

Breed Identification

Animals are selected for traits or characteristics that are considered economically important. Though most of our livestock industries use crossbreeding systems, it is still important to consider the purebred animals that contributed the genetics to the composite breeds we see today. A purebred animal is one that has the characteristics defined by the breed registry and purebreds are expected to pass those traits on to their offspring with a high degree of predictability. When animals of different breeds are mated, we call it crossbreeding. Some crossbred animals are now listed as purebreds because they have a set of traits that they consistently pass on and they have established a breed registry. Some breeds of poultry and their descriptions are listed below.

BREEDS:



White Leghorn:

This breed is known for their excellent production of white eggs. Originally, the breed's ancestors came from Italy, however, over the years many sub-varieties have developed throughout Britain, Europe, and America. This breed has the smallest body size of those listed here. Commercially, it is the major breed used to produce white eggs.



Rhode Island Red:

This dual purpose breed has origins in New England where breeders developed the breed by crossing Red Malay Game, Leghorns and Asiatic native stock. This breed is characterized by a long, broad body; a deep, well-rounded breast; color described as a lustrous, rich red throughout; and brown to dark brown eggs. Commercially, this breed has been selected for egg production and is the major breed used by itself or in crosses with other breeds, to produce brown eggs.



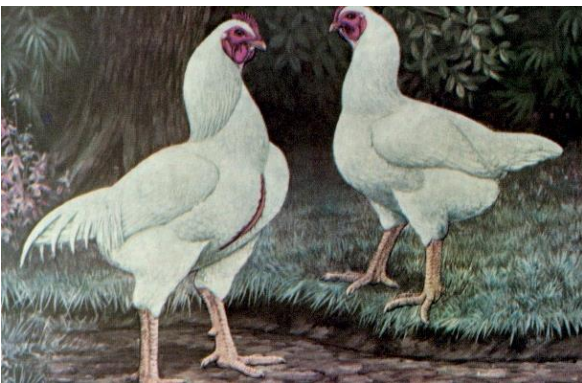
White Plymouth Rock:

Although this is a white breed, the birds of this variety are known for the brown eggs they produce. This breed is also considered a dual purpose breed and is the basis for the modern strains of female parent stock for broiler chicks. Commercially, this breed has been selected for meat production and is the major breed used as the “mother” of meat-type chickens.



Barred Plymouth Rock:

Similar in type to the white variety, this breed is characterized by their unique plumage coloration. Each feather is patterned with sharply defined, regular, parallel bars of alternating light and dark color, ending with a narrow, dark tip. A 60% black, 40% white ratio is recommended in females.



White Cornish:

This fowl is uniquely characterized by the texture of their feathers, being short, hard and quite narrow, and by the exceptionally large breast muscles. This breed was produced from White Malay. The shells of their eggs are brown. Commercially, this breed has been selected for meat production and is the major breed used as the “father” of meat-type chickens.