

Black Asian Chickens Have No White Meat

When Ayam Cemani chicken breeders say their birds have dark meat, they mean it. The native Indonesian breed is black to the bone - including all the meat, organs and even their bone marrow. But, at \$199/chick, you won't find many on the dinner table just yet.

Jenny Taylor is farm manager for Greenfire Farms, Midway, Fla., which raises a variety of unusual and rare poultry breeds. She says the breed is costly because of the red tape and expense importing them. The all-black chickens come from a 500-year-old Asian breed. Because of an import ban from that region, North American breeders such as Greenfire Farms import from certified breeders in EU countries.

"Despite their hypnotic, otherworldly beauty, Ayam Cemani are usually hardy, low maintenance, and by disposition easy to handle," Taylor says. "We were asked by New York magazine to supply an Ayam Cemani model for their holiday gifts issue, and after we flew him to New York, our rooster patiently allowed himself to be draped with million-dollar jewelry and trussed with a red ribbon while he was photographed under bright lights."

The chickens do well in confinement or backyard runs for owners from Maine to Florida, she adds. They thrive on 16 percent layer pellets and have the same water and housing requirements as other chickens.

Medium size with a narrow frame and small breast, they are more for showmanship than meat. They also produce 80 cream-colored eggs each year, which can



be hatched and sold.

Though Greenfire Farms only breeds the blackest birds, they can't guarantee that all offspring will have the same amount of black pigment.

Taylor notes she has never dressed an Ayam Cemani, but when a coyote killed one, she cut the chicken open. Everything was black, she says, but adds it's a myth that the blood and feces are also black.

In the future, however, the black chickens may be dressed and served at some high-end restaurants.

"A lot of people are interested in them for their culinary value," Taylor says.

For poultry enthusiasts interested in unusual birds, she notes that Greenfire Farms has another black breed. The Swedish Black Hen is more adopted for colder climates and has more red in the wattles, but is also black to the bone. Chicks sell for \$99/each



The All-black Ayam Cemani breed is native to Indonesia. A medium-sized bird with a narrow frame and small breast, they're more suited for showmanship than as producers of meat or eggs.



and adult pairs sell for \$700.

For details about them and other varieties raised at the "boutique hatchery," check out their website.

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How To Reshape Damaged Culverts

Terry Jacob has a solution to fix damaged culvert ends that plug up with every rain. He reshapes them with his hydraulic culvert "reshaper". The scissors-action jack slips inside and pushes bent ends back into shape in minutes.

"Galvanized, corrugated culverts on country roads cost hundreds to thousands of dollars to be replaced," says Jacob. "We live in a flat part of Kansas and it's a serious problem. Residue from fields get trapped and constricts flow, and we get drainage issues."

Jacob's reshaper was originally designed to pick up tractors, but he modified the saddles with pieces of channel iron to fit the shape of common culvert sizes.

"Without the saddles, the jack would just rip the steel, but with the saddles, it conforms to the shape of the culvert," says Jacob.

The scissors jack collapses down to about 7 to 8 in. to slip inside the bent end of a culvert. If the end is smashed down even

farther, Jacob edges the 4-in. high nose into the hole and slowly raises the bend enough for the entire jack to enter.

"I use 30-ft. hydraulic hoses off a tractor to power it, with one person at the culvert and one on the tractor," says Jacob. "I can also hook it up to a power pack used for pickup-mounted bale spears."

Reshaping a culvert will still be a 2-person job as the 60 lb. scissors jack is awkward for one to handle. Regardless, it could be a good way to get culverts at discount.

Jacob recently used his reshaper to repair new culverts that were bent being handled by loaders.

"I was able to go inside and bend them back," he says.

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Terry Jacob uses his hydraulic culvert "reshaper" to fix damaged culvert ends that often plug up with heavy rains.



Scissors jack collapses to slip inside bent end of culvert.