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Recommendations for Raising Rabbits

Cage:

- Recommend at least a 24x36 floor space cage. Maximum of 4 Rabbits.
- Hang cage **out** of direct sunlight and wind, but in a cool dry area.
- Cages built on a wood frame can become contaminated with urine. So avoid it if possible or build it so they cannot contact the wood. Rabbits like to chew on the wood.
- No wood shavings in the cage.

Water Source:

- A valve water system with a 3 or 5-gallon bucket is best.
- Bottles can be used, but you need to have enough of them. Two or three per cage.
- Never let your rabbits run out of water. If your rabbits are not eating, check your water supply. (Klubertanz.com or Bassequipment.com)
- **WE CAN NOT STRESS HOW IMPORTANT WATER IS TO A RABBIT**

Feeder/ Feeding:

- Recommend **7-inch** screen bottom feeder, and this will allow the fines to fall through.
- I do not recommend a crock; the rabbits will leave fecal matter in crock and contaminate the feed.
- **Do not feed carrots, lettuce or grass.**
- It takes 4oz of 16% feed to maintain the weight of a 5 lb. rabbit.
- Show Rabbits should be on full feed from day one.

Once You Receive Rabbits

- When you get the rabbit's home place in their cage and let them get familiar with their surroundings, a day or so before you start handling them.
- If you are going to change your feed now is when you will need to start transferring rabbits over to a new feed, do it gradually over a week. (See transition of feed below)

Weighing Rabbits

- Weigh your show rabbits after you have had them about a week or at 5 weeks of age.
- Weigh them often- postal scale/Kitchen scale
- Two weeks before show every other day
- Keep a journal-log of your rabbits weights
- If you have rabbits weighing light or heavy, separate them in another pen and adjust feed.

Validation

- Watch for infected eyes, ears, runny stool and sneezing.

Selecting Rabbit Pens:

- When picking your rabbits for a meat pen you want uniformity.

Handling

- Wear long sleeves to protect your arms from getting scratched.
- Handle your rabbit with care, and often.
- Do not lift or carry a rabbit by its ears or legs, this is painful for the rabbit. Lifting by the ears causes damage to the ear veins. Also, without the entire body being supported, when a rabbit kicks, it may cause bone fractures in hind legs, and cause injury to nerves or tendons.
- Do not lift a rabbit by the scruff of its neck without supporting the body, injury can occur and this may damage fur.
- Put a rug or piece of carpet on the table or area where you are handling your rabbit, so it can get a foothold when being handled. Smooth surfaces cause a rabbit to slide, making it hard to handle, groom, and pose. A rabbit will not feel secure on smooth or slick surfaces; which scares them.
- Handle your rabbit during the cool part of the day. Two or three short sessions are better than one long session.
- Handling rabbits when it is too hot may cause stress and heat stroke.
- Carry your rabbit by tucking its head under your arm while supporting its body between your side and your same arm. The rabbit's eyes should be covered by your elbow. Support the hind or back legs with your free hand.

Grooming

- Begin grooming your rabbit at least one week after receiving your rabbit.
- Groom in the cool part of the day.
- Use a table covered with a rug or piece of carpet as a grooming stand.
- Moisten your hands and rub them through the rabbit's fur (from head to tail) until it is damp.
- Once the fur is damp, stroke the rabbit from head to tail several times to remove dead fur.
- Do not rub the fur backwards (from tail to head) as that can break the guard hairs.
- Continue to groom your rabbit daily by stroking the fur from head to tail. This makes the fur shiny and tight.
- Grooming improves the appearance of your rabbit, and tames it, making it easier to handle.

Posing Your Rabbit

- While grooming, put your rabbit in the proper show position.
- Place it on the table. Face the rabbit to your right if you are left-handed or to your left if you are right-handed. (This makes it easier to pick the rabbit up.)
- Place the tip of the front feet so they are even with the rabbit's eyes. Place the tip of the hind feet even with the rabbit's hip bone. Make sure the rabbit's tail is showing and not tucked under its body

Transition of Feed

- Mix 1 cup of new feed to 3 cups original (current) feed; give this ration for two days.
 - (1cup/3cups-2days)
- Mix 2 cups new feed to 2 cups original feed; give this ration for two days.
- Mix 3 cups new feed to 1 cup original feed; give this ration for two days.
- 7th Day give only new feed

Quick Guide for Feed Transition

- 1cup/3cups-2days
- 2cup/2cups-2days
- 3cup/1cups-2days
- 7th Day only new feed