

Pigeon Breeding

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siasts. Trimming is the pigeon breeders' equivalent of fitting cattle for show, and entails delicate grooming and removal of undesirable colors and locations of feathers. A tiny manicure scissors is the primary tool used in trimming pigeons.

York Fair is a major show for the Angle family, with Marvin and Kevin exhibiting as many as 150 pigeons between them. Angle shows annually at the NPA national show, which rotates around the country. Two years ago, the southcentral Pennsylvania area hosted nationals at the Lancaster Host Inn, drawing 5600 pigeon entries for their show. Pigeon auctions are also usually

held during show events, with top breeding birds commanding prices up to \$150. Birds from outstanding bloodlines are in continuing demand, both at public and private sales. As competition for birds has grown, pigeon breeders are being increasingly careful of their flocks. Angle's loft has twice been broken into by thieves over the past several years, who selectively stole some of his most highly-prized show birds.

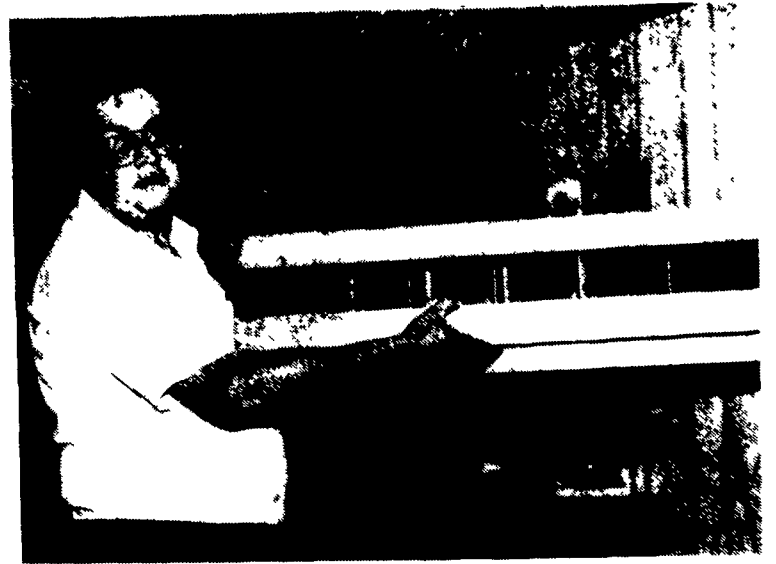
Following the Middle East war a few years ago, demand skyrocketed for pigeons from top show bloodlines. Buyers were primarily from Kuwait, where pigeon competition is keen, and war devastation and hunger had nearly wiped out all the flocks of the country's hobbyists. Angle relates that one

shipment of 60 pigeons sold by an acquaintance of his carried a \$30,000 selling price.

Brokers for foreign buyers often arrive at lofts with video cameras and forward videotapes of pigeons to potential customers. Some also arrive at public and private sale with specific orders for pigeons of particular species and coloration.

Specialized handling techniques have evolved through shipping pigeons for show and sale purposes. "Microbarriers" and "skykennels" are containers designed for handling pigeon shipments by postal service and by air freight. Microbarriers, used for shipping birds via domestic postal service, have a filter lining inside the breathing holes in the cardboard to prevent potential disease and bacterial contamination.

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When shipping pigeons by air for show or sale, Marvin Angle uses wooden "skykennels" to keep his prized birds safe and secure.

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