

Saturday, December 31, 2011

Puberty comes to the Chicken Coop



Cock a doodle errrrrr. Ahh pubescent roosters in their first crow. Like human boys when their voices crack, the roosters just don't get it right at the beginning. It sounds like someone decided to choke them half way through a crow. That is what we heard when we first entered the barn this morning. Cock a doodle errr.

We purchased day old Partridge Chantecler chickens at the end of September and they finally have moulted into their adult plumage. The five hens are a beautiful liver chestnut with black partridge marking on their feathers; the roosters have a glossy chestnut head and mane and iridescent black/green tail and wing feathers - stunning birds and Canadian winter hardy.

I am teaching them to come to a foil pan with cooled oatmeal, a trick I learned over 20 years ago with my first flock of layers. I teach them to come to the banging on the bottom of a pie plate full of oatmeal and then entice them into the coop for the night. They love the oatmeal and come running. Once the spring comes and they are outside I will post a video. Actually somewhere in the archives of CBC television is a video of my first flock doing just that. Thankfully the footage of me crowing at my rooster to get him to crow for the camera ended up on the cutting room floor.

During the transition to laying eggs in the spring you often get very odd sized eggs from tiny to huge. When I got one of the huge eggs (probably a triple or quadruple yolker) I entered it in the Rural Delivery Great Canadian Big Egg Contest. The egg won and was shipped to the World competition (or more accurately the eastern seaboard of North America) where it came second. As a result of that success I was on television once, the radio at least three times and in the press a couple of times. I figured that I deserved a seat in the Senate after that (seems to be all the qualifications required). By the way, the chicken died.

Now I have to enter the strange and wonderful world of poultry fanciers to find a Chantecler rooster from an unrelated line. Then in the summer I will start breeding and hatching chicks for sale.

It's cock a doodle dooo Stupid rooster, get it right!

TTFN
Laurie