

# LET'S TALK RABBITS!

By Melanie Lyons – NY State 4-H Rabbit Ambassador

## NEWSLETTER #1

Hello, my name is Melanie Lyons. I am the NYS 4-H ambassador for rabbits. I am going to be writing this column to help newcomers understand and learn about rabbits and teach you ways to have fun while doing it. I am 13 years old and belong to Otsego county 4-H. I have been an ARBA member for 3 consecutive years. This past year at the ARBA convention in Wichita Kansas, I was 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the duchess contest where I had to write a written application, take a 200 question written test, answer 100 breed identification questions and judge 4 classes of rabbits. I then made callbacks so was able to do the interview process. I raise Jersey wooly, mini rex, netherland dwarfs and Holland lops. I finished 2012 as the #1 youth breeder in NYS and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall nationally for the jersey wooly breed.

This months column is going to be about basic care of your rabbit. The most important thing to a rabbit is clean, fresh water. If a rabbit does not have water, it will not eat its food. A well balanced pellet food is also desired. You typically want a high fiber pellet with protein around 16%. Hay is also good to have in the diet. Timothy hay is better than the alfalfa hay due to the high protein value of alfalfa. Hay is also good for the wool breeds to prevent wool block. It is also high in fiber. It's a good idea to worm your rabbit yearly. This will put your rabbit into molt so plan accordingly. I like to use ivemectin horse wormer paste (apple flavor) where I feed a pea size amount. I usually place the wormer inside a cheerio so the rabbit will eat it. My rabbits LOVE cheerios!

Cleanliness is also important. You want your rabbits cage cleaned and disinfected regularly. This will cut down on parasites and diseases. Your feed/water dishes should also be cleaned regularly. You can use vinegar as an inexpensive disinfectant or Listerine. A spray bottle works well to spray the pans of your cage.

Toenails should be clipped monthly. You can get small dog clippers at the dollar store that work really well.

I encourage you to attend an ARBA show near you. Whether you show or watch, you will learn a lot. The shows are open to EVERYONE for free. Feel free to talk to breeders at the show, they are ALWAYS willing to share their knowledge of their breed. Go to [www.arba.net](http://www.arba.net) and for New York State Rabbit and Cavy Breeders Association info go to <http://www.nyrcba.com> The next NYS rabbit show is March 9, 2013 Northeast Tri-State Club (double show) Ballston Spa, NY. If you have any questions, contact me at [mplyons@stny.rr.com](mailto:mplyons@stny.rr.com)



Breed: Holland Lop  
Showroom Classification: Broken Pattern  
Variety: Broken Black Tort  
Class: 4-class  
Body Type: Compact    Fur Type: Roll Back



Breed: Jersey Wooly  
Showroom Classification: Agouti  
Variety: Chestnut  
Class: 4-class  
Body type: Compact    Fur Type: Wool