

Time to get cleaning!!!!!!

How to keep you rabbit clean and Groomed

By Melanie Lyons – NY State 4-H Rabbit Ambassador

NEWSLETTER #3

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 month I am going to talk about grooming and how to keep your rabbit clean. There are many different types of fur such as rollback, flyback, rex, satin, standing, and wool. When trying to decide on the breed you want to raise it is important for you to understand grooming because some breeds need more frequent grooming than others. This includes mainly the wool breeds. According to the ARBA Standard of Perfection, no substance can be added to a rabbit's coat that will alter it at a show. This includes conditioners, oils, etc. because it adds a sheen like appearance or a denser feel giving the rabbit an unfair advantage. Water is the best thing to use because it is normal and neutral. It is OK to use before a show too. Here is a list of things you can use and what you can't use, (According to Pamela Nock, an ARBA judge)

Which of the following products would be ok to use right before a show on your rabbit?

show sheen - No way! Just because it's for sale in a rabbit supply catalog doesn't mean it's ok to use before a show. Any product that claims to add something to the coat (luster/sheen) most likely contains oils/silicone that are illegal to use for show.

water - great to use for day of show to wipe off the coat, remove loose hairs, and reduce static. Doesn't strip the coat of it's natural oils and luster.

dry shampoo - great for cleaning the coat, but shouldn't be used right before show day because it can strip the coat of it's natural oils.

corn starch - mixed with water, but don't use right before the show as it may leave residue on the coat (foreign substance) that could result in a disqualification.

shampoo - any products for cleaning the coat are generally fine to use – but

remember, they can strip the coat of natural oils, so do cleaning well before the show. **vinegar** - great for cleaning off stains, but remember not to use too close to the show due to odor (foreign substance) and the fact that it strips natural oils off the coat.

quick clean - great for removing stains and is odorless. fine to use before a show.

powder - nope! foreign substance that will result in a disqualification.

grooming chalk - used for brightening up white markings on livestock, don't use on rabbits!

grooming lotion - lotions are oily, don't use on rabbit coats!

Doc's rabbit enhancer supplement feed - any supplement fed to the rabbit to enhance coat condition is fine to use.

classicoat stain remover - good for removing stains.

kwik-stop - yes, it's used to stop a bleeding nail that was cut too short. Be careful not to get it all over the rabbit's foot.

A rex furred rabbit should never be given a bath since it will ruin the coat. A small amount of water will work just fine.

Before most shows I have seen many breeders wet the rabbits coat with a damp towel with water to remove excessive hair. (All fur types except wool. With wool it is more of a static reducer.) This is just about all you have to do when grooming a rabbit with rollback, flyback, Standing, rex, or satin fur. Slick and easy stones (black) help remove excessive and loose hairs too.

When grooming a wool breed rabbit it takes more work, but nothing you can't handle. I personally get most of my brushes from Agway in the dog section.

Taking care of mats step by step:

1. Separate the mats using your fingers to pull them apart. This loosens the mat up so you won't hurt the rabbit as much.
2. Use a good comb to finish removing the mats
3. Keep working at your mats; it may take a while and if you can't get it with your comb. Keep separating it with your fingers.
4. If you absolutely can't remove the mat you can use scissors to cut it, but be extremely careful not to cut the rabbit and make sure this is your last resort.

The most common places to find mats are behind the neck, around the rump, and under the chin.

Removing loose hair and dirt:

Blowing your rabbit out is a great idea no matter what breed you raise. You will be surprised how much dirt comes out even if it looks like your rabbit isn't dirty. Blowing your rabbit out gives it a "fluffy" look to it by opening the coat up. Also, it removes loose hair and dirt. If you wear contacts like me, be careful not to blow towards you because dirt will easily get into your eyes. A popular brand of rabbit blower is a metro blower.

Remember to keep your cages clean and wiped down. This will cut down on your grooming time. Make sure you are grooming often and are clipping toenails! Good luck!

Disclosure: I am not a professional groomer or an expert. These are some tips that have been successful for me. Special thanks to ARBA judge Pamela Nock for supplying the list of do's and don'ts for supplies allowed by ARBA standards and for reviewing this article.

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 and for New York State Rabbit and Cavy Breeders Association info go to <http://www.nyrcba.com>. Catalogs are usually posted. The next NYS rabbit shows are:

April 6, 2013 Cattaraugus County (Double Show: Triple Dwarf Hotot Show) Little Valley, NY

April 20, 2013 Heart Of NY RBA (Double Show) Fulton, NY

April 27, 2013 Catskill RBA (Double Show) Rhinebeck, NY

April 27 & 28 2013 Eastern State Flemish Cortland, NY

If you have any questions please email me at mplyons@stny.rr.com

Thank you Laura Dorr and Marge Thornton for supplying this months breed id pictures!



Breed: Lilac	Body Type : Compact
Showroom Classification: Standard	
Variety: Standard	Fur Type – flyback
Class: 4-class	

Breed: Palomino	Body Type: Commercial
Showroom Classification: golden	
Variety: golden	Fur type - flyback
Class: 6-class	