

APPRAISAL OF THE BREEDING METHODS OF THE LATE JOHN MIFSUD

by "Achilles" (Melbourne)

It would appear from a previous article on the breeding of John Mifsud's famous family bred from 139 that he had preconceived ideas that the dominant male was the foundation on which to establish and cultivate a strain of winning birds. Although 139 himself produced 14 Federation place getters including 2 Fed winners 4th Fed, 5th Fed, 6th Fed etc., surely the concentrated effort of a great stud sire John Mifsud was fully aware that a dominant line can be founded on a dominant producer hen. However not in an endeavour to perplex you or to give rise to argument, but simply to lay before you the essential facts of strain making, I am privileged to present for your perusal a further family of "Mifsud" birds based on an exceptional producer hen. Nay, that term would not suffice, for surely this hen would be the greatest stock hen of all time. For from two of her famous daughters alone were bred 31 Federation place getters. Truly a massive total.

This hen was V.H.A.45.1 known as the number one hen. Her two daughters were "Expected" a winner of three races including 6th Fed. 250 miles, and 1st Fed. 500 miles. The other "Strinesdale Queen" a winner at 300 miles. "Expected" produced 14 Fed place getters and "Strinesdale Queen" 17. Surely these three hens would be the greatest producer hens in the history of the sport in Australia.

Now it is obvious that whichever system of strain development you pursue the path must be biased one way or the other. That is to say you must breed either to the male or female line. This of course does not hold good for the loft where the owner indulges in multitudinous outcrossings using as stock a bird from here, a bird from there, a gift or a loan or a moderate raced. Such a loft can only contain a mixed lot of birds

of all shapes, sizes, types and ability.

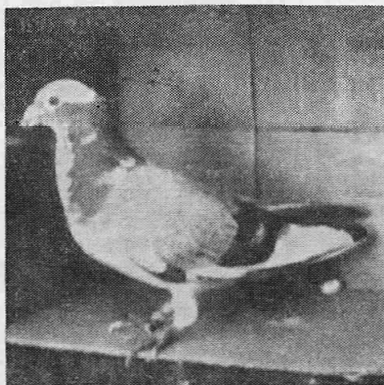
Such a group of birds cannot and will not respond equally to any regime of management. In tossing some will get too much, some too little. In feeding the larger birds receive too little food the smaller bird too much.

Surely the ideal is a loft of uniform birds, all alike, all the one type, all carrying the desired characteristics.

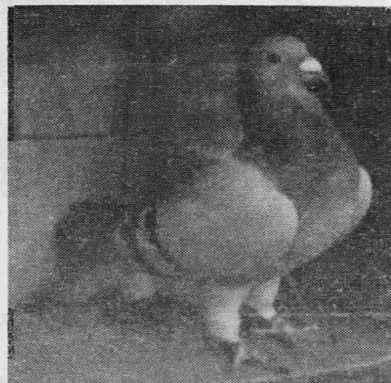
It must be clearly understood that the saying to "obtain a mixture of blood" is a fallacy. Blood does not mix like milk and water but each young bird receives a genetic group of characteristics from the sire and similarly a group from the dam. These characteristics are fixed and remain constant given to the bird at the moment of fertilisation.

Having established this point we can now see that with continued outcrossing the production of a good bird is sheer chance. This statement is not a derogatory one as many good birds have been bred by this means but they are the result of a gamble. To assure the production of a definite type or family line breeding must be undertaken to concentrate the desirable features needed for success.

The proof of this statement can be seen by examining several well-used phrases within the fancy.



Typical hen of the 101 family, flew 500 miles twice, bred three winners. she is by in-bred son of 101, who was mated to his own daughter.



Blue bar in-bred grand-daughter of "Expected", clocked 500 miles, to 600 miles, 1964. Note dominant female characteristics, size, vigour and robustness.

"They in in all shapes and sizes" True-but how often does the odd shape and type continue to breed good birds?

"He raced well but never left a winner" . . . How could he . . . he didn't carry the dominant genes.

"I can't tell the sex of my youngsters" Here we see that either voluntarily or involuntarily this fancier has bred to the female line where the cocks have become "henly" especially in the shape of the head. Such cocks are small, compact and light framed. In dog breeding such males are termed "bitchy" and are considered inferior as sires.

John Mifsud stresses the point that the results obtained from the female line in his own loft had been wonderful, as could be seen by the performances of the three hens mentioned above.

However, to continue this success was the problem. John felt that the novice and even the established flyer who did not wish to give time and thought to the study of line breeding was courting disaster. For although the hens retained their vigour, size, depth of colour and other dominant features there was a corresponding falling off in the standard of the cocks. When we look at this strain we see that 90 per cent of the great birds

were hens. Therefore the great art in line breeding to the female line is in the selection of the cocks to be used as mates to the dominant hens, and as stated by John Mifsud this cannot be done in a moment but only after long and careful selection.

713	→	Expected 1st Fed 500
Blue Prince (4422)		300 mile Fed Winner
	→	Expected 1st Fed 500 mls
3237 8769		
15th Fed 300 mls 7th Fed 400 mls		
14766		
3rd Fed 500 mls		
14817		
9th Fed 300 mls 15th Fed 500 mls		

Points to note in this pedigree.

1. The three birds on the left are all sons and daughters of a grandson to grandmother mating all won on the track and in turn became good stud birds.
2. The Cocks Blue Prince and 3237 were not raced but kept for stock. This is in direct contrast to the Cocks of the 139 family (the dominant male line) where the stock

THE SOUTHERN RACING PIGEON FEDERATION

With much hard work, foresight and enterprise the Southern Federation has organised the transport for this year's races by road. All members are looking forward to a good season for many seasons due to the new system. One reason that will appeal to the wives is that it will reduce the nights required to be away on pigeons. It is intended to basket on Friday nights up to and including Grong Grong, 256 miles and Thursday night for the rest. Also it promises to be cheaper flying and no limit will be placed on the number of birds flown.

The race programme will consist of two races from Marulan and two from Breadalbane for the early series and then revert to three Marulans, two Breadalbane, two Yass, three Cootamundra, three Grong Grong,

cocks had to prove their worth on the track.

Blue Prince and 3237 carried the genes necessary to pair with those of the dominant hens.

We are not all fortunate enough to have a 500 mile winner in our loft on which to found a family, but by careful selection of foundation birds from a well tried line bred family we can by further judicious line breeding establish our own family and strain. This will be dealt with in a further article.

three Carrathool, two Hay and two Mildura for the main series.

The feature races for this year are young bird derby from Grong Grong, Federation National from Hay and Open National from Mildura.

A pleasing aspect of the new arrangement is that all birds will be picked up from the club by the transporting vehicle saving extra transport costs. Another is that the Open National will be flown from Mildura, 520 miles approx. and have Thursday night basketing as against last year's 580 miles from Broken Hill and will be flown over areas that are not so dry.

The clubs affiliated with the Southern Federation will be pleased to accept a limited number of new members and any interested fanciers should contact the secretary, N. Broome, for a club that would suit his district.

Cooks River, one of the affiliated clubs will be flying from Carrathool a Breeders' Plate that at present totals approx. \$600 so its members naturally are very keen on the new road transport that is to operate.

Most fanciers will agree that the fact of going by road, later basketing, no intermediate transport, less feed for the journeys and less time involved to attend the club adds up to more efficient handling and a greater possibility of keeping the birds at their peak and so better racing.

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