

New Exhibitor Q&A

How animals are judged/shown?

Different breeds have a different standard they are judged to. This is found in the Standard of Perfection or SOP. The animals on the table are compared to each other and whichever animal most closely matches the written standard, wins a higher placement. This process starts with the animals competing against others in the same class (age and variety). The class winners then compete for the best of variety. Each breed has slightly different classifications, but generally the variety winners then compete for best of breed if there is more than one variety. The show world was also built on trying to breed for better animals, so along with the best animal they choose the best opposite sex. For example, in rabbits if a doe (female) wins best of breed, a buck (male) will win best of the opposite sex of breed. This is not fixed though, a buck can win best of breed, in that case a doe will win best opposite sex of breed. Cavies work in the same way, although the males are called boars and the females are sows.

What is an SOP and where can you get one?

SOP, or a Standard of Perfection is a book which has a collection of standards for rabbits and cavies. This is a written description of what the ideal animal in every breed and variety looks like along with what disqualifications or faults certain breeds have. The SOP also holds other information, and is a very useful tool for breeding and exhibiting animals. Judges will use these to judge the animals on the table, the best animal is one who perfectly matches the description in the standard. You can get one at some vendors at shows, or online at arba.net under "ARBA Store"

What's the difference between animal show variety and registration variety?

The registration variety is the detailed and specific color. Many breeds group colors together. The showroom variety is the variety you enter animals in shows. For example, in lop breeds (English, French, Holland, and American Fuzzy) they show in solid and broken patterns, although they can be shown in many colors. This information can be found in the breed's SOP.

How do I find reputable breeders and my first show animals?

I found it most beneficial to go to shows and meet people, learn about the different breeds and find something you're really passionate about that fits your style. Do you want a fiber breed? Do you want to also raise them for meat? Are you or possibly your kids able to handle certain breeds? When I first started I was 12, and I found the bigger breeds really hard for me because I simply couldn't comfortably carry them or put them on the table. That's not the case with everyone though. Different breeds also have different care requirements, some rabbit breeds shouldn't be on a wired floor due to an increased chance of sore hocks, the woolled breeds and long haired breeds have much more time dedicated to their coats. Other things to look into is how long their show life is, if you want a small herd, you need an animal that can show longer.

What do the abbreviations mean (BOB, BOSB, BOG, BOV)?

If you watch a show you will notice people sitting off to the side of the judge with paper work, these are volunteers who are called writers. They will document all of the placements, disqualifications, and let the judge know the class numbers. While their writing sometimes there are placements more than just numbers, and these are typically Best of Breed, Best of Variety, and more. Since space can be limited on the sheets and sometimes awards to these are shortened. Different breeds will use different terminology, this is a general overview and not every one used at shows.

Award	Abbreviation	Meaning
Best of Variety	BOV	Best animal of that color
Best Opposite Sex of Variety	BOSV	The best animal of the opposite gender in a color
Best of Group	BOG	Similar to BOV, it's the best animal in a certain color group
Best Opposite Sex of Group	BOSG	The best animal of the opposite gender in a group of varieties
Best of Breed	BOB	The best animal of the breed entered
Best Opposite Sex of Breed	BOSB	The best animal in the opposite sex of the winner of the breed
Best in Show	BIS	The animal entered in the show that best fits the Standard of Perfection for its given breed
Reserve in Show or Best Reserve in Show	RIS or BRIS	The 2nd best animal entered in the show that best fits the Standard of Perfection for its given breed

Show Preparation

How can I find shows?

You can go to the New York Rabbit and Cavy Breeders Association website at nyrcba.com and under the "show dates" tag you can find a list of all the NYS sanctioned shows and catalogs.

How do I read a catalog and what do I look for?

A catalog has a brief overview of the show and holds important information such as the location, the address, entry information, prices, who the judges and secretary are, show rules, what breeds are sanctioned and more. The secretary is in charge of all the entries and paperwork for a given show, it's important to know who this is as typically entries will be sent to them either by

email, mail, or another show system. You will also typically need to find this person in the morning to check in.

What is a Sanction?

A breed being sanctioned simply means that show that is recognized by that breed-specific specialty club as one that can receive points. As mentioned under 'How to find shows' the shows you will find on the NYS page will have a list of shows sanctioned by NYS. You do not need to be a member of any clubs to show, nor does the breed need to be sanctioned to enter.

You will however need to be a member of that specific state or specialty club to earn points towards sweepstakes. In New York, you need to be a member of a local state affiliated club to earn points towards the state sweepstakes, they can be found on the website under "clubs". Points are received based on where an animal places in a class and how many animals were in the class.

How do I enter a show?

Typically at the end of the catalog you will find a sheet that looks like a table with spaces asking for your name, and contact information. You will fill out the top part with the information for whoever is showing the animal and the table with the information about your animal. You will also have to indicate which shows you want to enter, as many have multiple in one day. To calculate the amount you owe you have to take the total number of animals you're showing, multiplied by the number of shows you plan to enter, and the entry fee. For example if I am showing three rabbits at a double show with an entry fee of \$5 it's going to be $3 \times 2 \times 5 = \$30$. All of this information can be found in the catalog. Most shows will also have a Day of Show entry, where you can fill out all of the information at the show, although it's more expensive.

In the chart it will ask you for a tattoo/tag number. If your animal is not tagged or tattooed, typically it can be done at the show. With caviars, you can't pick a random tag number like you can with rabbit tattoos, many secretaries understand this and if you leave that blank and write a note with your entries.

When I get to the show, how do I check in?

On show day you will want to arrive at the showroom around 45 minutes or more before the show starts. This will give you time to set your stuff up, get your animals settled and get checked in. The check in table will usually have the show secretary and other club members who will ask for your name and find you to check you into the show, if you didn't pay ahead of time this is when you'll pay. Check in typically closes a half hour before the show starts.

What should I bring to a show?

Show day can be a long and tiring day for both you and your animals. You'll also want to have your animals in a cage with a solid bottom, this prevents leakage and mess. I recommend bringing some folding chairs so you have a place to sit and wait between shows, snacks and water for both you and your animals. Your animals will likely be a little scared or stressed in a new environment so it's normal for them not to eat or drink anything all day, but they should have the option if possible. Smaller things such as small 8oz water bottles are handy for

transport. You're also welcome to bring small folding tables to put their cages on so they aren't on the floor. I also recommend bringing some bandaids, paper towels, and nail clippers in case anyone's nails were missed at home. Make sure to check the catalog to see what the location allows, not all shows will allow chairs/tables. Most of this is all optional so bring what works for you!

What is a check in sheet and what do I do if something is wrong?

When you pre-enter a show and either mail, email, or use another program such as easy2show to enter, you will receive a check in sheet. This will look very similar to the sheet you sent in. I highly recommend carefully reading this over. Sometimes things can get mixed up. Your secretaries are people too and can make mistakes, but it's okay! If something is wrong, email them back and let them know what needs to be changed. It's typically an easy fix.

Exhibitor Etiquette

- 1) Shows are anonymous, once an animal is on the table you should do your best to stand back and not talk about a specific animal on the table. Your judges can hear you, and they don't want to know who owns any animal on the table. When you're waiting for your breed to be called, don't be afraid to ask questions to the writer or other exhibitors about what class they're in or how much they have left. However, breeders and writers are typically really busy at a show. If they seem to be actively doing something it may be best to wait a few minutes to ask your question.
- 2) Sometimes animals don't behave, and if they are being extra adventurous and jumping in and out of coops, you can put your hand over them to keep them inside. We try to keep every animal apart to prevent any fights, as they're on the table with other rabbits who might not be friendly.
- 3) When you first get to the show and are setting up be mindful about the isles around you, everyone around you including yourself are going to have to easily get to every cage and get their animals to the table to keep shows moving smoothly. Shows may indicate isles with tape or cones. You'll also want to set up with plenty of space between you and the show tables as a lot of people and rabbits have to get through that space.
- 4) Before entering a show and before leaving for a show you should check to make sure your animals are healthy and have clipped nails, if their nails are too long they may hurt the judges, you, or themselves. If they are showing signs of sickness you should leave them home. This protects other animals and them from the stress of a show.
- 5) Judging tables will usually be set up against a wall or in the middle of the showroom. You should avoid walking behind the tables unless invited. If you want a picture for an award, ask the judge for permission.
- 6) **In order to enter youth, a youth (ages 5-18) typically must put the animals on and off the table.**