



March, 2006

307-766-5027

4-H Animal Science News

RABBITS: PEDIGREE & REGISTRATION

Source: Tonna Thomas, Domestic Rabbits, Jan/Feb 2006

For those of you who have raised and/or shown purebred rabbits, this may be somewhat of a refresher course....but even refreshers are not entirely without merit and education. For new rabbit enthusiasts, it is hoped and believed that this article will be informative and beneficial to you.

A Rabbit Pedigree Form (from the American Rabbit Breeders Association---ARBA) shows or indicates the following information:

- Breed and variety
- Name of animal
- Ear number
- Weight
- Sex
- Registration/champion numbers (if any)
- Ancestry of the animal
- Name of the breeder

The name of the rabbit is not important to the owner, but it also identifies the original breeder (which may be different). Most breeders use their registered rabbitry name (and/or some other name such as their first and/or last name) prior to the name given to the rabbit. For example:

John's Buster, Smith's Buster, or Happy Farm's Buster....or they may note the name on the pedigree as John's_____.

When it is the latter, the breeder is giving the buyer the option to name the rabbit....but keeping the original breeder's name as the breeder. Unless the pedigree is blank, it is not proper etiquette to change the name. It is important to leave the original name or breeder's name on the pedigree as this gives the original breeder credit for that animal. Do not rob the original breeder from credit due by deleting their name from the pedigree.

The weight is the actual weight at time of senior age or at time of registration. Simply weigh the animal and enter that weight on the pedigree.

The sex of the rabbit is rather obvious. Simply enter the correct sex on the pedigree.

4-H/Youth Specialist
Livestock & Equine
307-766-5027 or e-mail sschafer@uwyo.edu

The ear number identifies the rabbit. It is the personal ear mark of that rabbit and it is placed in the left ear. Some breeders have systems to their ear numbers. For example:

My Dwarf Hotots have one system and my Florida Whites have another system. I use three digits for the Dwarf Hotots....the first is the rabbit's name, the second is the dam's first letter of her name, and the third is the sire's first letter of his name. The Florida White start with letters rather numbers.

Some breeders use the rabbit's name in the ear for the personal ear number while others may use the year they were born, followed by additional numbers and/or letters. However, regardless of the format used by a given breeder....the ear number is an extremely important form of identification.

The date of birth is another important part of the pedigree. It determines the age of the rabbit for registrations, shows, exhibitions, and other activities or events. Rabbits must be shown in their proper age classification unless they are "bumped up" to show in a higher class as per stated in their respective breed standard. What does that mean? Well, for example:

A four-class rabbit is over the maximum junior weight, then this rabbit can be allowed to show as senior even though it may not be old enough. However, it is very important to note that this is only permitted if the breed standard allows animals to be shown in a higher age. It is also important to note that no animal may be shown in a lower age classification than its true age.

Variety is also included on the pedigree, but...what exactly is variety, what does variety mean? Typically, the color of the rabbit is the variety of the rabbit....therefore, some breeds such as Florida Whites have no varieties. The pedigree also contains the varieties of the ancestor....and this is important when selecting animals for breeding because some colors are compatible for breeding with other colors and some colors are not compatible with each other.

The Registration Number (gets placed in the rabbit's right ear) and Grand Champion Number are also items to be recorded on the pedigree. However, it is necessary to note that the vast majority of rabbits will not earn these numbers....so they cannot be added to the pedigree. It is somewhat difficult to explain how these numbers are earned, but if you would like this information contact the American Rabbit Breeders Association.

The ancestry is another component of the pedigree. It indicates the parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. By keeping accurate and up-to-date records, you can see and locate how much each animal weighed, their variety, and if there were any registered/grand champion rabbits in its background.

If all pedigrees are correctly and completely filled out, they become an invaluable source of information. Therefore, as with most everything else in life, it is very important to keep correct and complete records.

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING Issued in Furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, acts of May and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture. Glen Whipple, Director. Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

Persons seeking admission, employment, or access to programs of the University of Wyoming shall be considered without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, political belief, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. Person with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc) should contact their local UW CES Office. To file a complaint, write the UW Employment Practices/Affirmative Action Office, University of Wyoming, PO Box 3434, Laramie, Wyoming 82071-3434.