

# ▶ Van Gent

## Halfway through the season of the marathon races

We are halfway through our marathon season. Through the weather systems from the middle of April till now, we almost had only northern winds to deal with accompanied by hot weather. You can see that the racers are dealing with the hardest conditions in years. As we race out of France and then every week, Northern winds with warm and very dry weather the birds must be in tip top condition to race.

### Breeding is key

My breeding loft is doing great. I reduced the number of couples from 10 to 8 and

good result with not many birds entered. The yearling cocks went to 430 kms and all went to 100 kms for training. Then the yearling cocks did 670 kms and the rest to 115 kms.

Then I basketed the 3 from St Vincent again for Dax, 1,070 kms. First came the 2nd arrival of St Vincent, now on a youngster of 16 days. She came back from St Vincent and went straight on her eggs. So after a few days I gave her a youngster of 5 days. The second arrival was the 1st hen from St Vincent and she was basketed on new eggs of 4 days. These two made the prize list and the 3rd one,

cocks, 670 kms. When they are doing that well I am thinking about putting some of the yearling hens and cocks on a race of 910 or 970 kms, depending on weather and winds. With a tail wind I will do it, with headwinds I won't. Then I will keep them until next year and then start them on the marathon races.

### What did I change?

I changed the used mixtures. I am using two type of mixtures. Gerry Plus mixture and All in One Beyers. In the beginning of the season they got 80% Gerry Plus and 20% All in One. All in One is a very rich mixture and too rich for the early part of training and distances. Gerry Plus is low in protein and eating this will keep them training.

During the longer races the percentage is now 50%-50%. And 3 days before a marathon race I give them extra feeding in their breeding box of a mixture of All in One, Tovo, hemp seeds and small fatty seeds. Of course they also get their minerals in a mix with stones etc. Three and 2 days before basketing I use the SAS drops of Travipharma. This is individually per bird. And when they return, I give the birds that have had more than



Breeding 2018.

that is much better. As you can see these are a good example of the excellent breeding I had this year.

### Preparation and races

To get the kms of training done, my racers flew 115, 185, 245, 345 and 185. After that the yearling cocks went to 480 and after that all went to 670 kms. Then the 3 for St Vincent were basketed. These are 4 and 3 years olds and enough experience for a hard race of 1,085 kms. The results were good, 1 hen was very good and the other 2 just missed the prize list. And all were home within 2, 5 hours. So very satisfied. I basketed 4 2yo cocks for Bordeaux, 945 kilometer and again headwinds. Now 3 out of 4 in the prize list and all home within 4 hours. So also a very

the cock came a day later; 1 in 4 basketed pigeons make it to the prize list by the way. I am very pleased with the season so far. Almost no losses and high prize percentages and the racers recovered very well from their endurance.

Next I am going to basket yearling hens for Chateauroux National, 670 kms which will be training for them. Why did I split the cocks and the hens in the beginning? I started the season with a cock surplus. After the first few trainings I lost 2 hens, so I needed to be a bit more careful with the hens. I kept them at 100-200 kms just to keep them going and the cocks already did their yearling programme. Now that everything is going as good as it goes, I also did put the hens on 315, 160 and 400 and now they have to do the same as the



St Vincent winner for Vincent Vork.

one night in the container, a pill against trichomonas and a recovery pill made by Gertjan Beute. These recovery pills make the birds recover far more quickly than when you do not give these. And the tricho pill takes care of infections from their journey in the trailer. Further I try to keep them in training. So every week a flight of 75 kms or more. Just to keep them active and also I hope that they do not moult that fast in their wings.

Next year I will use daylight lamps from the longest day to then end of the season to make the day as long as the longest day. Like this I hope the moult will be slowed down.

#### Overlooking the first part of the season

I am very happy. The changes made are working, Further more less losses in the

training races with the hard weather and the small racing team I have, I am very happy.

#### What else is there going on?

Recently I was able to accompany the person who does the checks for the international morning release races in the western part of Holland. The first birds of the ZLU races are being checked thoroughly by this person. So we went to the winner of St Vincent ZLU morning release Vincent Vork. He clocked the bird at 06.06 in the morning and saw the bird arriving. We were at his place at 14.30 and checked the codes in the electronic ring, we took pictures of the bird and there are a few more things you need to check. In the Netherlands we have a new system that has replaced the bands that you needed to time in a hand timer. Now the

birds get basketed at the entry club. Then they go to a central point where all birds get a second code in the chip. This second code proves that the bird was at the central point of the organisation. So the birds leave this facility in another basket that they were put in at the entry club. After this they are transported to the place of release. So with the check that second code is checked. I was able to see and feel the 1st National St Vincent for about 25 minutes and it was a joy. I was handling the bird for the pictures and film, made by Pigeon Pixels, check it on youtube. Search for Pigeon Pixels and check the films. They have subtitles. Enjoy!

Next time I will keep you up to date with the last part of the 2018 season.

Arjan van Gent

## The Fellside Way News with Glenn

We have a few results to catch up with, starting at the Tewkesbury race flown on 30th June with the Brampton & Dist, liberated at 9.15am in a ENE wind with 6/39. The in form loft of S J Bell 1st, 3rd & 4th with vels of 1367, 1281 & 1277, first home



Phil Heslop of Annan holding his (camera shy) red hen that he was going to sent to the Ypres memorial race.



Poppies from the Weeping Window at Carlisle Castle to commemorate 100 years since the Great War of 1918.

a blue Natural hen pooled to win £20, followed by a blue chequer widower cock and a another widower cock. Simpson Bros were 2nd & 6th on 1282 & 1218 with a red chequer cock; 5th to L McCluskey on 1225. Returns were fairly good.

On to Maidstone on 17th June for Irthing Valley RPC, liberated at 9.15 in a light SW wind with 7/28. Taking 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 6th D Smith of Haltwhistle with vels of 1237, 1199, 1184 & 1086 with a blue chequer cock, a chequer w/f cock, a blue bar widower cock and a blue hen. G N Webster of Brampton was 4th on 1173 with a red chequer cock and 5th to P Wright, also of Brampton with a dark chequer pooled AB on 1164. Very well done to Dennis Smith at 289 miles, top flying from a top fancier.

Well readers, how are you doing with the young birds? I'm doing a bit of training with my own and I'm hoping to get them beside the Solway Fed transporter and liberate them beside their birds. I'm thinking that they will break off when near to Carlisle. Some will probably go past but if they have anything about them they will make their own way back to their loft.

Steve Allan of Gretna kindly gave me some eggs off his Nico Volkens pigeons. These birds are very tidy long distance lines and I will train the youngsters later on if I manage to hatch them out that is. I really do think his birds will do well at 500 mile events.

Good luck to you all, keep the faith.

Glenn