

IFCA / CIFIC affiliation article for CPFA

Compared to many breeds of pigeons, Indian Fantails are a relative newcomer to North America as the first birds arrived around 75 years ago. They have grown immensely in the time; in popularity, in size, in colours and in the number of breeders.

There has been a National club (IFCA) in existence in the USA for many years, along with a few regional clubs. There has been a National club (CIFIC) in existence in Canada since 1990. These various clubs have done a good job of promoting the breed in their respective regions and the breed has never been more popular.

The breeders in the USA and Canada have been friends for much of this time but, with some exceptions, there has never been much interaction between the clubs on different sides of the border. We have discussed it in the past but it never went very far. In the last few years however the discussion became much more involved with breeders on both sides very much interested in making it happen. The key issues were how to remain autonomous, keep each of the National clubs strong, and make sure rules, regulations and dollars worked for both sides. To that end we had to resolve some key issues;

Master Breeder Program

The CIFIC had a master breeder program for many years and 4 breeders obtained the points required to achieve the recognition. However, over time nobody stepped up to put forth the effort to tabulate show results and the master breeder program was eventually cancelled. The CIFIC has, since its inception, used the Standard of Perfection that was written up by the IFCA.

The IFCA has a much larger base of members. They have a strong master breeder program still in effect and it is a goal for many of the breeders to add to their totals each year.

Districts

The CIFIC has one Canadian district. The IFCA has 6 districts. There is a much larger base of directors, each one having some degree of control over their district. The IFCA is able to draw on many more members to help spread the responsibilities around and help to keep the club strong and moving forward.

Financial Concerns

The CIFIC maintains a bank account that ensures that the club can pay for its expenses and the club supplies its own bands to members. All club expenses run through the one account.

The IFCA maintains a bank account that handles club expenses and revenue as well. The main difference is that the main club is broken down into 6 districts. Each district is able to hold 1-100 point show and 2-50 point shows each year, based on entries, etc. The National Show and the Louisville Young Bird Show do not count against a districts shows. The National and NYBS entries, costs, awards and other expenses are handled by the main IFCA bank account and officers of the club. All district shows are handled individually by each individual district. This includes all costs and revenue. The main club does not get involved with district expenses other than to supply the awards for each districts 100 point shows.

Judging

The CIFC tries to have a top judge for the main shows. The club does not have a certified judging program in place to train judges but historically many IFCA certified judges have come north over the border to judge the main shows. The IFCA has had a certified judge system in place for many years. For a show to qualify as a "points" show it must be judged by a certified judge. As a separate issue, the IFCA is in the process of reviewing their present system as, like the rest of the hobby, judges are not being replaced as quickly as they are retiring.

The incoming president of the IFCA, Harvey Addengast and myself as the president of the CIFC talked at length at the 2014 NYBS and then again often after that. Ideas were discussed and dropped. Eventually the reps from the clubs both felt that the best arrangement would be simply to establish a Canadian District of the IFCA. Based on how each club operates this would be simple and seamless. To establish 1 (for now) Canadian district would mean it would operate the same as any other district. It would control it's finances. It would control which shows might be made into joint shows or 50/100 point shows. The shows that were agreed upon by the Canadian members to become joint meets would qualify for IFCA master breeder points if the class winners were members of the IFCA. The entry fees would not change. An Exhibitor would not necessarily have to be a member of both clubs to enter birds. The proposed addition of a new District 7 was put to a vote by both the IFCA and CIFC membership and was almost unanimous in its approval on both sides of the border.

While this may seem like only so much talk with few tangible benefits it is anything but. The benefits are many;

1-With many of the IFCA chasing master breeder points a number of them close to the border are already talking about attending a joint show in Canada. This increases entries and competition in the show and allows the show to be more prominent.

2-With breeders coming from the States there will be much more interaction between breeders on both sides of the border. Now, instead of simply knowing names from the Internet, people are friends. The breeders from both sides are more likely to make an effort to attend shows across the border if they know and are friends with the breeders at that show.

3-Sharing of good stock will happen much more simply because of the increased interaction, either at the shows or by shipping later.

4-With larger entries comes more exposure for the breed and likely more breeders down the road. We all notice the top breeds in the shows and many of us are drawn to consider these breeds because of the strong clubs and competition that is displayed at the show.

5-There is a much greater exchange of information and more uniformity in the judging of the birds, both in show setup and judging itself.

With our hobby being recognized as more in decline than growth anything we can do to stimulate interest, interaction and fellowship is a worthwhile endeavor.

We have already seen benefits in a short period of time and they will just continue to grow. It would be worthwhile for many other breed clubs to consider similar cooperation in the future to help to reverse the downward slope we are most definitely headed towards. Together we are much stronger.