

## **TIPS FOR NEWCOMERS TO THE SHOW TABLE**

by Judith Graf

Most of us are old-timers to the show world of rabbits but there are many who do not understand the rules and the goings on associated with it. So if you are a show veteran, you don't need this; but maybe it will cause you to pause and consider those who are new and think of ways to help them. So without further ado, here we go.

First, your rabbit does not need to be registered or even have a pedigree in order to enter a rabbit show, but it must be a recognized breed. You do not need to be a member of any club or even the American Rabbit Breeders Association. You need only to pack up your bunny, go to the show location and show your rabbit.

If it is a pre-entered show, you will have had to send in the entry information and the entry fee postmarked before the deadline date. To locate the show and who to send all this to, you will need to find out who the show secretary is. The ARBA lists all upcoming sanctioned shows in it's magazine the Domestic Rabbits. It would be best for you if you would join the ARBA as your membership in the organization gets you the periodical, a very informative guidebook on rabbits, a membership listing, and the rulebook. The address of the ARBA is: PO. Box 426 - Bloomington, IL 61702. NOTE: ARBA now lists upcoming shows six months in advance on their website.

So now you know where the show is and you arrive complete with bunny in tow. Locate the entry table, tell whomever is volunteering to take entries that you have never done this before and could use a little help. Most rabbit people will be willing to give you a hand and are generously helpful, but they may also be busy trying to get their entry in as well and you may have to wait for them to finish.

If this is a one day "carry cage" show and not pre-entered, you will need to fill out your entry at this time. Some exhibitors purchase a quantity of show forms from ARBA or a rabbit club so they have plenty on hand and can fill them out before leaving home which saves the hustle and bustle of doing it at the show and leaves more time to visit right away! Generally filling- out entry forms is relatively easy but can be confusing if you don't understand what is going on! Even oldsters can mess up filling them out. Your name and address is obvious. Your ARBA number is your membership number (letters) assigned to you by the ARBA when you joined. Check the box if you do or do not want ribbons (usually most people want their ribbons if offered, so why this is there to fill out is anyone's guess). Fill in the name of the breed of bunny and the variety you are showing, or at least the color if you are unsure. Then the ear number. Every rabbit must have a PERMANENT and legible tattoo in the left ear in order to show or the rabbit will be eliminated and not placed. Sex, and class are next. Enter buck or doe and the class means whether it is a senior, intermediate, or junior. A rabbit is a senior if it is over six months old. Rabbits have simply junior or senior classes. OK that is the entry form. Now for the individual remark cards.

In the top left corner put the rabbit's ear number tattoo. In the top right corner, put your exhibitor entry number if you are assigned one for this particular show. Your name and the name of the show is simple. Enter the name of the breed, the variety or color; and circle if it is a buck or doe. Then circle the class which is abbreviated as Sr. (senior); Jr. (under 6, months). Breeds do not compete against each other for fur/wool but are shown in their own breed fur/wool class. Pay your entry fee and turn in your cards when requested and you're finished entering.

The rabbit must be registered first before it can be issued the grand champion certificate. This is done by taking the rabbit and the rabbit's 3 generation pedigree to a licensed Registrar who will inspect the rabbit for any Disqualifications and if none be found, fill out a form with all pertinent information of the rabbit. A permanent registration number or symbol will be tattooed in the right ear of the rabbit. The current fee for this is \$4.00 per rabbit. The rabbit must be at least 6 months old and you must be a current member of the ARBA. The Registrar will verify this by looking at your card, or will accept your membership application at the same time of registering the rabbit if you are not a current member.

If the show is officially sanctioned for breed sweepstakes, it means that someone has paid the national specialty breed club their required sanction fee. This means that your points won at that show will be accumulated and compiled for end-of-the-year sweepstakes in that breed club if you are a current member of that association. The breed does not need to be sanctioned in order for you to show your breed of bunny at an ARBA sanction show.

Now back to the show...your bunny is all entered, you have only to wait until your breed is called to show! When your breed is ready, place your bunny on the assigned table in the show box coop on the judging table when your class for age and variety is called. Sometimes no one officially calls this so it is up to you to pay attention.

You are not allowed to show ownership or talk to the judge during judging if it will influence the judge's decision in any way. Some exhibitors will speak to the judge if they are not showing during class judging and some judges will visit with the exhibitors in a friendly way but without reference as to the ownership of any rabbit being judged. If, in the judge's opinion you are interfering he/she may disqualify your entire entry. It may be said here that manners, courteous attitude and ethical behavior are all attributes of good sportsmanship! You may not agree with the judging but you are paying for that person's opinion on THAT day and it is best to keep your thoughts and comments to yourself. If you really do not understand why the judge placed a rabbit, wait until all the judging has transpired and politely ask the judge if you may speak with them.

Most judges will be glad to answer your questions. After your bunny is placed and the judge makes placing comments, it will be returned to you for removal from the table. If your bunny placed First in it's class it will be held for judging against the other first place winners in that variety. If it wins Best of Variety, it will be held for judging against all the

rest of the variety winners for Best of Group in those showing in groups; or for Best of Breed. Some breeds also choose best junior and best senior.

### **SHOW JARGON:**

If a show is designated as being ARBA sanctioned, it means that the sponsoring club putting on the show has paid a sanction fee to the ARBA. This will entitle the rabbit entered to be eligible to win "legs" towards a grand championship.

#### A leg is earned by:

1. Placing First in a class of 5 or more with 3 or more exhibitors in that class.
2. Placing Best of Variety if there were at least 5 in that variety with 3 or more exhibitors in that variety.
3. Placing Best Opposite Sex of Variety if there were at least 5 of that sex in that variety and at least 3 exhibitors in that variety.
4. Placing Best of Breed if there were at least 5 shown with 3 exhibitors.
5. Placing Best Opposite Sex of Breed if there were at least 5 of that sex and at least 3 exhibitors in that sex.
6. Placing Best of Group with 5 shown in that group with at least 3 exhibitors in that group.
7. Placing Best Opposite Sex of Group if there were at least 5 in that sex of group or at least 3 exhibitors in that sex of group.
8. Wins Best of Show.

The key to remember is that there must be at least 5 in the class and at least 3 exhibitors. When a rabbit wins three of these "legs" at 3 different shows under at least two different judges and (at least one of these must be won as a senior) by sending in these leg certificates and the appropriate fee along with the registration to the ARBA office, the ARBA will send you a Grand Champion certificate and the rabbit's title will be published in the Domestic Rabbits news.

Now! If you are lucky to have won Best of Breed, you must wait to return the rabbit to the table again to compete against all the other Best of Breed winners for either Best Four class or Best Six class. Then the two winners from these compete for Best in Show.

There is a great deal of waiting during all of this. This is where the fun is! You get to meet new friends and old; sell extra bunnies to fellow breeders or new ones; buy that promising one from someone else; obtain breeding stock; and generally socialize among good friends, all who have one thing in common: the rabbit hobby.