



PENNSYLVANIA REFINING COMPANY

REFINERY AT KARNES CITY, PA.

PENN DRAKE PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

OHIO DIVISION
2686 LISBON ROAD
CLEVELAND 4, OHIO

January 9, 1956

AIR MAIL

Mrs. Marian Breland
Animal Behavior Enterprises
Route 6
Hot Springs, Arkansas

Dear Mrs. Breland:

We're getting all set for our 1956 use of CASEY and we find we need some information from you which will help us to better answer some of the most common questions asked by those who see CASEY in action.

Please provide us with complete answers to the following questions:

1. What is the value of each bird after trained?
2. What is CASEY's normal daily egg production?
3. How long does it take to train a bird to play ball?
4. How old is the bird when it goes into training?
5. How many flunk out of training --- what percent?
6. What breed of hens are the CASEY birds.
7. Is it only these breeds that are trainable?
8. Do you raise the CASEY birds right on your farm only?
9. How old will the CASEY birds normally live?
10. Once trained will the bird perform permanently or do they require refresher training.
11. What is the process used to train them - that is, what is the exact procedure?
12. Can roosters be trained to play ball? If so, why aren't they used?
13. Once trained are the birds ever let loose again --- or are they kept isolated?
14. What is the mixture used in the feed box? Is it special stuff?
15. Why do the CASEY birds fight with each other?

I guess that's about it for now but we may have more a bit later. Please give this as quick attention as you can for we need the information before January 18th in order to get set for the first show in time.

Best regards from us all.

Most cordially

Robert W. Lackner



85: GUMOUT - CLEVELAND

CODES: BENTLEY & A.B.C. 6TH EDITION

January 16, 1956

Mr. Robert W. Lackner
Pennsylvania Refining Company
2086 Lisbon Road
Cleveland 4, Ohio

Dear Mr. Lackner:

Thank you for your letters of January 9th and 10th. Answering the last letter first, we have not yet set any definite date for the Godfrey show nor for any other national network appearances but we will be sure to let you know as soon as anything is scheduled along this line.

With regard to the questions in your letter of January 9, I'll do my best to try to answer these, although, you no doubt realize that some of the problems are rather complicated and they will be difficult to answer definitely.

- (1) This is a tough one. It is difficult to place a precise value on each bird-- the birds differ considerably in their personal qualities and amount of training requirements. I could say somewhere between \$100.00 and \$1,000.00 but am not sure what this means, because we do not sell the birds.
- (2) Casey's normal daily egg production is about that of any chicken in good health -- an egg a day during laying season, which varies in length, being considerably longer for young birds of the egg breeds. We use heavy breeds instead of egg breeds and keep our birds to a much older age than is typical of an ordinary laying flock. Hence, the average annual egg production of the trained chickens would be lower than the average laying flock even though the health record of the trained birds is better.
- (3) Length of time in training varies with different birds, also the degree of perfection which is needed. The basic responses of operating the bat can be trained in about six weeks but alertness of performance, adaptation to audience and show circumstances, persistence, and other features required before the bird is ready to ship sometimes require four to six months to achieve.
- (4) Birds can be trained at any age but we generally like to start from five to seven months.
- (5) Ten to twenty-five percent flunk out of Casey training but they can sometimes be used for other acts.
- (6) The Casey birds are largely Indian River, which is a broiler breed, achieved by crossing Delaware and New Hampshires. These are white birds with a few

black feathers. We use some New Hampshire hens and a few White Rocks.

- (7) No, any breed can be trained but these heavy breeds are hardy and tame.
- (8) No, we buy the birds at about five months from poultry raisers.
- (9) Some birds are still performing at six or seven years. They may occasionally live even longer than this but we haven't really tested the possible limits. Four or five years performing life is practically certain.
- (10) The birds perform permanently -- they do not forget in the ordinary sense. They may require refresher training only in cases where the props have been changed or where long storage has lessened their emotional adaptation to show circumstances.
- (11) This is one of the long and complicated questions which would be difficult to answer without writing a book on the subject, however, in general we reward approximations to the correct responses with food until the bird begins to operate the bat successfully. At first very weak responses are reinforced; later in training, we require the bird to give good strong tugs at the bat; still later, we require the bird to operate the bat several times for each food reward; and then later still, add the requirements of making a technical home run and of working under the very arduous circumstances of show life. In general, the chief principle used is food reward for correct behavior. No punishment is ever used and wrong responses simply drop out from disuse.
- (12) Yes, roosters can be trained. We do not use them because of their emotional behavior. They are much more apt to startle and try to fight with attendants and audience. In other words, we do not claim that women are smarter than men but only that they act more sensibly!
- (13) Yes, the birds are occasionally put out in the yard for sun and exercise but this may happen only once a year or less often depending on the circumstances.
- (14) Yes, the mix used in the feed box is special feed. It is prepared particularly so that it will not jam the electric feeder and can be consumed quickly by the chicken.
- (15) Casey birds fight because they have been isolated from each other. If they were loose in a yard, they would still fight but the beaten bird would run to a corner. Fights would occur less often because the birds who have once been beaten generally avoid the victors for periods of hours or days. In the shipping cages, the birds have no chance to settle their differences and establish their social hierarchy.

I hope that this will help you in your preparation for the use of Casey this season. We wish you continued luck with the shows and please let us know if we can be of service in any other way. Best regards.

Very truly yours,

Marian Breland

MB/ob