

Holland Lop Rabbit Specialty Club

by Margie Brewer
mr2dutch@embarqmail.com

Greetings all you fellow Holland lovers.

It is time to sit and visit for a spell. I hope winter has been kind to you, your Hollands have survived and your nest boxes are full.

I have not heard from any of you lately. I keep trying to impress on each of you that this is your column. It would be

more interesting if I could get input from around the world of Hollands.

I love my Hollands; it is such a challenging breed. There is always a part I am not quite satisfied with. Do you find that to be true in your herd? Presently, I am working on the head. I somehow overlooked the slipped crown on some of my bucks. Big mistake. Once you get slipped crowns, it hard to get rid of. So that is my goal for the year 2009...work on crown placement. Last year it was shoulders. I had extra length in the shoulders. (This is a no-no) The shoulders, as you may know, should be nearly equal to but not exceed that of the rear of the animal. A good Holland, in my opinion, should look as though there is no neck; the head should be mounted high on that short, muscled, compact, well balanced body (no length in shoulders) carrying the width all the way back. Did you know you can tell if an animal is pinched by looking at its rear feet? If it is tracking straight, it is not pinched.

The deadline for Holland National Show in Pa is March 14, 2009.

ARBA Judge John Cosby passed away recently. He will be missed by the entire rabbit world.

We need more rabbit judges, if you are qualified, please consider going for your license.

Hotot Rabbit Breeders International

by Matthew Hinderman
matthewhinderman@yahoo.com

As a relatively new person to the ARBA, I have noticed a trend which seems to be leaning toward the smaller breeds of rabbits. As the interest in the small breeds is growing, interest in the large breeds seems to be declining. With the declining popularity of many of the larger breeds of rabbits, breeds like the Standard Blanc de Hotot have had a hard time keeping up with this trend.

There are other large breeds that are in worse shape, but once I saw a picture of the Standard Hotot I knew I had to raise them even if I did not have a lot of space. After purchasing my first pair, I soon learned the breed was a rare breed. The Standard Blanc de Hotot proved to be a challenge, perhaps that made me even more determined than ever to continue to work on their quality! When I first started breeding, I put the buck in with the doe and waited patiently for babies 28 days later. Day after day came and still no babies. After speaking to other breeders, they shared their advice. One person told me they left the doe and buck together for a week. I thought to myself, what if the buck and doe really started to fight? Then, after several failed attempts to breed them, I tried putting my doe in with the buck each morning before work and each afternoon when I got home from work for about 5 days in a row. The first few attempts, the buck and doe just looked at each other.

I thought I'd have to dim the lights and break out some smooth jazz, but eventually the buck got up enough courage to do his job. I thought maybe I had a timid buck and needed a new one. I began to work with him and look for a new buck. However, the AM/PM routine for 5 days did work and I did get a nest box of 8 Standard Hotots. I was thrilled and eagerly watched them grow. One day in the shed, I heard the dreaded sneeze. I was mortified when I saw it was my Standard Hotots, I did not have a trace of any other sick rabbits and the parents were healthy. I could not figure out what had happened with the babies I waited so long for! The litter was up to their awkward "teenager" stage and that is when I heard them start to sneeze. I never had a sneezing rabbit and wanted to give up on the breed since I had other rabbits that would be put at risk. I couldn't believe I had to cull the whole group that I worked so hard to get! The next time around I anticipated problems after weaning, so I decided to do everything possible to keep the rabbits from sneezing. My rabbitry was spotless! I started a new cleaning schedule from every 3 days to a daily pan dumping. I even sprayed each pan out with the garden hose. Up to that point, I've never had a sneezing rabbit, so I was phobic about cleanliness. Needless to say, the next time around I had a litter of 1, but it didn't sneeze.

Many who are reading this might be wondering are you trying to convince other breeders to raise standard Hotots? Rabbits with snot would be enough to scare anyone away from raising a breed, but of course, I would encourage everyone to raise and promote Standard Hotots. Hopefully my experience can help others and hopefully they can avoid some frustrations and mistakes along the way. Mainly, for those who are looking to raise a rare breed, I cannot stress enough how important it is to watch the animals in your pedigrees. If the breed is small, the gene pool may also be small. If you are looking to add breeding stock to your rabbitry, find out what that rabbit has in it's pedigree before agreeing to purchase it. Sometimes people do not give out pedigrees until after they receive payment, but if you don't get that information in advance how will you know you don't

already have several collateral relatives in your herd? After looking at the pedigrees of my first pair, it was clear to me why I was seeing the problems I saw. The pair I was breeding was closely related. Some would call it line-breeding but after seeing infertility and decreased immune systems I called it inbreeding. The first Standard Blanc de Hotots arrived in the United States in 1978. 8 arrived and only 6 of the 8 could be used for breeding. Some Standard Hotots have been imported since that time, but for the most part the gene pool has remained very small. To combat what I saw, I bought new breeding stock

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from as far away from Michigan as I could find. I also looked into out crossing.

Many breeders that raise Standard Hotots began out crossing to add new blood to their genetic lines. I have seen many different breeds used to outcross with Standard Hotots. Blue eyed white Beverens, New Zealands, Satins, Californian and even a Holland Lop are a few breeds I have seen in outcrosses. I would avoid using the Beveren because many of the Standard Hotots I see have low front shoulders. The body types are leaning more toward a mandolin body than a commercial body. There is also an issue of eye spots and I feel the eye spots are not helped when using a rabbit with blue eyes. Recently at a show, a judge mentioned he was not impressed with the Hotots fur. The Standard Hotot should have a frosty white coat. This fur quality as described in the SOP seems to have been lost, so importing new blood may help bring the fur quality back. However, the European Standard Hotots are between 6 and 8 pounds and in the United States they are 8 to 11 pounds. Some breeders are experiencing seniors that do not weigh 8 pounds, so breeding an import must be done with only the largest representatives of the breed. The judge also thought fur could be improved by crossing Dutch with New Zealand, but I am not sure if fixing the fur is something that is going to be that simple. Everyone has their own opinion how to outcross. Personally, I used a Californian to outcross with my Standard Hotots. Even though the fur may not be perfect, the shoulder and size were improved with this outcross. For this breed to survive, the rabbits have to have commercial bodies.

This year at the ARBA convention I had the pleasure of showing the Best of Breed Doe and the Best Opposite Sex Buck. The buck was an outcross to Californian. Of course having the Honor of Best of Breed may carry more weight if there were more than 13 rabbits at the convention. Perhaps one day we will see rows of Standard Hotots at the ARBA Convention. I have helped many new breeders start raising Standard Blanc de Hotots. My advice is to keep working with the rabbits and don't give up. If you practice out crossing, don't be afraid to cull heavily for the first several generations. In fact, be prepared to cull heavily because if you are introducing a new breed to the Standard Hotots, you should only be introducing the best possible offspring. I have been contacted by breeders all over the United States that are interested in raising standard Hotots. Transportation is not as difficult or expensive as one might think. You just have to be willing to go the extra mile and the rewards in the end will be worth it.

Lop Rabbit Club of America

by Debbie Ernst

Greetings Lop friends! Our club would like to welcome anyone who is interested in showing and raising the beautiful French and/or English lop rabbits. Please contact any of our members, officers, or myself. We would be glad to share information with you and welcome you into our lop family. Our club now has their own website, so please make a note of

the new address, which is as follows: <http://www.lrca.us>. There, you will find club and contact information.

I hope everyone is surviving these cold winter months and that your nestboxes are filling up with the prospective winners for 2009! Springtime will be here before you know it and maybe this will be YOUR year to have the BEST French or English lop! Besides attending your local shows, our 2009 Lop Nationals

will be an event you won't want to miss out on. It will be held in Bloomington, Illinois on March 28th, so this will be another chance for everyone to get together and show their best lops. The host hotel is the Hawthorn Suites and the banquet will be held at the Interstate Center. We encourage everyone to attend if possible and look forward to seeing you there.

Congratulations again to Mary Crawford, LRCA President, for recently being inducted into the Lop Club Hall of Fame. Mary has dedicated so much of her friendship and leadership throughout her many years of involvement within our club, and has shared so much of her knowledge with all of us. She is a dedicated, wonderful member of our great lop family. Also, congratulations to Debbie Ernst from Texas, for winning two Best in Shows and a First Reserve in Show, and a BEST of the BEST in Shows, with the same English lop doe! This doe also won her class in Louisville, so this rabbit seems to be on a winning streak. Any other club members, (Youth, that means you too), who have a BIG French or English lop win, or any other news of interest for our club, please send me an email or snail mail me about this. We want to hear about it. My address is: 5812 116th St. Lubbock, TX 79424 or email me at: DandDErnst@msn.com

Until next time, keep those nestboxes warm and full of future grand champions! See you at the show tables.

Mini Lop Rabbit Club of America

by Christopher DeSurra
chrisdesurra@yahoo.com

I want to start with a few announcements from our national meeting this past October in Louisville. We are very proud to report that Kayla Schmidt was awarded the National Mini Lop Scholarship for \$500 this year. Furthermore, Greg West, Hobart & Judy Todd, and Janice Yarnell were introduced into the National Mini Lop Hall of Fame. We

would also like to congratulate Michelle Wojcik who was selected as our Open Member of the Year and Nicolas King who was selected as our Youth Member of the Year.

All of us on the west coast hope you are planning to attend one if not both of the 2009 National Conventions that will be held in California. Of course, this November will hold all the glitz and glamour of the ARBA Convention in Del Mar, which is very close to San Diego California in the south. But I also hope that many of you are planning to bring your beautiful bunnies to the quadruple open and youth shows next month in Monterey, CA including the National Mini Lop Show. For full information request a free catalog by email to chrisdesurra@yahoo.com, by mail to Chris DeSurra, 2069 Federal Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92627 or by phone (949) 646-0335. Please offer your name, address, email address, and phone numbers. More information about this fabulous weekend can be found on our website <http://www.geocities.com/minilopnationals/>.

The first step is to reserve your room at the Monterey Bay Travelodge, 2030 North Freemont Street, Monterey, CA 93940. If you decide at a later date that you cannot come, the reservation for Friday and Saturday night is easy to cancel. Call (831) 373-3381 and ask for the "Lop Rabbit Club" block to receive the special rate of \$95 for a single or \$99 for up to 4 people. Information about hotel amenities can be found at info@montereybaytravelodge.com. (Please make sure you do not make your reservation at the Monterey Downtown Travelodge).