Rabbit Show Standards  
A.R.B.A. Standard of Perfection

General Faults — All Breeds
Specimen in moult or otherwise out of condition (but not diseased).
Hutch stains.
Broken toe nails.
Stray white hairs in colored fur.
Double dewlaps.
Poor tail carriage — one that is not permanently set on either side.
Poor ear carriage.
Poor eye color.
Flabby or over-fat, thin and extremely poor in flesh.

General Eliminations — All Breeds
(Eliminations are presumed to be temporary in nature and curable; nevertheless, they are cause for elimination from competition in a show — or from registration until the ailment is cured or corrected.)

Any of the following are cause for elimination: Colds, ear canker, slobberers, pot belly, does heavy with young, sore hocks (showing infection — not merely bare), vent disease, abscesses, sore eyes, running eyes, if severe or conspicuous.
Mange, or a scurvy condition with large flakes resembling dandruff or scale at the roots of the fur; fungus growth or mites causing scabby condition.
Overweight or underweight to eliminate from regular class but animal may compete in fur classes if entered. A rabbit eliminated from its class for being the wrong sex for the class may compete in fur classes, if entered.
Illegible permanent ear marking.

General Disqualifications — All Breeds
(Disqualification — One or more permanent defects, deformities or blemishes which renders an animal unfit to win an award in competition or from taking part in an exhibition.)

Any of the following ailments: Snuffles, tumor, rupture, blindness in one or both eyes, lop ears except in lop eared varieties, ears torn or ears with any portion missing.
Off-colored eyes, wall eyes, moon eyes, unmatched eyes, spots or specks in the iris.
Wolf or “buck” teeth, malocclusion, broken or missing teeth.
Crooked feet or legs, bowed legs, severe cow hocks, deformed bones.
Foreign colored spots in solid or self varieties or marked varieties when specifically noted in breed standard, dying, plucking, or trimming. Any taking designed to alter the natural condition or appearance.
Wry tail (permanently set to either side), screw tail, bob tail (shortened so as to be conspicuously out of proportion), broken tail permanently out of line.
Dew laps in the following breeds: Himalayan, Netherland Dwarf, Polish, Tans, Silvers.
Bucks not showing both testicles in normal condition.
White toe nail or toe nails to disqualify in all solid colored breeds, including Himalayan and Californians. A toe nail or toe nails merely showing the pinky cast reflected by its blood vessel, is to be considered as a white toe nail(s). A light colored toe nail is one that does not carry the full coloring called for by its breed standard. To be considered a light toe nail, it must carry at least some of the color pigment called for by its breed standard and must match the color of the nails on that and the corresponding foot.
Colored toenails disqualify in any rabbit whose foot color is white like New Zealand White, Dutch, Checkered Giant, White Polish, White Rex.
Absence of toe nail or nails, including dew claw nail, on all breeds.
suggested exhibits

These are suggested requirements for the county 4-H Rabbit Project. They are general enough so that they may be adapted for all ages of 4-Hers in each county. Be sure to check with your County Extension Office for the exact rules for your county’s 4-H rabbit program.

Suggested First Year in Rabbits — Fancy or Commercial

- Help construct hutches for your rabbits.
- Obtain feeding and watering bowls.
- Study and learn the parts of a rabbit.
- Study breeding and management practices.
- Study the "Standard of Perfection" for your breed.
- Learn the way to handle and carry rabbits properly.
- Purchase a minimum of one buck and two does, making sure they are purebred rabbits. It is recommended that the rabbits be at least four months old, but not over one year of age. *
- Feed a good recommended rabbit pellet.
- Feed and water rabbits daily.
- Wash water bowl daily.
- Learn how to keep housing and equipment clean and sanitary. Learn how to prevent diseases and parasites of rabbits.
- Complete your 4-H Rabbit Record and give it to the proper person according to your county’s rules.
- Exhibit original living rabbits.

*It is suggested that the 4-H’er buy three rabbits so that if one dies the project can still be completed. Also having rabbits of both sexes provides a start on the next year.

Suggested Second Year in Rabbits — Fancy or Commercial

- Improve on everything done for the First Year.
- Learn how to tattoo a rabbit.
- Learn how to pedigree a rabbit.
- Improve your equipment.
- Raise young rabbits with your rabbits from the First Year. Breed so that the litters will be born in early spring — April or May.
- Keep two does and one buck for the third year project.
- Begin this year’s record with the closing inventory of the year before.
- Exhibit original rabbits and a junior buck and/or junior doe from your litter. (Also 6/8 buck and doe if applicable.)

Suggested Third Year in Rabbits

- Use the two does and one buck saved from the Second Year.
- Improve upon everything done for the Second Year.
- Plan a breeding program so you can raise your own rabbits and/or purchase additional rabbits to add to or improve your breed. Also, consider the alternatives of adding a second breed of rabbits of your choice to improve and expand your 4-H rabbit program.
- Learn to dress rabbits and find a market for the offspring that you do not plan to keep.
- Show your rabbits in at least one A.R.B.A. Youth Division Show to find out how your rabbits measure up to the rabbits of other breeders.
- Begin this year’s record with the closing inventory of the year before.
- Exhibit one or more rabbits that you have fed and cared for from the time of birth. County rules on the total number and specific exhibit take precedence.
Glossary of Rabbit Terms

**Adult** — See Senior.
**Abcess** — See Boils.

**Agouti** — A hair shaft having three or more bands of color with a definite break in color bands on the entire body. Usually dark slate at the base, with two or more alternating light and dark bands or rings interspersed with black guard hairs. Head, ears and feet usually carrying ticking. Belly color usually much lighter and not carrying ticking. Example: steel or gray Flemish, Chinchilla and Belgian Hares.

**Back** — The entire top portion of the rabbit, extending from neck to tail.

**Bare Spots** — A section of the rabbit entirely without fur.

**Bell Ears** — Ears that have large tips with a distinct fall or lop.

**Belly** — The lower part of the body containing the intestines. The abdomen. For purposes of defining color area, it is the underbody of the rabbit from the forelegs to the crotch area.

**Belt** — The line where the colored portion of the body meets the white portion just behind the shoulders. Example: Dutch.

**Blaze** — White on the head and nose running up between the eyes on rabbits with multi-colored fur.

**Boils** — A hard swelling or isolated collection of pus or purulent matter occurring in the rabbit’s skin, accompanied by localized fever and heat.

**Bowed Legs** — Applied to both fore and hind legs. Bent like a bow. Curved outwardly in the middle.

**Breed** — A race or special class of domestic rabbits that reproduce distinctive characteristics of fur markings, fur texture, shape, size and growth. A breed may be subdivided into varieties. Example: the Black, Blue and Tortoise varieties of the Dutch breed.

**Breeder** — A person who breeds or raises a special variety or varieties of rabbits in conformity with accepted standards of perfection or for the purpose of improving their commercial value.

**Breeding Certificate** — A written certificate by the owner of a stud buck, showing its pedigree and the date of breeding to a particular doe. Given to prove the ancestry of the young.

**Broken Coat** — Guard hair broken or missing in spots exposing the undercoat. Areas where the coat is affected by molt exposing the undercoat.

**Broken Ear** — A distinct break in the cartilage which prevents erect ear carriage.

**Broken Tail** — A tail that is or has been broken and is out of line. A disqualification.

**Buck** — An unaltered male rabbit.

**Buck Teeth** — See Wolf Teeth.

**Buff** — A rich golden orange color with a creamy cast.

**Bull Dog** — A short, broad, bold head of pronounced masculine appearance.

**Butterfly** — A dark colored area on the nose, such as found on the Checkered Giant and English Spot breeds.

**Carcass Weight** — The weight of the rabbit after it has been killed and dressed.

**Carriage** — The way a rabbit bears itself. The style or station of a rabbit.

**Cheek** — The sides of the face beneath the eyes.

**Chest** — The front portion of the body between the forelegs and neck.

**Choppy (or Chopped Off)** — Having the back and loins cut off abruptly and falling vertically to the tail. Not having a gracefully arched back and loins.

**Cobby** — Stout and stocky. Short legged and short coupled.

**Collar** — A white band completely circling the body at the chest and forelegs.

**Condition** — The physical state of a rabbit in reference to health, cleanliness, texture and molt of fur, and grooming.
Suggested Fourth Year in Rabbits
- Improve upon everything done for the Third Year.
- Help at least one new, beginning 4-H rabbit member get started. Help the new member get two 4-month-old does and a buck from pedigreed stock.
- Begin this year’s record with the closing inventory of the year before.
- Exhibit a commercial meat pen.
- Exhibit two does and one buck in their show room classes.
- Exhibit one of the does or the buck, either a colored or a white rabbit of any age that is in top fur condition.

Suggested Fifth Year and Above in Rabbits
- Improve upon everything done for the Fourth Year.
- Serve as a 4-H junior leader for the 4-H rabbit program in your county or in your 4-H club as the project leader.
- Begin this year’s record with the closing inventory of the year before.
- Exhibit rabbits in all show room classes for your breed(s). (Four classes for small breeds, six classes for medium and giant breeds.)
- Exhibit a commercial meat pen.
- Exhibit at the State Fair, as well as at your county fair.
- Exhibit in more than one A.R.B.A. show in either the Youth or Open Class Division.

Meat Pen — Commercial Rabbits
Exhibit three rabbits of the same breed and color or variety. They should be of equal size, litter mates, not over 5 pounds in weight and not over 69 days of age. They can be opposite or like sex. Rabbits of marked breeds must be marked with no disqualifications. If not, the entire pen can be disqualified.
Cow Hocks — Hocks that turn or bend inward causing the foot portion to turn outward.

Creamy — Light yellow. The color of cream.

Cutting — Selecting only the best rabbit from the litter for future breeding and show stock. Cutting out the least desirable specimens from a litter.

Dam — A mother rabbit.

Density — The property or quality of a thick coat.

Dewlap — A pendulous fold or folds of loose skin hanging from the throat.

Disqualify — One or more permanent defects, deformities or blemishes that make a rabbit unfit to win an award in competition or to take part in an exhibition. (Disqualified rabbits are not eligible for registration by A.R.B.A.)

Doe — A female rabbit that has not been altered.

Ear Lacing — A black or dark colored line of fur outlining the sides and tips of the ear.

Elimination — One or more defects presumed to be temporary and curable. Cause for elimination in a show or from registration until cured or corrected. (Elimination for overweight or underweight — rabbit can compete in fur class.)

Eye Circle — Even marking of color around both eyes. Example: Checkered Giant.

Eye Color — The color of the iris. The circle of color surrounding the pupil.

Faking — Any change in the external appearance of a rabbit on exhibition, done with intent to deceive.

Faults — Imperfections or lacking ideal type for breed and variety, not serious enough to disqualify the rabbit. Examples are cheek spots too large, bars instead of spots, lack of taper in spine marking or herring bone.

Fine Coat — Coat is too fine in texture and lacking body. Guard hairs are too weak and thin in structure, similar to hairs making up the undercoat.

Flabby — The condition of a rabbit when the flesh or fur hangs loosely. Not trim and shapely.

Flank — The sides of the rabbit between the ribs and hips and above the belly.

Flat Coat — Coat lying flat or close to the body, lacking spring or body. Fine coat coupled with lack of density.

Fly Back — The property of fur that causes it to return quickly to its normal position when stroked toward the head of the rabbit.

Flying Coat — A loose, fluffy coat of fur, caused by undue length and thinness of under wool and weak guard hairs.

Foot — That part of the leg on which the rabbit stands. On the foreleg — that portion below the ankle or pastern. On the rear leg — that portion below the hock joint.

Forehead — The front part of the head between the eyes and the base of the ears.

Foreign Color — Any color of fur, eyes or nails that is different from the prescribed standard of perfection for the breed and variety.

Frosty — Having the appearance of being powdered or sprinkled with meal. Mealy.

Genotype — The genetic inherited characteristics and potential of the rabbit stock.

Gestation — Carrying young in the uterus. Pregnancy.

Glossy — The reflected luster or sheen from naturally healthy fur in rabbits. Improved by grooming.

Guard Hair — The longer coarser hair of the coat, offering protection to the undercoat and providing wearing quality and sheen to the coat.

Hairline — A narrow white line running between the ears, connecting the blaze and collar on the Dutch.

Hindquarters — The posterior section of the body, made up of loins, hips, hind legs and rump.

Hip — The thigh joint and large muscular first joint of the hind leg.

Hock — The middle joint or section of the hind leg between the foot and hip.

Hog Fat — The condition of a rabbit obviously over-fattened and, as a result, out of proportion to the true type of the breed.
Hump Back — Having a hump or protuberance on the back, marring a gracefully arched outline.

Inbreeding — A system involving very close mating of rabbit stock, such as brother and sister.

Inherited — The degree for which a trait or characteristic is passed on from parent to offspring.

Inner Ear — The concave portion of the ear.

Intermediate — A rabbit at least six months old and no more than eight months.

Junior — A rabbit under six months of age.

Kindle — To give birth to young rabbits.

Knee — The second joint of the leg, connecting the thigh and leg. In animals, more properly called the “hock.” The second joint of the foreleg is the elbow.

Knock Kneed — See Cow Hocks.

Lapin — French word for rabbit. Also, in the fur trade, it is dyed rabbit fur.

Lazy Tail — A tail that is slow to assume its normal position when it is moved.

Line Breeding — A system of mating stock so that the offspring are highly related or close descendants of the chosen ancestor.

Litter — Young rabbits of a doe born at the same time.

Live Weight — Weight of a rabbit before it is dressed for market.

Loin — That part of the back on either side of the spine and between the lower rib and the hip joint.

Loose Coat — Fur lacking density in the undercoat, coupled usually with fine guard hairs and a resulting lack of texture. Does not indicate a slipping coat.

Lopped Ear — Pendulous ear. Not carried erect. Falling to the side or front.

Luster — Brightness and brilliance of fur.

Malocclusion — An inherited defect where the upper and lower jaws do not let the teeth meet, resulting in long uneven teeth extending out of the mouth.

Mandolin — Having the appearance of the body of a mandolin laid face down. Back and saddle arching toward loins to make noticeably large, broad hindquarters.

Marked — Having the basic color broken up by orderly placement on a white (usually) background.

Massive — Bulky and heavy. Ponderous. Large and compact.

Mealy — See Frosty.

Meaty — The quality of being able to carry a large proportion of meat for the size and type of rabbit. A noticeable meatiness at the forequarters, back, saddle, loins and haunches.

Molt (Moult) — The process of shedding or changing the fur twice each year. The baby or nest fur is molted at two months. The first natural coat of fur is fully developed at four to six months.

Muzzle — The projecting portion of the head surrounding the mouth, nose and lower jaw.

Neck — That part of the rabbit connecting the head and body.

Nest Box — Special box inside the hutch or cage hole where the young are kindled and live for the first 18 to 21 days.

Nostrils — The two openings of the nose leading to the head.

Off Colored — Applied to several hairs or patches of fur foreign to the standard color of the rabbit.

Open Coat — See Loose Coat.

Outcrossing — A system of mating unrelated stock of the same breed.

Pair — A male and female rabbit.

Palpation — A hand method used to determine if a doe is pregnant and will bear young.

Patches — A small section of fur foreign to the color standard of the rabbit.

Paunch — The prominent portion of the abdomen of the rabbit.

Pedigree — A written chart of the male and female ancestors of a rabbit, showing the date of birth, ownership of dam and parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of the specimen.

Pelage — The fur coat or covering.
Pepper and Salt — A flat, unattractive appearance of black and white ticking. Example: Chinchillas. Caused by lack of contrast and waviness and in ticking and weakness of color in the tips of guard hairs.

Phenotype — The appearance of the individual rabbit.

Poor Coat — Fur not in good condition through molting, rust, poor grooming or ill health of the rabbit.

Rabbit — A domesticated rodent of the genus Oryctolagus Cuniculus.

Racy — Slim, trim, slender in body and legs, harelike, alert and active.

Ribs — The curved portions of the sides immediately back of the shoulders above the belly.

Rump — The hind portion of the back and bones.

Rust — A reddish-brown coloration of fur, usually appearing on the sides, flanks or feet of rabbits, having the appearance of iron rust and being foreign to the standard color. Rust usually appears in American Blues, Black, Havanas and Lilacs. May be caused by fading through over-exposure to the sunlight, dirty hutches or dead hair about to molt.

Saddle — The rounded, intermediate portion of the back between the shoulder and loin.

Sandy — The color of sand, as in sand-gray Flemish Giants. Gray with reddish brown cast interspersed with dark guard hairs.

Screw Tail — A tail that is twisted. A corkscrew tail has more than one turn and is a disqualification.

Self or Self-Colored — Rabbits of the same colored fur over the entire head, legs, body and tail. Not having ticking, agouti hair pattern or shadings.

Senior — A rabbit six months of age and over in those breeds having two show room classes, Junior and Senior. A rabbit eight months of age and older in those breeds having three show room classes, Junior, Intermediate, Senior.

Shadow Bars — Weakness of self-color in the fur of both fore and hind feet, appearing in the form of white or lighter colored bars running across the feet and acting as a severe cut or penalty in scoring. Occurs more often in the agouti breeds than in selfs.

Shoulder — The uppermost joint of the foreleg, connecting it with the body.

Silvered — Having an abundance of silver-white or silver-tipped guard hairs interspersed through the fur that produces a lustrous silvery appearance.

Sire — A father rabbit.

Slipping Coat — A coat that is shedding or molting a profusion of hairs.

Slobber — Excessive salivation creating wet or extremely moist and unsightly fur around the mouth and lower jaw and forelegs.

Snaky — Slender, narrow body, thin and typical of the Himalayan.

Snipey — Narrow and elongated head, with an appearance of undue leanness.

Solid Color — Of the same color uniformity over the entire animal, not mixed with any other color. Having no markings or shadings. Includes ticked or agouti colored rabbits. Also includes brindled rabbits but not rabbits of basic "tan" pattern.

Sport — Rabbit not true to the characteristics of its breed.

Spraddled Legs — Forefeet bowed outward when viewed from the front. Knock kneed. Hind feet not set parallel with the body. Turned outward from the hock joint.

Station — Ideal manner of standing of carriage in conformity with standard position of pose.

Stocky — Compact, stout and cobby.

Stops — In the Dutch, white part of the hind foot extending upward from toes and ending abruptly about one third of the way to the hocks.

Strain — A race or stock of rabbits in any standard breed of the same family blood, having the quality of reproducing marked racial characteristics.
**Stringy** — The quality of having a ropy or sinewy finish, noticeably in the larger breeds of rabbits if not properly fattened for market.

**Sway Back** — Having a distinct fall or scoop in that portion of the back between the shoulders and hindquarters, as distinguished from a gradually arching back.

**Sweep** — An unbroken flow of designated markings. There should be no gaps or congested areas.

**Symmetry** — The quality of possessing a harmonious proportion of head, ears, legs and body structure conforming to the standard type of the breed represented.

**Tail Carriage** — The way in which a rabbit carries its tail. Poor tail carriage is denoted by the tail being carried to one side or the other.

**Tattoo** — A punched code in the ear that is a permanent method of identification.

**Texture** — The character of fur as determined by feel or touch, such as "fine" or "coarse" texture.

**Ticking** — A wavy distribution of longer guard hair throughout the fur that is a different color from the under wool or body fur. Ticking is usually produced by black-tipped guard hairs and adds to the beauty of the fur. Examples: Chinchillas, Flemish Giants and Belgian Hares.

**Trio** — One buck and two does.

**Tucked Up** — The trim appearance of a Belgian Hare, with long rounded body and breast and belly gathered in closely to form an arch when the rabbit is sitting.

**Type** — Used to denote body conformation of a rabbit, or shape of a particular part of a rabbit, as in "head type." The general description of the physical makeup of the rabbit.

**Typical** — Serving as an ideal representative of any given breed or variety as applied to type, color or fur quality.

**Under Color** — The base of the fur hair. Shaft next to the skin. Not the belly fur of the rabbit.

**Variety** — A subdivision of any recognized standard breed, distinct in color of fur from other subdivisions. With rabbits type shows the breed and color the variety.

**Wall Eyes (Moon Eyes)** — Having a milky film over the cornea or appearance similar to a moonstone. Colored eyes having an extremely light iris giving the eye a glazed appearance.

**Wolf Teeth** — Protruding or elongated teeth in the upper or lower jaw caused by improper alignment of the upper and lower front teeth preventing normal wearing action.

**Wool** — Descriptive of the fur of Angora rabbits. The guard hairs and under-fur being from 2½ to 5 inches long and resembling fine wool in texture.

**Wry Tail** — Abnormally bent, curled or twisted. Permanently held to one side. A disqualification for a rabbit.
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