SPRAYING

SPRAYING MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE  
YOUR SHOW BIRDS BENEFIT AND STEADY DOWN MUCH MORE QUICKLY

The show season to the enthusiastic fancier is a very exciting time. It reveals the fruits of his efforts during the previous few months. When I visit the shows, I shall no doubt see many Budgerigars that would have looked much better and most probably have been placed higher up in their classes, had the owners taken a little more care in the process of preparing their birds.   
On visiting his first show a newcomer to the Fancy is probably not aware that an exhibitor can enhance the look of an exhibit, and so help to win a special award. It is for the benefit of these newcomers that I am writing. There is no excuse for any exhibitor to send his birds out in bad condition, and I refer, of course, to dirty birds in dirty cages.

Occasionally the general condition cannot be commented on. Sometimes a bird may look all right when placed in a show cage, but by the time it has reached the show hall, it could possibly have 'blown out'. This is a term we used when,for no apparent reason, a bird starts to drop its feathers, and on returning home the bird falls into a severe moult.

When I send my birds to a show, I enter them to win. Therefore, to stand any chance at all they have to be in spotless condition. Many Fanciers are of the opinion that only light coloured birds need cleaning up, but in actual fact all varieties require preparing for the show bench. Therefore, if possible, spray all your birds.

Before I describe the procedure I adopt, I must stress that I consider spraying to be one of the most important items that should be carried out for all birds except when breeding, particularly if you have no outside flights. If you keep your birds inside all the year round with no access to the natural elements and you do not spray them, you will soon find that their feathers will lose all that natural richness. You have only to look at wild birds, when they are not moulting of course their feathers are like a piece of silk, and your birds can, to a smaller degree, achieve that look if you spray them.

Does spraying damage the feathers?  
I do not think so, in fact, I would go as far as to say that all feather disturbances are started inwardly, either by nerve upset or due to a deficiency in the general makeup of the bird or its diet. But that is another subject.

Spraying is an excellent steadier and results in the task of training being far easier. It is also one of the best ways of getting birds into a fit and good general condition. You will find that a bird will use every muscle in its body while in the process of preening itself. A bird preens itself with the oil extracted from the preen gland at the base of the body, just above the tail.

When spraying, I prefer the bird to be in a show cage, the bottom of which has been removed and replaced with a wire netting base. Not only does the wire allow the water to run away but the bird will not be keen on standing on it. After having tried standing on the wire netting, you will find that subsequently it will automatically jump on to the perch and this, of course, helps from a training angle. I use hot water in my spray and hold it at a distance of about 18 inches from the front of the cage. I find by the time the water makes contact with the feathers it has cooled down considerably. Always spray gently to start with, in order to accustom the bird to the task, but ensure that it becomes quite wet.