winners of the European championship certainly went home with very nice prizes a hopefully good memories of a nice time in Tuscany.

Andy Verelst

