



Do You Trust Your Information Source?

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In today's world information is readily available thanks to Google, Social Media and online networking. You can look at it as either a blessing or a curse, it can certainly be either one. If you're new to the fancy how can you make it more of a blessing than a curse?

The trouble with all the poultry information available to us today is that some of it is good, some is bad and some is downright awful. The trick is learning which is which fortunately gets easier over time so take heart. So, what can you do in the mean time?

My first bit of advice is to never take everything at face value, use questions to help you try to determine if the information is valid. Questions like: Does this make sense to me? What is the source of this information? If it's from a longtime breeder (with ten or more years of experience), or a poultry judge then I tend to trust the information. If it's from a relative newcomer, backyard poultry blogger or other similar source, then I tend to be much less trusting until I can otherwise verify the information.

One of the best things you can do to move yourself forward is to find an experienced breeder that will take you under their wing and coach you. Many years ago, I was very fortunate to find two great gentlemen to help me. One mentored me in breeding and the other on judging. Mentors can also help you to sort out the good information from the bad.

One on one personal interactions, either in person and specially on social media, can be a bit trickier. In personal interactions we can determine a bit more about a person's attitude in voice tone, etc. With social media conversations it's much more difficult to do that since we can't hear the person's tone of voice etc, we can only see what they type. If you feel they are coming across as a bit of a "know it all" or perhaps even arrogant then that should raise a red flag.

Something else that will help you separate good from bad information is to study as much as you can. Try to study the Standard of Perfection some every day or two. You'll find a lot of historical poultry books online that you can access free of charge and they can be a treasure trove of information. One place I would suggest you look for them is www.archive.org they have a huge collection. You'll probably find the really old books to be less helpful than those published in the 1930s and later.

Go to shows and find folks showing the breed you're working with and visit with them. Just don't try to talk with them prior to judging because they will be busy getting their birds ready. Remember to be respectful of them and their time. Once most of them see you're eager to learn most will be willing to help. It's a good idea to join the breed club for the breed you're working with as they can be great resources. If they have a Facebook page or group ask to join it too.

So best of luck in learning along the way in your poultry journey, I know it will be interesting, frustrating and fun all at the same time.