

Why half brother/half sister?

Old timers and experienced flyers often attest to the value of the half brother × half sister mating. Opinions on breeding like this one are notable for their lack of hard data. Such data is difficult to collect and never above suspicion. One source is catalogues and if sufficient can be collected, trusted and scrutinised some figures can be presented. It is possible for instance to study just 1st Fed. winners (however large the birdage). If this were done several interesting points could be shown.

In the sample used by me the breeding of these winners reflected the following:

- 38% were from a half brother/half sister mating.
- 38% were crossbreds (no close relatives).
- 15% were inbred or line bred.
- 7% were crosses of crosses sometimes within a vague family unit.

Other figures such as the average age of the producing hens 3.2 years is possible but it is interesting to note the opinions of experienced flyers shown in the figures i.e. over ½ were half brother × half sister matings. These same experienced flyers use sons of their top producing cock to cross-breed with any new blood which comes

into the loft. They are looking here for the crossbred (over ⅓) which offers hybrid vigor.

The half brother × half sister mating where the cock and hen have the same dam or sire can also be extended to include the dams being sisters or the sires just brothers or diagonally in both cases and this would further raise their percentage.

Just why this is a successful pairing is unresearched but may include

- (a) When practised it is most often a winner used to double up on. Since the old saying "winners breed winners" is also statistically true we have more likelihood of success.
- (b) This allows for crossbreeding with control. A winner mated to two hens of fresh blood is brought back by using the winner twice i.e. in both sire and dam.
- (c) The mating also allows for generation skip. Whereas the bird used may not himself produce well, his children may.

One interesting point is that most often this mating would not be used or endorsed by eyesign enthusiasts as similar eyes would not provide the contrast these enthusiasts seek (as a form perhaps of cross breeding).

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