

Selecting What You'll Show

Brian Walker, ARBA Judge

In regards to the question about putting does back on the table after they have had a litter, this is a problem that can be avoided with a little planning (if all else goes well). Our Tan standard (This does not apply for other breeds, be sure to check your Standard. Belgians may also be bumped up) allows breeders to "bump up" Juniors that make Sr. weight. This allows us to show our Juniors in the Sr. class before they are 6 months of age, so long as they meet the Sr. requirements. If a bumped up junior wins a leg in a Sr. class, it will count as their Sr. leg and negates the problem of trying to put a brood doe back on the table.

There are several problems inherent in this tactic. If a junior is to compete in a Sr. class, they must have a good coat, or they will be outclassed. Also, they must make Sr. weight (4 lbs.) or they will be DQ'ed. Faults Judges sometime forgive Juniors for, such as brindling on the front legs (the standard makes an allowance for this), can be held against an animal in a Sr. class. Thus, if you have a good Jr. doe that carries a good coat and can beat the Seniors, you can get her Senior leg before you have to take her home to breed.

On a different note, I think there one point in the discussion on culling that cannot be emphasized enough:

Never, ever, ever cull too quickly. I've been guilty in the past of culling before the animals had proper time to develop. I've also been surprised by animals that I had "written off," only to find weeks later that they had become nice show animals. In general, you can make a good call at about 4 months, at least on my bloodlines. Different lines may be able to be culled more quickly, but I find I do best if I wait. Now granted, you can cull for obvious faults and DQ's at earlier ages, but if you raise one more BOB a year because you waited a little bit extra, it makes the time that you waited on the other animals that didn't develop pay off.