

The Story behind Omelet Acres Chicken & Eggs

Our chicken venture was much by accident. Although Cathy raised chickens as a kid



growing up on the family farm her dairy & beef cattle as well as her horses were her first love. Unable to talk Mark into some beef cattle not even the mini Hereford's. Cathy stumbled on some hens that were advertised in Newark, Ohio. She was able to get Mark to go for a drive one April morning in 2009 and they went via Newark, while there they called the phone number in the ad and made arrangements to see the hens. The ad stated they were young gold comets, excellent condition great 4-h or show prospects. When

they arrived they were greeted by the owner who took them out back to see the chickens. He described how hard it was to capture them in order for us to see them, since he had already let them out for the day. As we followed him he led us to a pretty run down rubber shack...yes I said rubber an old rubber made shed that was pieced together, in what would be a stretch to call a shack. None the less upon peering in at these chickens it was apparent that the man did not use any exertion to capture these hens. They were so scrawny, weak and sickly. Everything Cathy's father had taught her not to give a second glance when buying livestock. Immediately Cathy reached for one it was apparent they were very lucky to hold their weight up. They probably weighed maybe 2-3 pounds. They were no young pullets either as the ad stated, they were probably at least 2 years old. They had been debeaked at an early age; one had a severe eye infection. They were pretty pathetic looking. Mark having grown up in the city and not having much background with livestock could tell they were not worth the \$10.00 each the man was looking to get. They really were not even good for a stew pot. Cathy had seen all she wanted and was ready to turn and leave when some white chicks caught her eye as well as some barred chickens running around in another pen. When she asked about them she was told they were Brahmas and Cuckoo Marans. They were beautiful and certainly had had a little better care than these gold comets had, not by much but still young enough to bring around. We asked if he was selling any of those chicks and he said sure, his wife had decided she didn't like them and he was



thinking of using them for target practice. Which from the looks of things and the way he talked he did a lot of that. That was all he had to say and Cathy asked how much. He hawed around a bit and quoted a huge price. She thanked him and started to leave, and then he said he would make a package deal on the 6 week old Brahmas, cuckoos and the old hens. Cathy still wasn't sure. You see dad's voice from my childhood kept telling me to leave it and run, but my heart told me to save the world. Bless his heart dad passed away almost 20 years ago now but he still makes himself known that he is watching. Mark had sided with my dad's voice by this time. I thanked the man and Mark and I started to leave, when he blurted "well I'll just use em all for target practice this

afternoon”. With that I went to the truck and brought out a couple carriers and offered a price for the chicks and the hens. I said I wasn’t paying premium price for sickly birds. I believe the man backed down on his price for he knew he wouldn’t get away from my tongue lashing of the deplorable state of these birds unless he lowered the price and got me on my way. That was how the chickens came to be and Omelet acres was begun.



It took months of quarantine, veterinary bills, and lots of good feed rations, grains and lots of produce to start these birds on a track to good health. They needed wormed, de-mited, beaks filed so the birds could eat properly and to help promote some growth back. All the while the birds were scared to death. Slowly but surely they started coming around, their health and appetite improved.

While the birds were quarantined we started on the chicken coops, we painted them gloss white inside,

put single hung windows for light and ventilation, cut in pop doors, skylights, roosts and nesting boxes. The outside of the coops we painted light grey trimmed in white to match our greenhouse ends and barns. We put up chain link fencing for the immediate area around the coop with gates to open up to premier fence a type of fence that we can move all around the fields easily so they can free range graze in green pastures. The coops are built on runners so we can pull them around the field easily. Finally in August the coops were done and ready for the girls to move in.



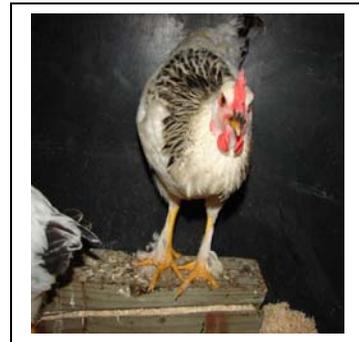
Obviously our old gold comet ladies were no spring chickens and certainly had not lived the best of lives, but the day they moved into their little Taj Mahal they made a transition. At first they blinked numerous times very quickly it appeared they were asking each other “could this be real? Are we dreaming?” They quickly set forth making their coop a home. Did I mention this guy we bought the chickens from had told us he got numerous eggs from these hens? Well that was a bit of an overstatement; no actually it was a bold face lie. We were lucky to collect maybe an egg a day from May through August. Thank goodness in June we had bought some other chickens, chicks & turkeys from a reputable local hatchery Cathy’s family had dealt with for over 50 years.

In September our little gold comets had gained substantial weight, had healthy feathering, walked with some giddy up in their step, and began laying eggs like no bodies business. These once sickly girls who could hardly hold their little heads up finally had the Cinderella storybook life and needless to say they have paid us back ten fold. The golden girls as we call them have become queens of their castle, they do rule the roost. Iddy Biddy the one with the severe eye infection had lost the use of her one eye, but that certainly didn’t slow her down. She is the queen bee, nothing gets past her. She tells everyone where their place is in the coop and the pastures. She is first to run and greet us, and kind of gives us the daily gossip in the coop. She has endeared herself to us; she also

has helped train the young chicks growing up the ways of the chicken world on Omelet Acres a division of Carousel Watergardens Farm.

The golden girls fell in love with our Brahma boys, yes boys out of all the Light Brahmas who were supposed to be all pullets (girl chickens) that's what the man told us that day. It turns out we had all roosters and only 2 pullets. The Cuckoo Marans we bought, well they all turned out to be Roosters. Another reason not to take someone's word for something when it comes to buying livestock, the guy said he had sexed chickens all his life and he assured me we were getting all pullets. My dad's little voice kept telling me beware, but remember I didn't listen with my head I went with my heart instead. Was it a mistake...well its all in how you look at it.

The golden girls fell in love with Eg G. Benedict our banty Brahma. He pays no attention to the Brahma girls. His counter part Beefy Boy who is a standard Light Brahma fell for the Lace Net Wyandotte's and one barred rock pullets. Then the Cuckoo Maran Rooster we kept (his name is Cuckoo man) he fell for the Brahma pullets and the remaining Barred Rocks and Lace Nets.



As the roosters matured it was necessary to separate the guys and their chosen gals, so this meant another chicken coop must be built. This one is a bit smaller than the first one. The big coop holds about 75 chickens. The smaller coop holds about 20-25 chickens.



Now we get to how our chicken and egg venture came to be called Omelet Acres. One of our light Brahmas was so cute as a chick, that of course we carried her/him we couldn't tell at the time for they had no characteristics of sex at that age. We carried this chick out everyday to go in their chicken tractor (a movable enclosure that they stay in during the day to protect them from predators to keep them safe). He/her would only eat out of our hand and he/her only talked non stop all the while we were around. He/ her didn't like to walk no this one wanted to be carried everywhere, I dubbed him/her Omelet. Then Eg G. Benedict (Bennie for short) was the first to show his rooster characteristics and being so cocky and independent he was so named.

In June when we had our Ohio Department of Agriculture Inspection to be able to sell our eggs, we were asked the name of our chicken venture. Mark & I looked at each other in puzzlement for we had not even thought of a name, so I quickly stated "Omelet Acres". Our inspector smiled and said that's cute. We then showed him Omelet and the rest of the chickens and their



housing. He was really impressed, especially seeing the before and after pictures of the golden girls and their transition but he was really surprised at their chicken coop and the skylights, windows and the cleanliness of it. We passed inspection, and yes he checked our coolers too, but he wasn't nearly as interested in those as the housing, and yes Iddy Biddy came out immediately to show him around even though she was still in quarantine.

I think the girls are happy; at least they keep paying us with an abundance of eggs. We thought they would go down in production through the winter but they have actually stayed right on track and once a week we have a 100% laying of eggs the rest of the time we are at about 85%.



We have ordered our new batch of chickens and turkeys for this year. We will stick with the local hatchery in Larue, Ohio. I am going to get some more Cuckoo Marans and some Wellsummers to add to our other heritage chickens. Of course the golden girls will live out their lives here, another thing that my dad's voice is telling me to be leery of.

We are pleased, and yes Mark has even taken quite an

interest in the girls. Why just the other day he mentioned "what kind of cattle is it you were interested in?" I replied "Water buffalo, why do you ask?"

