
ARAUCANA RUMPLESS

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ORIGIN:	Chile
CLASSIFICATION:	Light breed: soft feather
EGG COLOUR:	Blue or green (Sitters)
MASSES:	
LARGE FOWL	
Male:	2.7 – 3.2 kg
Female:	2.3 – 2.7 kg
BANTAMS	
Male:	740 – 850 g
Female:	680 – 790 g

The Araucana Rumpless with ear-tufts has become the accepted 'Proper Araucana' around the poultry showing world, but in truth it was all a mistake. There may well have been some blue egg laying chickens in South America with all the relevant characteristics, but if so, they were an abnormal rarity.

Here is the true story:

The Mapuche Indians in Chile had two breeds of chickens raised in different areas of the country. One they called the "Collonca", which was small, laid blue eggs, rumpless, and had a small single comb; the other they called the "Quetro" or "Quetero", derived from their word "kerto" meaning stammering, referring to its peculiar laughing crow - this vocal characteristic still exists in Asia as well and a Google search will find some YouTube clips of 'laughing cocks'. The "Quetro" was tufted, had a flowing tail, pea comb, and laid brown eggs. Tufted rumpless occurred when a rumpless bird were crossed with a tufted tailed bird, but these offspring were rare. The latter were later called "Collonca de Arêtes" by the Spanish, meaning "Collonca with earrings". These "Collonca de Arêtes" were blue egg layers, since the blue egg gene is dominant. In 1556, the Mapuche Indians were attacked again by the Spanish, and an epic poem named "La Araucana", was written by Alonso de Ercilla about their bravery. This name later stuck with the Indians, and subsequently with their chickens. The name derives from the Gulf of Arauco, near Concepcion, Chile.

Dr. Rueben Bustos, a chicken expert in Chile, had been an officer in the Chilean army, and in 1881 he had visited two villages, finding blue egg laying, rumpless chickens (no ear tufts) in one village, and brown egg laying, normal tailed, ear tufted chickens in another entirely separate village. Apparently the tufted birds were popular because they had a peculiar crow, said to resemble human laughter. He had himself tried to developed a strain of the so-called

“Collonca de Arêtes”. He crossed the two types simply because he was intrigued by their unusual characteristics and, unfortunately as it turned out, decided to combine them all in one bird and wrote about the Araucana in his country in 1914. Despite trying for over thirty years

(1881-1914) he had not stabilised the ‘Collonca de Artez’.

But these breeds remained quite unknown to the world until Professor Salvador Castello, a Spanish poultry expert and Director of the Royal Spanish Poultry School, Arenys De Mar, Barcelona, Spain, who had observed and photographed some “Collonca de Arêtes” at an exhibition in Santiago in 1914, later reported on these birds in 1921 in a paper presented to the First World’s Poultry Congress in the Hague (Holland), causing a flurry of excitement throughout the poultry world. Prof. Castello did not realize at that time that the “breed” that he had seen and described was not native fowl, as he had been told by Dr. Bustos, but rather were the product of Dr. Bustos’ many years of selective breeding. Professor Castello later corrected himself in 1924 – but by then the wave of interest in these birds had already begun, and many erroneous ideas had already developed, based upon the original erroneous 1921 paper.

At present the South African poultry standard follows the international consensus of requiring Araucanas Rumpless Tufted as the exhibition ideal, and is waiting for other major poultry showing countries to lead the way in changing standards. Perhaps in future Rumpless Araucanas will be accepted in two versions, tufted and non-tufted, possibly with additional recognised variations of pea or single comb, bearded or non-bearded if we are to go back to what was originally found in Chile some 130+ years ago.

The feather ear-tufts are unique to the breed in that they grow from a fleshy pad adjacent to the ear-lobe. Araucana Rumpless lays a large egg in relation to body size and is as productive as the tailed Araucanas.

When the Araucana was first introduced to breeders worldwide, the genetics that produced tufts were recognized to also cause chick mortality. Two copies of the gene will cause the chick to die in the shell before hatching. The tufted gene is dominant, however, and because no living Araucana possesses two copies of the tufted gene, breeding any two tufted birds leads to half of the resulting brood being tufted with one copy of the gene, a quarter being clean-faced with no copy of the gene, and a quarter of the brood dead in the shell, having received two copies of the gene. If you mate tufted to clean-faced, you will get 1/2 tufted and 1/2 clean-faced, but more living birds.

In the decades to follow, most breeders took one of two routes: either to preserve the old style of bird, or to breed out the tufts while increasing productivity.

The gene for tufts has “variable penetrance” meaning that the type and degree of tuftedness in tufted birds will vary greatly. Some will have one tuft, some will have two, some will have even tufts and some will have unbalanced tufts. But every tufted bird, no matter how their tufts look, carries the tufted gene. A one-tufted bird may produce plenty of two-tufted offspring, and vice versa.

The gene for blue eggs is dominant, so the term “Easter Egger” is used to describe birds of mixed breeding that produce such eggs. Unfortunately, these mixed breeds are often incorrectly labelled as Araucanas or Ameraucanas, and marketed to backyard poultry hobbyists who are not aware of the difference. In 1976, the first standard for the breed was

accepted by the APA, conforming to the traditional style. This was followed, in 1984, by a second standard for the “improved” variety.

In short, the differences are as follows:

- **Araucana** (USA and Canada) – tufts (lethal allele), no crest, beards or muffs, rumpless, blue eggs, willow legs and yellow skin (with exceptions).
- **Ameraucana** (USA) – no tufts, i.e. no lethal gene and no crest, but beards and muffs with tail feathers, blue eggs, slate legs and white skin.
- **Araucana** (Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, Asia, Japan, Russia, Holland, France, Spain, Belarus, Ukraine, Scandinavia, Argentina, Chile, **South Africa**, Pacific Islands, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Arabic Nations, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Australia) – no tufts, i.e. no lethal gene, but crest, beards and muffs, with tail feathers, blue eggs, slate or olive/willow legs and grey/white skin.
- **Easter and Olive Eggers** – Easter Eggers lay blue eggs and Olive Eggers lay green eggs, both with variable traits and not recognised as a breed in any country.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

THE MALE

Carriage:	Alert and active.
Type/body:	Body: moderately long with flat back medium sloped. Firm in handling. Saddle hackle: well developed. Rump: well-rounded with saddle feathers flowing over stern. Breast: full, round and deep. Wings: medium in length, carried close to the body and well up.
Tail:	Tail entirely absent, i.e. no pygostyle bone (uropygium or parson's nose). No tail fluff must show below saddle hackle.
Head:	Moderately small. Beak: strong and stout; curved. Eyes bold. Comb: small pea. Ear-lobes are small and abundantly covered by tufts. Tuft: 5 to 15 tuft feathers growing from a pad located just behind and below the earhole. Tufts should be of good length, matching in size and sweeping backwards or projecting horizontally. Wattles: very small.
Neck:	Of medium length with hackle feathers.
Legs and feet:	Legs of medium length strong and well apart; colour olive or willow to slate. Toes: four, straight and well spread.

THE FEMALE

The general characteristics of the female are similar to those of the male allowing for the natural sexual differences.

COLOUR

In both sexes and all colours:	Comb, face and wattles light/bright red. Eyes dark orange in all colours. Legs and feet olive or willow to slate.
Male and female plumage:	Black, white, black red, silver and golden duckwing, blue, blue red, cuckoo, crele, spangle and pile. Any Old English Game colour excluding off-colours. Any self colour including lavender. In lavender, both sexes to be a uniform blue-grey throughout.

SERIOUS DEFECTS

Comb lopped or twisted. Any comb other than minimal in female. Legs other than standard colour. Uneven or splashed breast colour. In lavenders any straw or brassy tinge.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Comb other than of pea type in male. Unmatched or absent ear-tufts. Incomplete rumplessness, i.e. tail feathers present. Pearl eye.

BANTAMS

Araucana Rumpless bantams are to be exact miniatures of their large fowl counterparts and so standard, colour and scale of points apply. As the large Rumpless fowl is historically and naturally a small breed, it follows that great care must be taken to keep the bantams within the approved weight limits.

SCALE OF POINTS	
Type and carriage	25
Ear-tufts and rumplessness	25
Comb	10
Other head points	5
Feet and legs	5
Colour	10
Condition and handling	20
TOTAL	100