

OAK SHADE RABBITRY
PRESENTS
RAISING RABBITS FOR
MEAT PENS AND SHOW

This rabbit production material is furnished by OAK SHADE RABBITRY

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SPECIAL TIPS FOR RAISING MEAT PEN RABBITS

1. When the babies arrive, after the first day, give full feed of PETRUS 700B (contains calf manna, 18% protein) to mamma and babies for five weeks and three days.
2. At five weeks remove does from the babies and put her in a different pen with the smallest baby for three days. Then place baby back in with the other babies.
3. Reduce does food to 17% protein (about a tomato sauce can full (4oz.) and some hay.
4. At 5 weeks and 3 days, change the meat pen rabbit's food to 17% protein pellets (feed until show).
5. When the babies begin to come out of the nest box, begin to feed them a feed enhancer of 3 parts crimped oats, 1 part barley, and ½ part sun flower seed. Place 2 oz. of this mixture in a crock bowl in the morning for the babies to feed on. (Increase amount of enhancer as they grow). Add 3 oz. show bloom mixture per coffee can. (See Doc. Enhancer)
6. Before feeding we suggest an investment in a dog vitamin known as Linetone, which is to be sprinkled on the feed pellets which will assist in the condition and sheen of the rabbit's coat.
7. Four weeks before the show date, weigh three rabbits in each pen to get an average weight. Three weeks before the show date weigh every other day and record weight gain per day. The next two weeks weigh everyday to monitor weight gain and place higher weighted rabbits in separate cages if the rabbit is trying to go over five pounds during the last week.
8. For overweight animals, if one or more rabbits are over the five pound mark, place them in separate cages. On the night before the show, remove the water from the selected rabbits at about 10:00 p.m. and weigh the next morning. They can lose up to two ounces.
9. Do not feed meat pen rabbits hay unless they get loose bowels or diarrhea.

TIPS FOR RAISING MEAT PENS

- I. Care of Breeding Animals
 - A. Need 16 hours day length, in winter, turn lights on in barn when you get home, turn off before you go to bed. At least 5 weeks before you breed.
 - B. Six days before you need to breed, give mixture of water and apple cider vinegar (7 cups of water to 1 cup of apple cider vinegar).
 - C. Dark red vulva – the Doe is ready to breed. If not, wait two to three days and rebreed.
 - D. Bucks go sterile if temperature does not go below 75 degrees at night for 10 to 15 days.
 - E. Does are rebred in 5 to 7 days, if they lose a litter.
 - F. Put nest boxes in at 27 days.
 - G. Watch does carefully on 32 day after breeding. If she has them on wire, take babies and place them in the nest box. Check babies for first 2 or 3 days to make sure she is feeding them (full stomach) babies are ok if not they are shrinking. If she does not come into milk then take the babies and place them under other does.

- II. Care of Young Rabbits.
 - A. Take nest box out when the babies are 16 days old.
 - B. Eyes should open at 10 days, if not by 12th day, dampen a washcloth and wet eyes and separate them.
 - C. Wean about the 5th week.
 - D. Four to six young is a good number for the Doe to feed out.
 - E. At four weeks or sooner, give young an enhancer or 3 part oats, 1 part barley and ½ part black sunflower seed. Give one ounce per rabbit per day.
 - F. Weigh young rabbits at
 1. 5 weeks and get average size
 2. 6 weeks rabbits should weigh 3 pounds
 3. Weigh every other day
 4. Place larger rabbits in a group cage and mark to the litter
 5. Check for some D. Q.'s
 - a. Bobtail
 - b. Two colors on the tail (martinizing)
 - c. All toe nails color
 - d. White in middle of black
 - e. Deformities, boils, and cysts
 6. 7 weeks individually chart growth and check for D.Q.'s
 7. 8 weeks weigh and chart growth and check for D. Q.'s
 - G. Last week before the show when you go to weigh

MEAT PENS The two main breeds used for meat pens are Californian first and New Zealand second. At most state shows you can show American, American Chinchilla, California, Champagne D'Argent, Cinnamon, Crème D'Argent, New Zealand, Palomino and Satin. Californian and New Zealand are the only breeds allowed at TVE and CLSDD. You breed for meat pens 100 days before the show.

Meat pens shall consist of three purebred rabbits, all of the same breed and variety. When I say variety that refers to the color of a rabbit. A meat pen does not necessarily have to come from the same litter. Age limit is ten weeks or 70 days. Minimum weight is three pounds each and maximum weight is five pounds each. All rabbits must be weighed in the presence of the judge. The four factors, in the order of their importance, for judging meat pens are (1) meat type, (2) condition, (3) uniformity, and (4) fur.

- A. The meat type is worth 40 points of the whole score. Type is the most important factor in judging these pens. The best meat type is found in those fryers that are compact and short, with the body well filled, rounded, and solidly fleshed. Smooth, well-filled hips and good depth of body are especially important. Protruding hipbones or prominent "razor backs" are serious faults. The width and depth of loin, thickness of the hindquarters, and well-developed shoulders are important to the meat carrying type of the fryer. The hindquarters are most important, loin second, and forequarters third in importance.
- B. Condition is worth 30 points. All fryers in a pen must be in prime condition. These reflect the care and management practices of the breeder. The fryers must be firm and solid. They must not show any signs of flabbiness, softness, looseness, or potteness. The pelt must be tight over the body and the animal must be clean and show no signs of neglect or disease.
- C. Uniformity is worth 20 points. This is a combination of the other three requirements. It denotes the ability of the breeder to pick three fryers for each pen which have the other three qualities in equal amounts, and will reflect the general quality of the herd from which they came. Uniformity must be present in weight, size, appearance, condition, meat type, and fur, and should be as similar in all aspects as possible.
- D. Fur is worth 10 points. Fur should conform to the breed description in the Standard and be uniform on all three animals in the pen.

If any one rabbit in the pen is overweight or underweight, the entire pen is disqualified from competition. Also if any one rabbit in the pen is disqualified then the entire pen becomes disqualified. All ARBA General Faults apply to each meat pen. Each breed is subject to the descriptions and disqualifications of their breed in the standard of perfection.

PRODUCING AND SELECTING FRYER RABBITS

I. BREEDS AND VARIETIES

A. Several Breeds Listed as Commercial

1. New Zealand's
2. Californians
3. Satins
4. Florida Whites
5. Champagne D'Argents
6. Silver Martens

B. Breeds Best for Show Meat Pens

1. New Zealand's
2. Californians
 - a. Why?
 - b. Breed for meat
 - c. Fast growing
 - d. White fur

C. Purchasing Breeding Stock

1. Deal directly with a reliable breeder
 - a. Ask about his breeding program
 - b. Ask about litter size
 - c. Ask about Does productivity
2. Ask to view some of the Breeders in the Barn
 - a. Ask advice on breeding this line of rabbits
 - b. Ask if the breeder can be called to answer any questions in the future.

II. THE BREEDING HERD

A. Breeding Age

1. Does – at least 6 months of age to 8 months of age (prefer 8)
2. Bucks – at least 6 months of age to 8 months of age (prefer 8)

B. Gestation Period

1. 28 to 32 days normally 31 days
2. If doe loses or kills two consecutive litters, eliminate her from you breeding program only if the faults lie with her and not human error.

A Kill if that happens

C. Housing

1. Site
 - a. Well drained
 - b. Adequate shade
 - c. Free of excessive wind

- d. Select site during hottest part of day
- e. Make sure other animals cannot get to your rabbits.

2. Building

- a. Good ventilation
 - b. Open sides – if you have a barn make sure there are openings at the top and bottom
 - c. You will need fans in hot weather
- ## 3. Welded Wire Cages are best, but wooden hutches with wire Flooring is just fine.
- a. Size – length 24x30, or 30 x 30 or 30 x 36
Height 18 “ high
 - b. Wire size
 1. Floor ½ x 1 inch mesh
 2. Sides 1 x 1 inch mesh or baby saver wire
 3. Top 1 x 2 inch mesh
 4. Door opening 14 x 12 inches

D. Feeding

1. Don't let dry Does become too fat
2. Feed her 8 oz. Per day until she kindles, then gradually build up her feed.
3. She should be full fed during the period of lactation, but she needs to be built up gradually over a two week period
4. Does will normally feed litter once per day, usually at night.

E. Nest box

1. Should be shallow enough after litter is added to:
 - a. Prevent Doe from injuring her udders
 - b. Allow bunnies to climb out easily
2. Wash and disinfect nest box before placing in Doe's pen
3. Fill 2/3's full with hay, straw or shavings for bedding
During hot weather use a bedding material in which bunnies cannot burrow.
4. Place the nest box in the Does cage on the 27th day of gestation.
5. Turn the box on its side when the bunnies have opened their eyes if the weather permits it.
6. Remove the nest box no later than 3 weeks.

F. Litter size

1. Day after kindling, remove all but 8 bunnies
 - a. Does only have 8 udders
 - b. Too many young causes runts and weaklings

1. Clean inside ears (swabs and cotton balls, alcohol)
2. Spritz hands with water and clean rabbits, wipe down with hands
3. Set each rabbit up in show position
4. Make selection (2 days before show)

H. Do not use drugs on meat pens.

I. To control ear mites

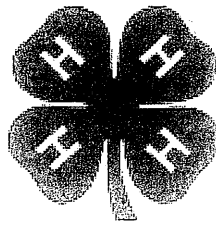
1. Use campho-phenique or use sharp plastic applicator and baby oil (2 drops in each ear every other week)
2. You may also use Ivermectin (for cattle) two drops per rabbit between ears when time changes in the spring and fall. **DO NOT USE ON DOES WITH BABIES, IT WILL MAKE THEM DRY UP.**

J. Do not take any rabbit to the show if

1. Meat Pen with any rabbit over 5 pounds
2. Dirty (start one week ahead of time and use the following mix to clean)
Argo cornstarch and white vinegar make a paste and put on dirty spots then set them in cage. Next day flake it off and re-apply if stain was not taken care of.
3. Well groomed

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Guidelines for the Texas 4-H Rabbit Showmanship



Texas 4-H Rabbit Project Team

Guidelines for the Texas 4-H Rabbit Showmanship

Showmanship is a participant's opportunity to demonstrate his/her knowledge and ability to properly select and present rabbits to their best advantage. The participant's confidence, ability and the rabbit's response are indicators of the knowledge and skills gained in handling and identifying quality animals, as well as defects, disqualifications, breed and variety characteristics.

Rabbit showmanship should be performed individually or with two participants at a time.

The following procedure is explained step by step along with what the participant will do and what the judge will be evaluating. The participant should follow the steps below as though they were examining the rabbit by themselves. **Order is not as important as a smooth, organized flow of presentation.** Prior to beginning the contest, judges should read the material thoroughly to ensure their judging will support the work of the leaders who have taught their youth based on recommended procedures available to all youth.

When selecting your rabbits for showmanship, you should check the rabbit over thoroughly. The rabbit should be free of diseases, parasites and disqualifications. If the participant is young or new to the rabbit project, the judge may have to prompt some. Extra points may be given for thorough knowledge; or points may be deducted for missed areas or incorrect reasons.

STEP

Carry rabbit to judging table and pose it.
(Continue the following steps, explaining each step taken and its purpose.)

PARTICIPANT WILL

To properly carry a rabbit, tuck the head under one arm and support the rabbit's weight by placing the other hand under the rump. One hand supports the weight of the rabbit, while the other hand controls the rabbit. You may keep a firm grip since a rabbit dropped from this position can easily break its back. You may want to remove your hand when you feel confident about being in control. If the judge asks you to move to a different spot on the table, always pick up the rabbit for carrying before moving to a new location.

When you arrive at the exhibit table place the rabbit on the table immediately and pose it. For proper pose, front feet should be even with the eyes. Rear feet should be firmly on table with toes even with haunch (thigh joint) with tail up. Facing left is the natural position for a right handed presenter.

STEP	PARTICIPANT WILL
1. Check Ears	Check the ears for: ear mites, proper tattoo (tattoo should be in rabbit's left ear), torn or missing portions of ears , that distract from general appearance, proper ear carriage, tattoo obliterated by ink , that is unreadable.
2. Turn rabbit over.	Properly turn the rabbit over, supporting the rabbit on the table or against your body. The rabbit will remain in this position from steps #2 through #10.
3. Check teeth.	With your hand over the area of the eyes, place a thumb and index finger on each side of the split lip and push back lips to expose teeth. You are checking for tooth defects such as malocclusion or simple malocclusion, broken or missing teeth.
4. Check eyes.	Check each eye for signs of blindness or abnormalities . You are checking for wall-eyes or moon eye (this is an eye with whitish cornea given a milky appearance to the eye), unmatched eyes (two eyes not of the same color), spots or specks in iris or on cornea, off colored eyes (eyes other than color called for in breed standard), abnormal eye discharge , must be noticeable and pronounced and marbling , a mottling of eye color, except in some chinchilla breeds allowing blue-gray eyes.
5. Check nose.	Check nose for sign of cold . The animal must show a white nasal discharge to be evidence of a cold. Matted fur on inside front legs may indicate presence of a cold.
6. Check toenails on all feet.	Check toenails by pushing thumb into center of paw. Push back fur with index finger if necessary to see toenails. Don't forget to check dew claws . You are checking for missing toenails, unmatched toenails on corresponding feet, (including dew claws), proper color toenails for the breed as stated in the breed standard.

STEP	PARTICIPANT WILL
7. Check hocks and front feet.	Check the bottom of the hind feet for sore hocks. Also check bottoms of front feet for sore areas. You are checking for sore, infected or bleeding areas , not just for bare areas.
8. Check legs.	Extend front legs to check for straightness . Run index finger and thumb the length of each front leg. Extend rear legs out straight by placing your cupped hand ahead of the rear legs and pushing toward the feet. Legs should not be bent, bowed, deformed or cow-hocked.
9. Check body for ruptures and abscess.	Run your hand over the chest and abdominal area to check for any abscess, tumors, or abnormalities . Ruptures may appear as lumps or large bumps under the skin, normally in the belly area. Abscess may appear as red lumps or sores in the belly area or the neck or chin area or under the arms, normally.
10. Check sex.	Check for the sex of the rabbit. Place thumb below vent area and push toward front of rabbit with index finger. You are also checking for signs of vent disease (as indicated by a scabby, reddened sex organ), split penis and testicles . All male animals in the regular showroom classes must show two normally descended testicles at the time of judging. Juniors must show both or neither testicles (because juniors showing only one descended testicle at time of judging would be disqualified from competition).
11. Check tail.	Restore the rabbit to its posed position. Check to determine if tail is straight. Permanently set to either side, permanently out of line, screw tail, or bob tail are disqualifications from judging competition.

STEP

PARTICIPANT WILL

12. Check for proper surface color, undercolor, ring color, foreign spots, or smut.

You are checking the fur for foreign colored spots (white spots in colored animal, or colored spots in white animal, unless specifically excepted in the breed standard). Inspect fur for smut on the usable portion of the pelt on a Pointed White, Californian, or Himalayan marked breeds and varieties. Check for proper color. Check surface color. Check undercolor and/or ring color by stroking fur forward or blowing into fur over the entire body. Tan Pattern: any tan pattern marking appearing in the marking pattern of Pointed White, Californians, or Himalayan marked breeds or varieties, is a disqualification. **Wrong under color, color other than called for in the breed standard, white hairs** (excessive white hairs in a colored section) are also disqualifications.

13. Fur quality and cleanliness.

Stroke fur toward rabbit's head to show fur going back into natural position, either **flyback/rollback**. Check density standing/upright fur, such as Rex and Mini Rex, by patting and blowing into several areas. Some woolled breeds, such as Angoras and Fuzzy Lops should be felt and blown into to check density. Stroke rabbit from head to rear for a molt condition. Check for stains on fur.

14. Pose rabbit for evaluation of overall balance.

Pose the rabbit for evaluation of overall balance. Check front, rear and side views for overall balance. Locate each of the following with your hand: shoulders, ribspread, and fullness of loin. Check hindquarters for fullness by stretching your hand across width and depth of the rump. Check hips for smoothness and fullness by running your hand over the top of the hip to the tail.

15. Participant's Appearance.

Participant should demonstrate good posture, good eye contact with judge throughout presentation, smile/pleasant expression, neat dress, remove chewing gum, hats or caps and long hair should be pulled back.

STEP

PARTICIPANT WILL

16. Participant's Actions.

Carry out actions in a confident manner, always being considerate of your animals, fellow showman, and the judge. Demonstrate a gentle and smooth flowing presentation.

17. Participant's Knowledge.

Demonstrate quick, confident, and correct response to questions asked about your rabbit.

At all times extra points could be given for detailed information freely given or points deducted for failure to explain each procedure.

In addition to the above procedure, the judge may ask the exhibitor two or three specific questions. If questions are asked, they will be age appropriate and might cover such topics as the breed being handled by the participant, rabbit care and health, breeding, rabbit equipment, variety characteristics, and disqualifications. This information can be found in the current ARBA Standard of Perfection, the ARBA Domestic Rabbit Guide and the ARBA Official Guidebook to Raising Better Rabbits and Cavies, all of which should be used to prepare for the showmanship competition. You may want to contact your county Extension agent or a local breeder for more information.

TEXAS MEATPEN

BREEDERS

There are many commercial meat breeds recognized by the American Rabbit

Breeders

Association. Meat entries refer to meatpens, single fryers, roasters, & stewers. This list is limited to those breeds that have proven to perform well in Texas conditions. This listing is not an endorsement of breeders, merely a courtesy to help families find rabbits for their county livestock shows.

Due to the high demand for meat rabbits in November-February, it is recommended that a deposit be made with the breeder(s). And be sure to contact breeders at least 3 months before your county's breeding dates. Contrary to popular belief... it is NOT always easy getting rabbits bred for a specific show. List compiled by Mrs. Kathy Moerbe bbpals@hotmail.com JANUARY, 2003

CALIFORNIAN

* Wayne & Michael Heaton
Huntsville, TX
936-291-8688

* Don & Sidney Phillips
Hempstead, TX
979-826-6920

* Paul Ritcher
Brenham, TX
979-836-6809

* Paul E. Smith
Houston, TX
281-458-6699

Fur & Feathers
Magnolia, Texas
832-704-1811
832-704-5367

6-K Rabbitry
John and Leslie Kelly
Houston, Texas
lkelly1@houston.rr.com

Blue Rain Rabbitry
Lisa Hayes
Magnolia, TX
lisa_hayes@sbcglobal.net

BNKH
Joyce and Ray Alexander
Tomball, TX
alexanfam@hotmail.com

NEW ZEALAND

* Monty McCaslin
Angleton, TX
979-849-4805

* Lawrence Neil
Angleton, TX
979-849-3487

* Paul E. Smith (also REDS)
Houston, TX
281-458-6699

Green Acres Rabbitry
Vickie Ruiz
Grangerland, TX
countrywyfe@hotmail.com

Heaton Rabbitry
Joe Heaton
Huntsville, Texas
936)291-8688
(936)714-4816

Walker's Rabbitry
Tyler Walker
Baytown, TX
irishredneck2004@yahoo.com

PALOMINO

Gold variety only
* Bob Sorrels
Houston, TX
713-944-9313

Potential Rabbit Contacts

Ken and Mary Schwenke

936 825-2510

Brian Eilers

832 722-5814

Kathy Hillery

979 533-6301 cell

979 793-5858 home

Rudle

281 914-1562

Brackeen, Holli

From: Capps, Christina [Christina.Capps@springbranchisd.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 22, 2012 12:34 PM
To: 'Ashton Belcher'; Brackeen, Holli; 'Emily C'; 'Raquel Caylor'; 'Kathryn Tekell'; 'Ken Tekell (Kathryn's dad) (tekelljr@gmail.com)'; 'Evan Powell (evan-powell@sbcglobal.net)'; 'Elizabeth Powell (Evan's mom) (elizabeth1062@sbcglobal.net)'; 'kshimerka4@gmail.com'; 'Adriana Munoz (Raul's mom) (ady_sm2m@yahoo.com)'
Subject: FW: Rabbit notes

These are some notes I picked up at conference a few years back. Really good information

Subject: Rabbit notes

Here are a few rabbit tips I picked up at Ag Teacher's Convention that I thought I would pass along to you.

- 1) Start with good genetics. You can't make bad rabbits good ones.
- 2) Feed should be 16-18% protein. It should be fresh and dust-free. (recommended the Grey Professional Purina Rabbit Feed)
- 3) **Babies are on full feed**
- 4) Use PVC square end caps for feed bowls (3" or 6")
- 5) Bucks and Does (not bred or nursing) should get a potted meat can of feed twice daily
- 6) Does with Kits should get vitamins daily
- 7) Wormer: wormed monthly with Vazine in water (from Tractor Supply)
- 8) **Dump out any old feed left from previous feeding and replace with fresh**
- 9) **Do not feed extra hay, feed or treats**
- 10) May add crimped oats or black sun-flower seeds to pickier eaters
- 11) Ear canker treatment: 4 parts mineral oil, 1 part permethrin. Put in spray bottle and spray monthly for preventative or daily for treatment
- 12) **Kits should be separated into "like" weights 3 weeks previous to show**
- 13) Kits should gain 1 1/2oz. daily
- 14) **Kits: 3 weeks before show start top-dressing the following (1-1 1/2 oz daily)**
 - a. 1 pound barley
 - b. 1 pound oat meal
 - c. 1 pound black oil sunflower seeds
 - d. 1 pound crimped oats
 - e. 2 pounds showbloom
- 15) All rabbits: **3 weeks before show start working hair.** Use spray bottle with water. Spray light spray over rabbits and work hair backwards. This aids with:
 - a. Removing dead hair
 - b. Helps condition coat
 - c. Helps train rabbits to stand for show
 - d. 1 week before show starch using corn starch on hair (barely dust hands before working hair)
- 16) **Kits should not weigh more than 3 oz apart when choosing meat pen.**
- 17) Select for wide shoulders and loin and a full hindquarter.
- 18) Uniformity is very important
- 19) Avoid flat shoulders
- 20) Take water and feed away six hours before show to firm up.

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