

Central Florida Rabbit Breeders

FEBRUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

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You Don't "Feed" Condition

What do I mean by the title of this article? Quite often other breeders ask me what do I feed to put such great fur and flesh condition on my rabbits? What's my secret formula?

It's not the feeding that makes them look like this. It's the genetics... Now, a good quality feed and clean fresh water are important, but you don't feed condition. I am convinced that if you use any of the top brands of rabbit pellets, you will get the same or very close results. I do feed my youngsters some race horse oats from the time they are starting to eat until they start to get their prime coats. Because of the genetics in my herd, they get their prime coats very young. Honestly, when the babies are in the nest and just get their first coats, you will see a prime line. They will lose this as they get a little older and go through their early growing age. Then at about 4 months old, they start to get their prime coats and they will last along time.

Another question I am asked ... how do I get such good looking fur in our weather? Now, some of you won't agree with this... But, I don't feel the weather plays into it as much as some of you may think. It goes back to genetics. I am not a genetic expert by any means, but what I practice is very simple ...

1. I only breed animals that are in prime condition. This is hard. Most of us want to get litters and will breed does whenever we can. It makes a difference to wait until they are in TOP condition. Mother Nature takes care of this naturally in the wild. Think about it.
2. Be consistent with what you do feed. I have never been a believer in magic mixes... I have seen it to often to cause more problems with the rabbits and in my opinion it's not worth it. Select a good quality feed and stick with it. Rabbits don't handle change very well. Water is the most important part of a rabbit's diet. Without a good water supply, it doesn't matter what you try to feed them.
3. Start a sound genetic family. Look for the items I have stated above. And remember, sound genetics need to be on both sides of the pedigree.
4. Make sure you have plenty of cage space. Nothing has improved my herd more than being able to separate the youngsters at weaning into their own cages...

As I write this, I have several New Zealand does in the barn with babies – from newborn to 5-6 weeks old. All of the mothers have prime lines down their coats and are in great flesh condition. This will also make it much easier to re-breed these does if they hold this condition, and they will.

I hope some of this information will be of some help and remember... this is just my opinion and what I practice.

By John Neff



From Our President's Pen

Here we are in the New Year. I truly hope that all of you have a great 2009 ahead of you. Let me start off with the news about our new Officers. Jim Thompson was the only member who sent his name to the Election Committee, so he will become our new Vice President. I have also appointed Thelma Thompson & Debi Goldben as Directors. Thank you all for stepping up.

Before I go on to the June show, I would like to mention that we will be having a work day. As soon as I can get a firm date, I will send out an email. I would guess it won't be until about March? There are several things that we need to do: pressure wash the trailer, clean out the trailer (there are some things that we are hauling that we no longer use), I asked Jimmy Thompson about welding racks to hold our show coops so we will be trying to design something for this, and I am going to pick up some outdoor carpet which we can cut to size for the show coops. We will also have a meeting with final plans for the June Show. Please watch for this date. It sounds like a lot of work, but we always have a good time at these work parties...

Plans for the June show are moving along. First, the date is June 6th and, of course, it will be in Deland. Thank you again to Karen Emmons for securing this

building for us. I will be asking for more help as time gets closer and we will probably finalize most of this at the meeting/work day. This is what I have so far ... our judges are, David Cardinal, Bob Koch, George Long, and Don Peterson. Julie will again be our Rabbit Show Secretary and Rosie McParland will be our Cavy Secretary.

We have a CFRBA member who will be on Animal Planet. How exciting is that? Tara McParland, who was our Cavy Secretary last year and is now a student at The University of Florida, was filmed recently for Animal Planet. They finished the filming at the Florida State Convention. I asked her mom, Rosie, to make sure she lets us know when it will air...

Remember, Debi works real hard on our newsletter and website. Please get her information to help make her job easier. We don't have regular meetings and this is the best way for us all to keep active and to be heard.

Time to bring this to a close and get it sent to Debi. Watch for the information and details about the workday and meeting ... Please keep in touch ...

Thank-you,

John E. Neff

Turning Others "ON" to the Rabbit Habit

A recent post on one of my rabbit email lists mentioned that, unlike horse and dog shows, entries for youth members were up in the rabbit shows they were attending. Those of us who have had the rabbit habit for a while know it's a great family activity.

After showing horses and large livestock for many years, getting ready for a rabbit show was like a walk in park. We could take a lot of rabbits in our little Escort wagon. When we had the van, we could invite friends and take their rabbits too -- carpooling to save gas and I had an extra driver.

As people look for ways to involve their kids in wholesome activities to keep them out of trouble, rabbits are most definitely an option. Rabbits don't take up a lot of space and a nice breeding program can be managed in one's garage or carport or even a spare bedroom. How do we get others involved and promote what we know is a great hobby?

Talk about it. Most people don't know about rabbit shows and when they hear me talking about it, they want to know more. That's how we got into showing -- we were buying cages and the lady asked if we'd been to a show. Show???? You mean the 4-H fair? Nope -- shows like dogs, cats, etc. What a trip!!! We warn people though -- you either love them or you hate them (no in between).

We have always gotten a lot of calls for pets and suggest folks join ARBA, even if only for 1 year, to get the "guidebook" that is included with a membership. It has tons of information in it and well worth the price of a membership. This is especially true for youth memberships.

Promote local club membership as well -- some clubs have lots of members with pets (or people who don't own rabbits but just like to be around us rabbit folks). Local and state clubs are a wealth of information and it's nice to have local folks to go to or talk with about problems or situations we may be encountering. AND it's these local and state clubs that put on our rabbits shows. Without these clubs and people supporting them, there won't be any shows.

Let folks know about the state and national breed clubs. These clubs work to increase awareness of specific breeds. State clubs often host specialty shows in conjunction with other shows and give folks additional opportunities to get their rabbits on the show table.

Carry applications for these clubs and, if you have a web site, put links on your site to the forms.

Be honest, ethical, and provide education. Nothing gives rabbit people a bad name faster than a breeder who charges exorbitant prices, sells sick rabbits, or pawns off garbage rabbits as show stock to an unsuspecting newbie. New folks ask tons of questions. Be helpful and encouraging. You don't need to be their first or only source, but let them know where to look for accurate information -- provide a list of recommended reading material or email lists which you know provide helpful, factual information.

A friend is actively promoting English Lops here in Florida. Last year she was typically the only exhibitor at many of the shows. Lately, the number of exhibitors and rabbits is increased and rabbits are earning GC legs. She's doing this by helping others get a good start and being an educational resource.

Even though the economy is slow right now, I can see a lot of potential for an increase in showing rabbits. It's something that can involve the whole family and it's still affordable. Let's take the time to show new folks how to get involved and let them know about the benefits and rewards of having rabbits as part of their lives.

There's also a whole other side to promoting rabbits if you're raising meat rabbits -- folks are looking for ways to economically put wholesome food on the table.

Debi Goldben

CENTRAL FLORIDA RABBIT BREEDERS ASSOCIATION
Affiliated with A.R.B.A. and F.S.R.B.A.
Orlando, Florida

I (we) herby apply for Membership in C.F.R.B.A., and tender payment for dues for one year (or more) for the class of Membership marked below and agree to abide by the Charter, By-Laws and rules of this Association, to accept some assignment in the Conduct of the Association and to help in its behalf.

DUES FOR ONE YEAR

Member of the A.R.B.A. – Single Adult \$8.00: Husband /Wife \$10.00
Youth \$2.00; Foreign \$10.00
Life Membership: Husband / Wife \$100.00 (Youth ages under 19 included)

NAME(S) _____

PHONE _____ BIRTHDAY(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _++_ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

BREEDS RAISED _____

Do you want your information listed on our club web site?
Yes _____ No _____

If you want to be listed but do not want all contact information listed, please indicate the information our webmaster should NOT include.

If you have a web site for your rabbitry/caviary and would like it listed on the club web site, please provide that link.

ARBA NUMBER(S) (If members) _____

MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATION TO
Joan Giesy
10540 Emerald Avenue
Leesburg, FL 34788

*Happy
Valentine's
Day*

