

# FAVEROLLES

By: Dirk de Jong (NL)



Above: Salmon Faverolles, French type.

## Intro

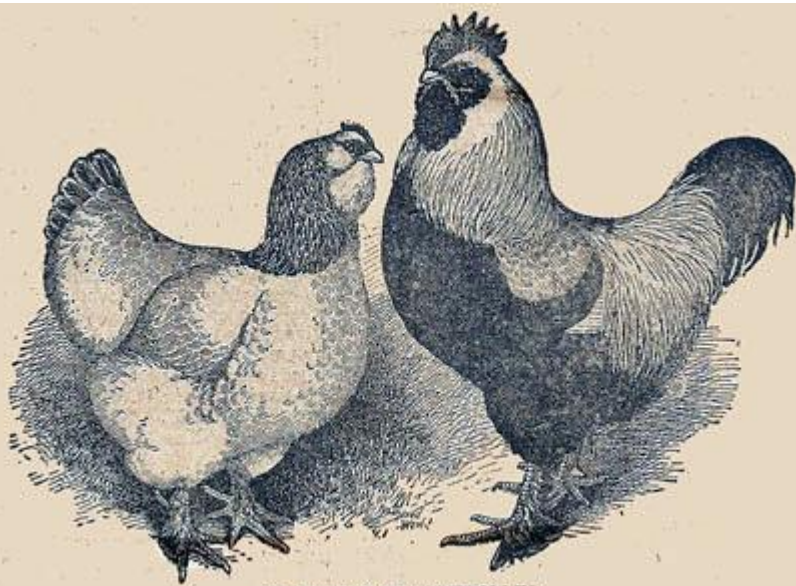
Chicken breeders can still learn a lot from rabbit and pigeon breeders, who train their animals to adopt the ideal position in order to show the breed type as optimally as possible. Most of the poultry breeders do - at best - not go beyond getting the chickens used to an exhibition pen.

## Judging the body type

As far as the body type is concerned, we rely upon a side view drawing, which was seen as 'ideal' years ago by Mr. C. S. Th. van Gink; and we have to try to turn this drawing into a reality. Over the years little things have been added or changed in

the text of the standard description, but Van Gink's drawings remain as an ideal type image. For the sake of completeness, a front, back and top view of each breed would provide much more clarity; this is perhaps something for the future, with computer images?

Left: The drawing by Van Gink, dated 1920.



ZALMKLEURIGE FAVEROLLES.

small detail. You would be surprised how the overall picture changes! It is not only

the back line and tail carriage that determine the length of the chicken, but also the position of the neck is just as important. By modelling a standard type in clay you can very simply show such differences; this gives a much clearer picture than a series of drawings. You can learn a lot by looking at your model after making any changes to it, by viewing it from a distance and observing it from all angles.

### **Appearance and body type of the Faverolles**



Faverolles are large, deep chickens with a horizontal carriage that gives the impression of great size. Seen from the front they have a broad chest, and the legs are set well apart. They have a full three-part beard and an upright single comb with no less than five points. The legs are slightly feathered, and the breed also has five toes. The ideal weights for Faverolles are 3.5 to 4 kg for the cocks, and 2.8 to 3.5 kg for the hens.

**Left: Rooster, French type.  
Below: Rooster, German type.**



Faverolles of the German type look heavier than those of the French type. The back line also looks longer through the lower carriage of the tail. The breast is also a little deeper, with the very deep keel-bone quite prominent in front. That is why the German type of Faverolles have the so-called 'brick model'. In weight, however, they are no heavier than the French type, which looks a little more graceful.

To illustrate the original type, we quote from an old article by Mr Muijs, published in *Avicultura* magazine in 1920. You have to keep in mind that over the years a lot has changed regarding almost all breeds. If you read the names of the breeds that were used to create the Faverolles, you cannot help thinking of the current breeds. If you tried re-creating the Faverolles now through the same crossings, you would face big challenges!

*Taken from: Avicultura, 3 March 1920, page 132*

*In both sexes, the comb is single, upright, medium sized, proportional and without any twists. This is a very difficult issue, because of all the breeds, from which the Faverolles are bred (Brahma, Cochins, Dorkings and Houdans), only the Dorking has a single comb, which in the hens also falls to*

one side. The peculiar comb form of Brahma and Houdans is highly inherent, so all of these comb forms may pop up in the Faverolles and it is consequently necessary to pay close attention to this point in order to obtain and maintain the right comb form. The beard and mufflings to be hanging well down, thick and full; long and thin is less desirable. However, such a beard is only found in the Houdan, one of the constituent breeds, and it is therefore very difficult to breed. The head of the Faverolles is one of the most characteristic and important points. It is wide and short, with small, thin wattles and a firm, short beak. In the hen the length of the keel bone and back is larger and deeper than that of the rooster. The thighs are short and are set wide apart and are straight; the shanks are medium long – low standing, short-legged birds are not desired - firm and completely straight, feathered on the outside up to the end of the outer toe; leg feathers soft; free of vulture hocks, which are still commonly seen. Toes five in number; the fourth or rear toe and the fifth completely diverging from one another. Tail feathers and sickles full and wide; the latter short and preferably upright as with the Brahma's; a wide tail with long sickles, carried low or straight backwards, does not conform to the shape of the bird. The tail of the hen is fan-shaped and to be carried fairly low.

**Right: Hen, German type.  
Below: Hen, French type.**



In former years breeding was on a much larger scale, one had to produce many birds for selection; but this also had its advantages. The overall results of the pairings could be assessed more clearly from a large number of hens than from just two or three hens, which are nowadays more usually bred by the fancier. A large number of offspring is a source of information - something we miss today. Of course, now there are better opportunities to acquire knowledge; books, magazines, internet, etc. If you have the opportunity to read any vintage volumes of Avicultura, you will find this is the equivalent to leafing through an unmatched encyclopaedia in the field of 'back-yard poultry-farming'. Let's go back over the history of the breed for the sake of completeness. This is done for new readers and people who do not have the opportunity to delve into an archive once in a while.

### **History of the Faverolles**

The Faverolles are named after a small village called Faverolles, located between Houdan and Dreux, in the department of Yvelines; about 70 kilometers west of Paris. Here the Faverolles breed was originated around 1870. the village has only 680 inhabitants, and if you see the 'Faverolles' road-sign you need to slow down,

otherwise you'll be out of town again. The village is surrounded by large arable fields, this slightly rolling landscape radiates tranquillity and space and, traditionally, a lot of vegetables and cereals are grown here. In France there are 7 villages named Faverolles. So be careful when you go to visit it!



In Paris, at the turn of the century, there was a lot of demand for Houdan meat-type chickens - yes there were gourmets there! - one developed a hen that possessed the good qualities of the Houdan, and not the bad qualities. Bad features at that time were sensitivity to disease and slow growth; however, this was improved by breeding out the crest. Also, bigger birds than the Houdan were required and out-crossing started with Asian breeds like Brahma, Cochin and Langshan. This was very progressive at that time; every poultry breeder wanted to improve his chickens with these giant breeds. The chickens bred from these crosses had yellow skin, which was not favoured; so the (white-skinned) Coucou de Rennes was bred in. The offspring of these had all kinds of colours and body types but were very good as utility chickens. About 1890 some of these chickens were imported into England and crossed there with Dorkings. This was a big hit, and the 'Faverolles' became very popular in England. That the British breeders had done a good job, showed at the great agricultural exhibition in Paris in 1896, where all the prizes for the Faverolles were won by birds from England. The French breeders based their future breeding on descendants from these English-bred chickens. However, they did not chose birds for separate male and female breeding pens, like the English did, but for the colour of the rooster, namely silver-coloured. Around 1900 the Faverolles, as we know them today, finally appeared.

### **Spreading over the world**

The breed quickly gained popularity and was introduced into Germany and America, where they were bred according the English standard, which is still largely followed in America. In Germany a standard was soon drafted that could be applied to good cocks and good hens out of one breeding pen. In addition, the Germans wanted to emphasize the nutritional qualities - a heavy meat breed; Thus, they aimed for a somewhat longer body type with the lower tail carriage and deep chest.



**Left: German type Faverolles drawn by Relovsky.**

In the Netherlands there have always been Faverolles breeders, but never in very large numbers. Being relatively unknown, an incorrect spelling of the name often occurs, due to both the singular or plural correct spellings ending with the letter 's'. It's French, and they write the 's', but do not pronounce it. In the past, this had to be explained to many exhibition secretaries.

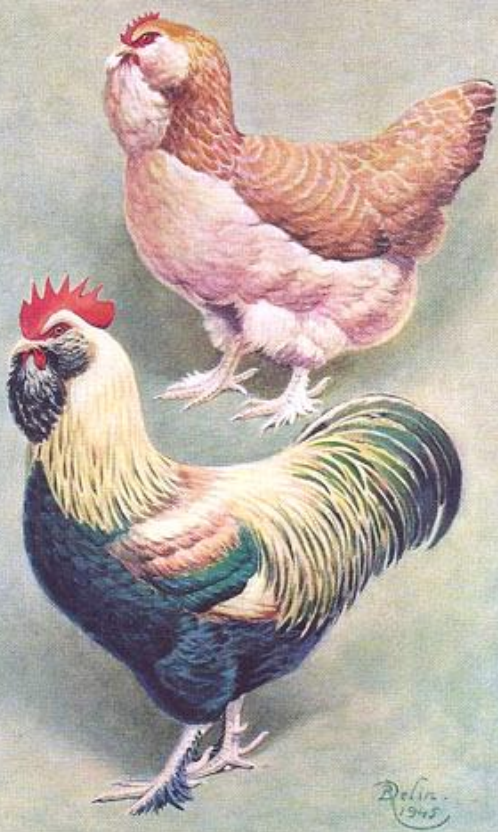
**Below: A drawing by Ludlow, 1909.**

### Faverolles today

When modern Faverolles are compared with the old drawings, we notice, that after 1900, not so much has changed as to the overall breed type; mainly these are a somewhat looser feathering, and a somewhat lower stance and a broader chest, which gives an even more impressive impression of



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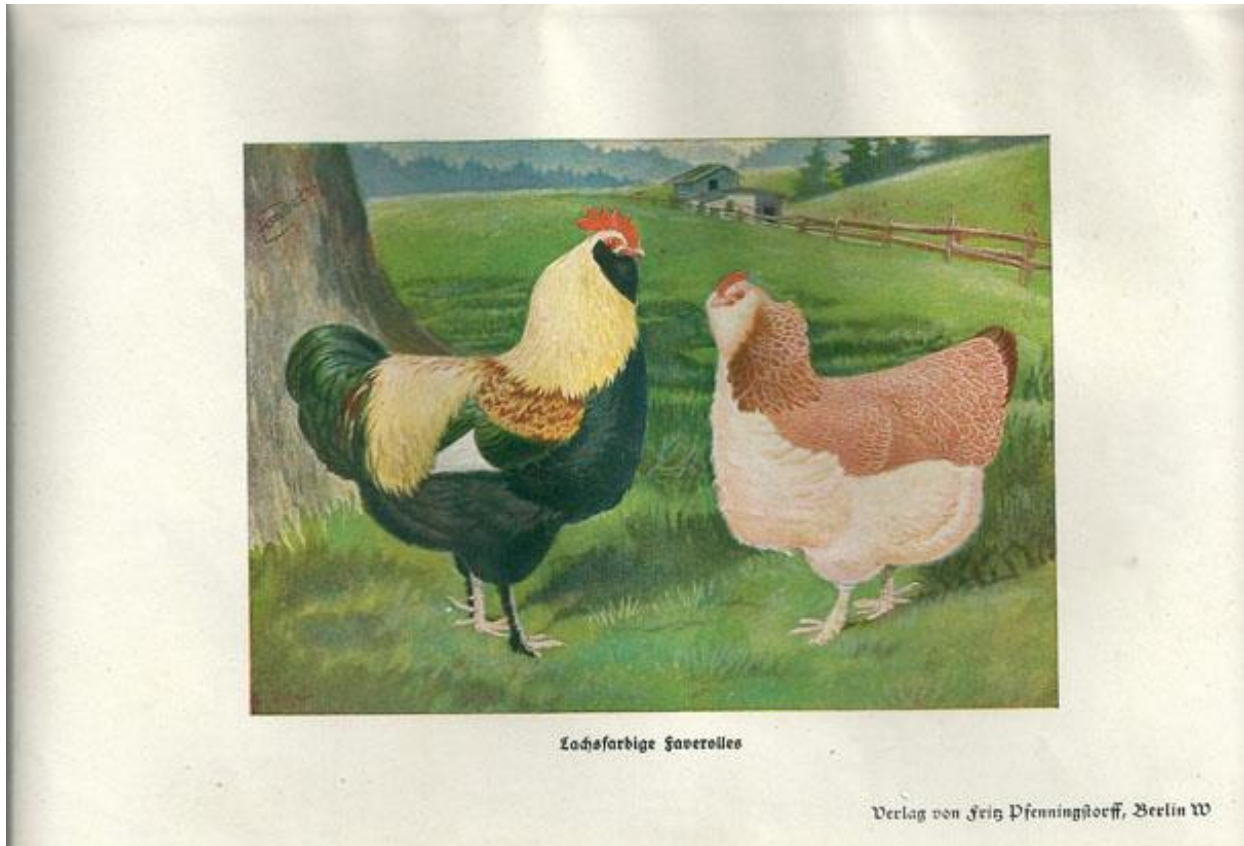
the chicken overall. Still, you always have to keep in mind that when we view paintings and drawings, we are always observing the artist's interpretation of the breed.

**Left: A drawing by René Delin, 1945.**

Concerning the salmon colour; this has changed over the years in the Faverolles in the different countries where they are bred in greater numbers. The salmon colour, in its varies in nuances, can be bred by selection, from very soft and light, such as now in France, to a very hard, almost red colour, in Germany.

England has always taken its own course; the perfecting of the Faverolles as we know them today is the work of English breeders. The favourite salmon colour was initially an almost black-and-

white rooster with little red on back and shoulders, and a dark salmon-coloured hen. In order to produce exhibition quality cockerels and pullets, double mating (a separate male and female from separate strains) was required. The standard was later adjusted ,allowing the roosters to show more red, so that from one breeding pen good roosters, as well as good hens were obtained. As far as I am aware, only America adheres to the requirements of the first English standard.



**Above: German Faverolles, *Lachshühner*.**

From the beginning, Germany chose the dark salmon hens and the dark red cock with the characteristic red neck spot. The type also became a bit more imposing; more trapezoidal, with a tail of a lower carriage.

In France, they initially chose for the light-coloured - almost black and white- 'English' cock and pale salmon-coloured hens. Later, two varieties were standardised: light and dark, although this has slightly changed over the years. Formerly the French name for the French breeding type was '*Faverolles clair*' (light, clear) and '*Faverolles foncé*' (dark) for the German breeding type; nowadays this is *Faverolles française* (French) and *Faverolles allemande* (German), with the colour name of '*fromant argenté*' for the French type and '*saumon*' for the German type. Thus, the difference in breed type, which is best seen in the high tail-carriage of the French and low tail-carriage of the German Faverolles, is also recognized in France; this is the same in the Netherlands.

**Right: Breeder Huub Gerritsen (NL) with one of his French type hens.**



There are the two types of Faverolles in the Netherlands, the French and the German. The French Chicken Club of the Netherlands supports this, because the differences are large enough to allow both types to co-exist. The Faverolles bantams though, have their origin in German breeding, and are always of the German salmon colour and body type.



**Left: Breeder Gert Calcoen (B) with a French type rooster.**

### **The colour varieties**

Originally the Faverolles came in three colour varieties: salmon, white and Columbia – the latter obviously coming from the Brahma genes. Nowadays, Faverolles are available worldwide in many more colour varieties; namely white, salmon in different nuances, black, blue, columbian, blue salmon, cuckoo, buff and silver wheaten. In France, the *Faverolles française* are now recognized in two colour varieties, salmon and cuckoo. All other colour varieties are *Faverolles-allemande*.

**Below: A hen in the Columbian variety.**

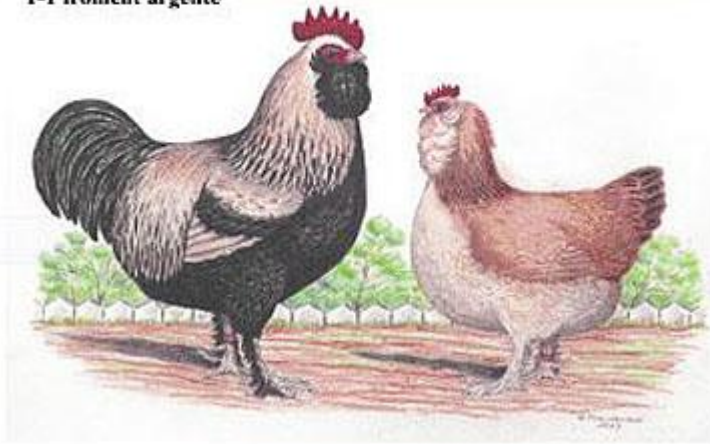


The salmon colour-way is something spectacular; with such completely different colours in the rooster and the hen; almost looking like being two separate breeds. When we look at the rooster we see a black fowl with white-coloured ornamental feathers and a white wing triangle. This white is not a pure white, but ivory-white with a little yellow on the back, shoulders and saddle. According to the Dutch standard, the feather colour of the back, shoulders and shoulder bow is to be mixed with a light red tint. With this description in our current standard, we want to prevent the necessity of double mating! Furthermore, the beard of the rooster is to be as black as possible, but this is not easy to achieve.

The colour of the hen is actually the opposite; an ivory-white chicken with a salmon-coloured neck, back, saddle and tail, each feather edged with a cream rim. In the German type, the hen's salmon colour is much warmer and darker. In the cocks we see even bigger differences: a deep black beard, a red-brown neck and a red-brown back and shoulder marking. The colours of the German type are thus much harder.

# Faverolles française

1-1 froment argenté



general colour description of 'silver wheaten' in France. The strange thing is that in this customized colour description of silver wheaten for the Faverolles is written about salmon-coloured shades. For me, this is very confusing.... It is strange that apparently everybody in our country (NL) in this modern age with all its internet information, has missed this alteration.

What happens next? In the Netherlands we follow the country of origin - in this case France. Of course, there is nothing more difficult than visualising a colour described through the same eyes of the writer. The top Dutch birds match perfectly the French description; and, apparently, the much lighter and irregularly coloured birds in France do also.

However, if we look at the standard image, we see the 'Dutch' Faverolles; the present French birds do not look like this anymore.

**Right: Salmon Faverolles hen, French type, bred by a Dutch fancier.**



Our Faverolles show a beautiful soft and especially regular salmon colour. Perhaps we can bring this to the French breeder's attention? More and more, Faverolles breeders in France have now switched to the German breeding line. Why? Don't they like their own breeding line anymore? Colours in our chickens are always a bit changeable and subject to personal preferences, because who is to determine how light a light-salmon colour is to be? One breeder wants it as light as possible and another wants to see some more colour.

## Breeding advices

*Taken from: Avicultura, 3 March, 1920.*

*When pairing the salmon-coloured variety, one should also pay attention to the comb, the width of the back and the width between the thighs, which should be good in both sexes. The comb must not show side sprigs and, if possible, be very fine, straight and upright. The chickens with the best combs are used for breeding, because the least comb fault is found in the chicks. A rooster with heavy beard and mufflings has great value as a breeding bird. Straw yellow neck and saddle hackle in the male is to be preferred over white for exhibition cock breeding, while even a very light shade of brown or brownish gray may be allowed for hen breeding. We should be careful with*



*breeding from hens with some black in the hackle, especially just at the feather tip, unless one knows that the hen's mother was much better coloured in the hackle.*

Much of this breeding advice from over 80 years ago still holds good; although difficult colours, occurring in many nuances, will appear over the years in a kind of wave motion. I think this will only be visible, viewed over a 50-year span, through the use of colour photographs appearing in the breed specials in the poultry magazines.



**Above: Faverolles chicks French type/colour.**

**Below: Especially in the German salmon colour, the difference between male and female chicks is already show after a few weeks.**



Faverolles lay cream or tinted eggs. These are usually a little bit rounded in shape, but a little small for such a large chicken. The minimum weight for a breeding egg



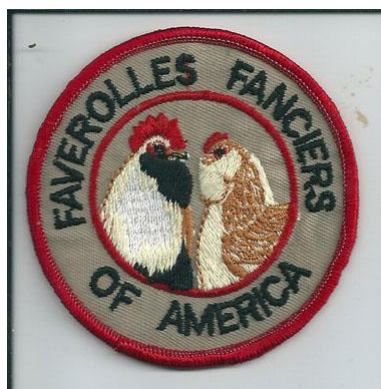
is 55 grams according to the French Standard. In the old times, the hens became naturally broody and they were excellent mothers, it was said. This no longer holds for the current Faverolles, although you can breed the broodiness back into your line, if you wish. I think where large numbers of Faverolles might be bred, we could fairly quickly make selections for a somewhat larger egg; after all, they were once a dual-purpose breed. In case I have stirred any interest in my readers to start breeding Faverolles: the ring size is 24 mm for the cock and 20 mm for the hen.

**Right: A blue-salmon hen. The only blue is found in the wing and tail feathers.**

### Faverolles Clubs in other countries

You will find Faverolles enthusiasts all over the world and through the Internet they often keep in contact with each other; and it is very interesting to find out how chickens are kept in other countries. Countries like America, Germany, and England have specialty clubs for Faverolles breeders, although you must not expect huge membership numbers. The American Club has only 43 members and six of these are from Europe; England is a leader with about 80 members.

In Germany the specialty club is called '*Sonderverein Deutscher Lachshuhn- und Zwerglachshuhnzüchter*'. In France, the Faverolles are accommodated together with the Houdans and Mantes in the '*Houdan, Faverolles, Mantes Club de France*'. In the Netherlands the Faverolles are represented by the '*Franse Hoender Club*'. If you compare the presentation of the clubs abroad with our those in our country (NL), we are still very staid and impecunious. More especially, in English-speaking countries they have beautiful and artistic prizes and colourful displays. I therefore hope that more fanciers will look over the border; it can only make the decoration of our shows more attractive.



[Click the logos for the Club's websites.](#)

### To end with

It's not an easy task to enter a perfect pair of Faverolles in an exhibition. It is not a breed where, you as a beginner, immediately come home with a car-load of prizes. Although, if you take up the challenge, you will get a lot in return. Faverolles are superior all-rounders, a very beautiful chicken, that are confident and have excellent utility qualities. A breed to love, a breed for Burgundians, for lovers of beauty, a

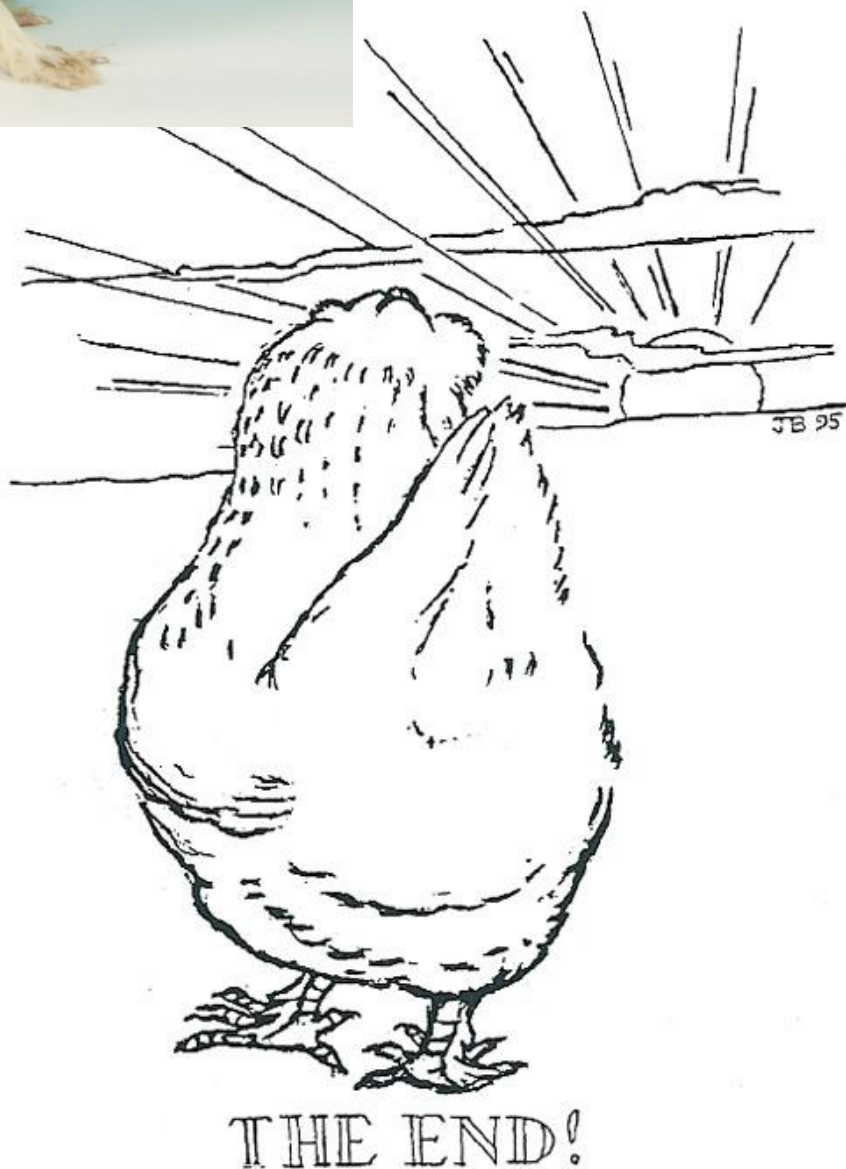




breed with character, for the show or just in the backyard; in short, a breed for everyone!

**Left: English salmon Faverolles hen, by Marcia Gilbert (UK)**

**Below: Drawing taken from the Jubilee booklet of the British Faverolles Club, drawn by Jesse Bruton, husband of Sue Bruton, president of the Club.**



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