

A Coronation Link

By AP Team

One Dutch poultry breeder has gone to great lengths to obtain her favourite breed and learn more about it, including making contact with the Aussie expert.

Conny Veenendaal discovered lavender based Coronation Sussex under unusual circumstances. She was enjoying a long awaited holiday in the US and a family catch-up when she received word from her home in the Netherlands that her favourite Light Sussex hen had died. While searching the internet for Sussex breeders with a view to obtaining fertile eggs she saw a variety she had not seen in Europe. The birds were Lavender Coronation Sussex, and just beautiful.

An epic 24-hour trip to and from a breeder prepared to sell fertile eggs was undertaken. Then Conny went to great effort to safely pack the fertile eggs for the return plane trip home. She was devastated when she discovered the eggs were old and so not viable for incubation.

Undeterred she set about locating other US breeders. Shipping the eggs out was no easy feat in that travel could take 7–10 days so eggs would need to be virtually laid and posted on the same day for fertility to be good. Nine shipments were undertaken with disastrous results. No chicks hatched.

A kind person in the US offered to

assist Conny and located, packed and posted fertile eggs and happily five chicks hatched. Later, when the youngsters were outdoors, a young cockerel was injured and required euthanasia. This left two pullets and two cockerels, but sadly each subsequently died due to a range of unforeseen circumstances.

One of the roosters had been mated to some unrelated Light Sussex females Conny had obtained, leaving offspring to go on with in two unrelated lines.

Conny's journey has relevance to Australia in that she vainly searched for information on the variety when she first started. Although living in the Netherlands she learnt that a breeder from Tasmania was acknowledged as the originator of the variety in Australia and wanted to contact him. With the help of an intermediary Conny was able to speak with Phillip Evans and benefit from his experience. As Conny's networking and acquisition of information is usually done electronically and Phillip and his wife enjoy a simpler life that only includes a landline phone, it was no small feat for the two parties to connect.

A side story accompanies Conny's involvement with Coronation Sussex. A gift of fertile eggs of blue-based Coronation Sussex from England has resulted in a second developmental project, but that is another journey altogether.

While it seems Conny has had many hurdles to overcome with establishing her line of Lavender-based Coronations, her efforts to have the variety accepted and recognised has presented a saga stretching over several years. The complexity of the acceptance system has meant much reliance on the specialist breed club and this has proved most unproductive.

It is to Conny's credit that she has persisted with her request for recognition. Most people would have walked away in frustration.

Finally in April 2021 she received the official paperwork acknowledging recognition of the Lavender-based Coronation variety in the Dutch and European standards for the Sussex breed. Her breed friends in Australia will have shared her jubilation at this achievement. ❖

