

"RAISING SHOW RABBITS FROM START TO FINISH"



I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Raising market rabbits can be a very enjoyable & rewarding SAE for the exhibitor.**
- B. Many exhibitors use market rabbits as a way to fund their large animal SAE's.**
- C. Smaller SAE's like rabbits tend to be more profitable than larger animal projects.**

II. LIVESTOCK SHOW RULES

**A. First, you need to know the rules—
“Can I purchase bunnies?”**

or

**“Do I have to raise my own
bunnies for the show?”**

**(HLSR& Brazoria County--exhibitors must own their does
and raise their own meat pens.)**

**B. Many fairs/livestock shows are going to
purchasing bunnies.**

--There are **advantages and
disadvantages to both.**

C. Buying bunnies for show:

1. Advantages:

- **Don't have to worry about does NOT having bunnies.**
- **Very short term project > 4-5 wks.**
- **You do not have a lot of \$\$\$ invested >> big return.**
- **Bunnies sell for about \$35-45 each & most exhibitors are limited to 5-10 bunnies per exhibitor.**

2. Disadvantages: (Buying Bunnies)

- **Limited supply of available bunnies from breeder.**
- **Limited bunnies to choose from at show time.**
- **Hard to get three bunnies that match.**
- **Exhibitor learns very little about raising rabbits>>**

**“Throw feed at them, pick them>>
show them!!”**

D. Raising your own market rabbits:

1. Advantages:

- **Exhibitor learns about breeding, kindling, & care of bucks/does.**
- **Exhibitor learns about care of kits.**
- **Exhibitor learns importance of keeping good breeding records.**
- **More bunnies to choose from at show time>>easier to pick 3 matching bunnies.**

2. Disadvantages: (Raising your own)

- **Possible kindling problems.**
- **Bucks going heat sterile.**
- **Trouble with does accepting bucks.**
- **More \$\$ invested.**
- **More cage space needed.**
- **Management/record keeping is very important.**
- **Cold weather makes successful kindling very challenging.**
- **YEAR ROUND PROJECT!!!**

E. “Does your show have a validation program set in place for market rabbits?”

- Not having validation procedures in place will lead to cheating in a rabbit show—it’s too easy!**
- Most shows tattoo w/a unique tattoo.**

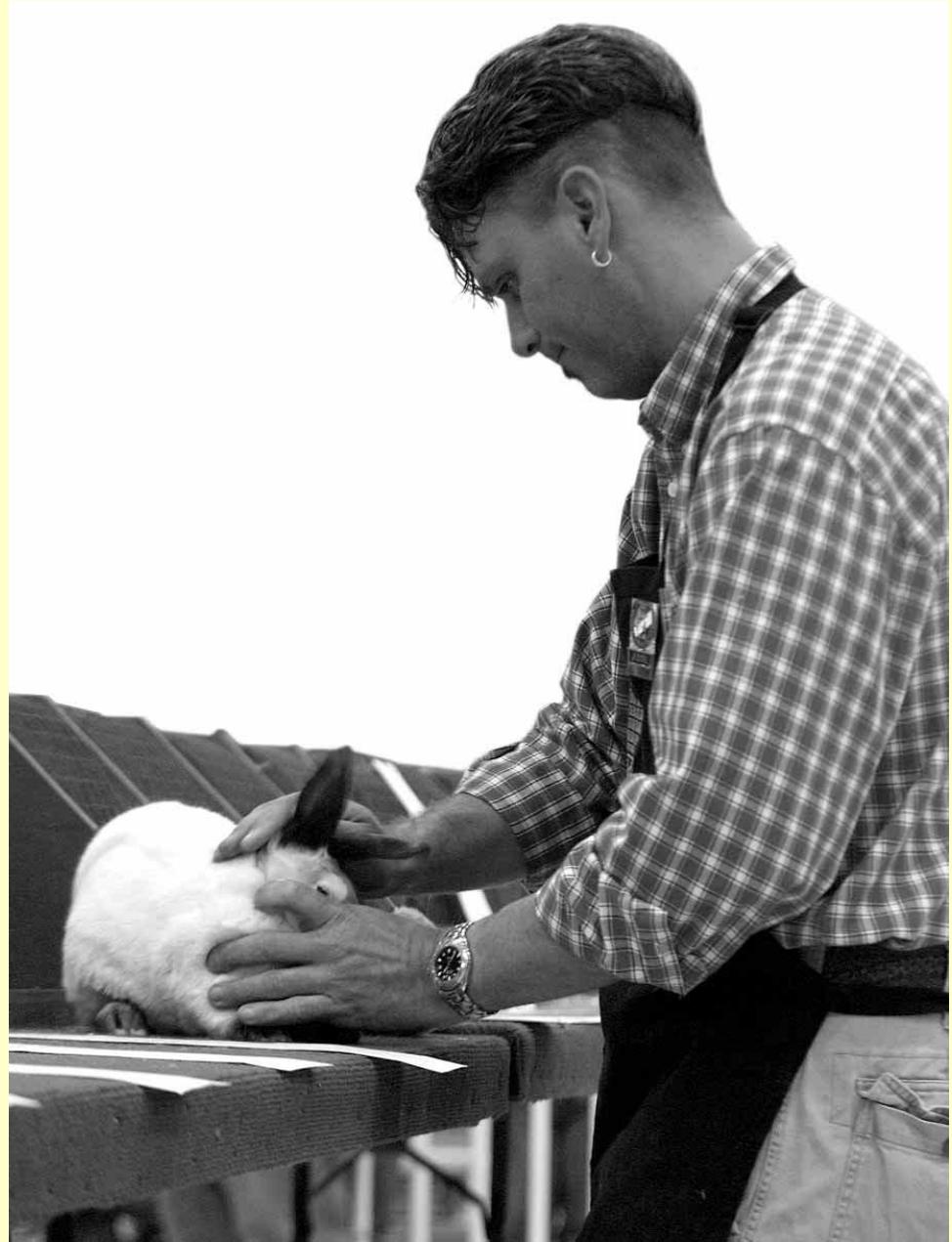


Left Ear Tattoo



F. “Does your show follow a specific set of rules?”

- To be successful, rules must address bunny weights, ages of bunnies, and disqualifications**
- Judges will follow your show’s guidelines.**



III. WHAT DO I NEED TO PURCHASE TO GET STARTED?

Facilities

- You **do not** have to have a fancy barn to compete:



Pole barn rabbit facilities



- **IT IS ALSO IMPERRATIVE THAT THE CAGES NOT BE ACCESSIBLE BY DOGS.**
- **Dogs will pull the legs off of bunnies if they go through the cage bottoms. Placing cattle panels around barn perimeter is necessary.**
- **Dogs also cause some rabbits to run around in the cage, causing a rabbit to break it's back.**

Hanging cages



Hanging cages with feeder in door





Hanging Cages



Hanging cages

- Ventilation is **EXTREMELY** important in the summer time.



Cages & heat lamps.

- Use heat lamps to keep bunnies warm in winter.
- Be careful not to place lamps too close to cages.



T-post cages



T-post cages-meat pen size.



Two - 30" x 24" x 18"





Stackable cages



**Stackable
cages**

- This cage is **NOT** ok. It does not allow for separating bunnies from the doe, and wood is not a good choice of material.



If you make your own cages:

- For a doe and a litter of 5, your cage needs to be no less than **30" wide**; **18" tall**; and **24" deep**. 33-36" wide is great. 1" x 2" galvanized wire works well.
- The floor of your cage needs to be **double dipped**, galvanized wire, **1/2" x 1"**.

- **Double dipped galvanized $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 1" wire is a hard to find but well worth the money.**
- **Smaller gauge wire causes sore hocks on does.**
- **Plastic coated wire causes problems and does not last long.**

If you purchase bunnies,

- Your cage needs to be 30-33" wide, 24" deep, and 18" tall. This pen should handle 4-5 bunnies.
- Ideally, each bunny should have it's own cage 18" wide, 24" deep, and 18" tall.



Rabbit Working Table



Waterers

A. Crocks vs. Automatic watering system.

1. Watering systems and bottles are hard to keep clean and often leak, causing a mess in the barn.
2. Nipples on automatic systems clog easily.
3. Crocks are easily cleaned, do not leak, and makes medicating bunnies easy.



THE HIGHER QUALITY
FINE-X

ALL PAT. OFF. MARCO
S.P.A. - 1982 - 1983 - 1984 - 1985 - 1986 - 1987 - 1988 - 1989 - 1990 - 1991 - 1992 - 1993 - 1994 - 1995 - 1996 - 1997 - 1998 - 1999 - 2000 - 2001 - 2002 - 2003 - 2004 - 2005 - 2006 - 2007 - 2008 - 2009 - 2010 - 2011 - 2012 - 2013 - 2014 - 2015 - 2016 - 2017 - 2018 - 2019 - 2020 - 2021 - 2022 - 2023 - 2024 - 2025

PVC water and feed bowls



6" PVC Flat end cap



Feeders

- Metal, gravity feeders, with metal bottoms, **not screen wire.**
- Clean weekly.
- Crocks are also used to keep smaller bunnies from being pushed off of feed.



Feed

- **Good Quality feed is imperative.**
- **16-18% protein.**
- **FRESH**
- **Dust free.**
- **Full feed***



Electrolytes/Vitamins/Wormer

- Vitamins used in water daily to help doe and bunnies.
- Wormer used on breeding stock.



Ear Canker Treatment

- Mix 1 part Permethrin 4 parts Mineral oil.



Scales

- A good **DIGITAL SCALE** that weighs to 10 lbs. **in ounces** is essential.
- **NOT A FISHING SCALE!!!!**
- The upper weight limit is 5 lbs.
- Three wks before show, weigh bunnies every other day.
- One week before show, weigh bunnies daily.



IV. BREEDS TO CHOOSE FROM?

A. Best breeds for meat pens are Californians or New Zealands.

**If you'll notice,
the winning
pens are
usually
Californians.**



- 1. Buy breeding stock from a reputable breeder. Watch out for junk.**
- 2. You are going to pay anywhere from \$125-150 for a exposed doe.**
- 3. If you buy from a competitor, you will probably be getting leftovers.**
- 4. Do not buy breeding stock or bunnies from feed stores, as they are often some breeder's culls.**

V. NEST BOXES

- Nest boxes need to be approx. 14" long; 10" wide, with sides that are 7" tall.



- **Nest boxes made of wire are easily cleaned, and provide good ventilation.**



- **You'll fill nest box with soft hay for bedding. Place nest box in cage 2 days before kindling. This gives the doe time to build a nest.**



- **When a couple of the bunnies end up outside the nest box, put them back in.**
- **When the majority of the bunnies are out daily, remove the nest box. This should be at about 18-21 days.**



VI. SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING

A. Top Dressing feed:

- 1. Enhances appetite.**
- 2. Helps hair condition.**

B. Three wks before the show, add top dress.

- 1. 1-1.5 Nyquil cup(s), once daily.***
- 2. Don't mix in feed, bunnies will dig out seeds, wasting green feed.**

C. Mixture:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 lb. Barley | 1 lb. Crimped Oats |
| 1 lb Oat Meal | 2 lbs. Showbloom |
| 1 lb. Black Oil Sunflower Seeds | |

VII. WORKING THE HAIR

A. Working Hair:

- 1. Removes dead hair from coat.**
- 2. Helps condition hair.**
- 3. Helps train fryer for setting up at show.**

B. Three weeks before show, start working hair every other day :

- 1. Set up rabbit.**
- 2. Lightly spray water on hair coat.**
- 3. Keeping rabbit set up, work hair forward and backward 100 strokes.**









- 4. The week before the show:**
 - Work hair daily**
 - Weigh fryers daily.**
 - You may need to separate heavier bunnies to slow weight gain.**
- 5. Five days before show, instead of using water, use a small amount of corn starch on your hands when you work the hair. This helps give the hair a soft, slick, shiny look.**

VIII. SELECTION

DISQUALIFICATIONS

A. You need to check each bunny for disqualifying characteristics:

1. **Ear canker:**
look down
into ear
for
crusty
sores.



Ear Canker



--**Teeth:** Teeth should be straight, with top teeth slightly covering the bottom teeth.



Malocclusions



Turning a rabbit



Cradle



2. Toe nails: Front feet should have 4 toenails and one dewclaw.



--Rear feet should have 4 toenails.



Checking for venereal disease



Sexing a rabbit



WEIGHT CHART

A. Fryer Weights:

RABBIT WEIGHT LOG

1. If you keep up with weights, you'll have a much

RABBIT TATOO NUMBERS BELOW :	DATE:						

easier time picking out your meat pen.

2. Your fryers must be very close in weight, generally not more than four ounces between the three fryers, and as close to 5 lbs. as you can get them.



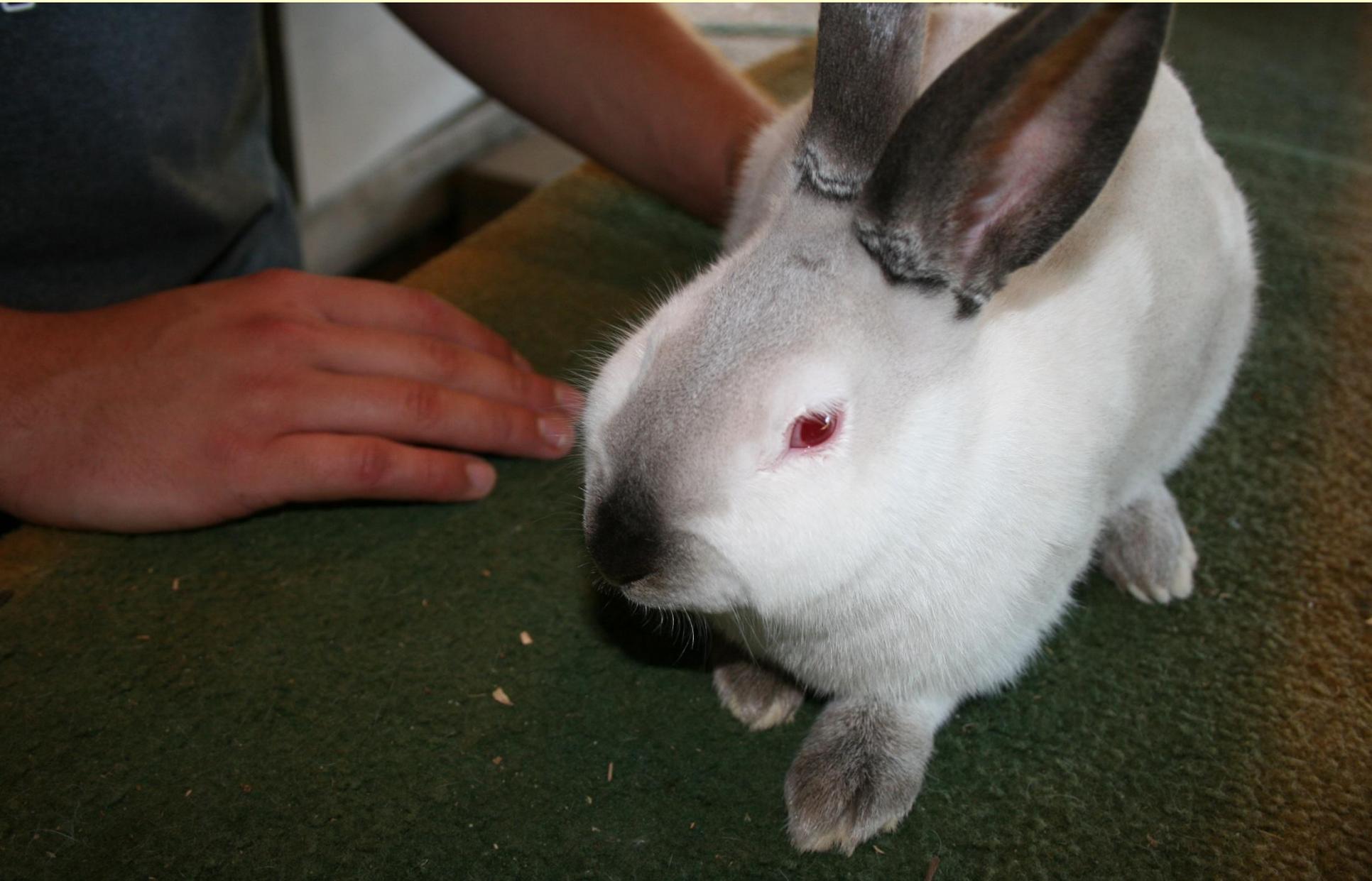
3. When bunnies are set up, you should be able to run your free hand over the fryer's shoulders and loin, determining the width of the shoulders and loin.



4. The shoulders and loins of each bunny should feel the same>> like peas in a pod. Wide shoulders, and loin are essential to a good meat pen.



Facial Frosting



Body Frosting



Flat shoulders



Arch starts too soon



Sloped rear end



Rat!!



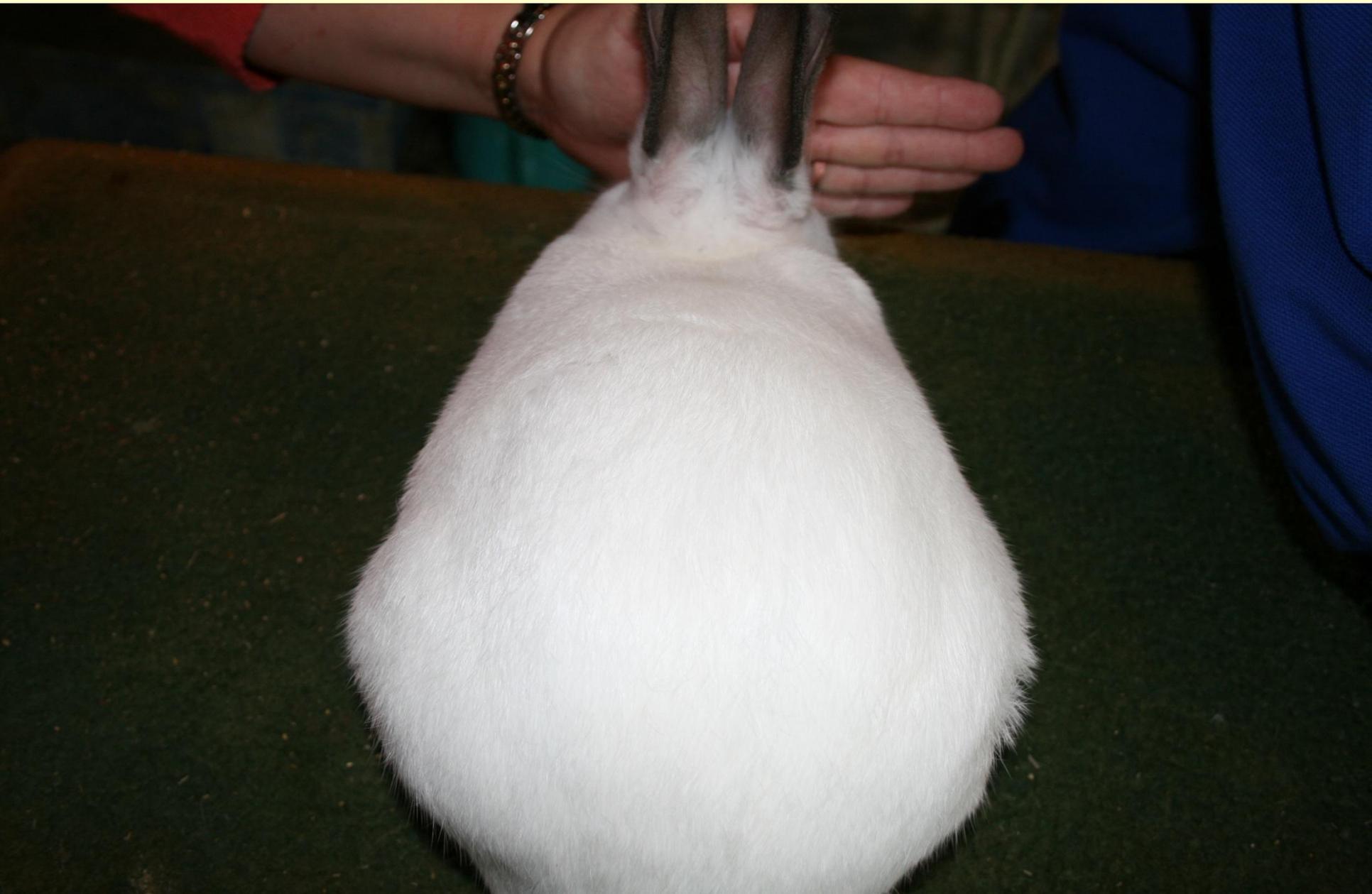
Pinched loin



Hind Quarter Width



Overall width



Good Confirmation



IX. SHOWTIME!!

- **Take scales with you if you must ck weights.**
- **Once rabbits are weighed in, you can feed and water them, but sparingly.**
- **Take water away from rabbits 6 hrs before show to firm them up.**
- **Keep your pen area clean.**
- **Have fun!!!!!!**

2003

2003
HOUSTON
LIVESTOCK
SHOW AND RODEO



GRAND
CHAMPION
MEAT PEN
YOUTH MEAT PEN RABBITS

HOUSTON

LIVESTOCK SHOW
& RODEO

2003

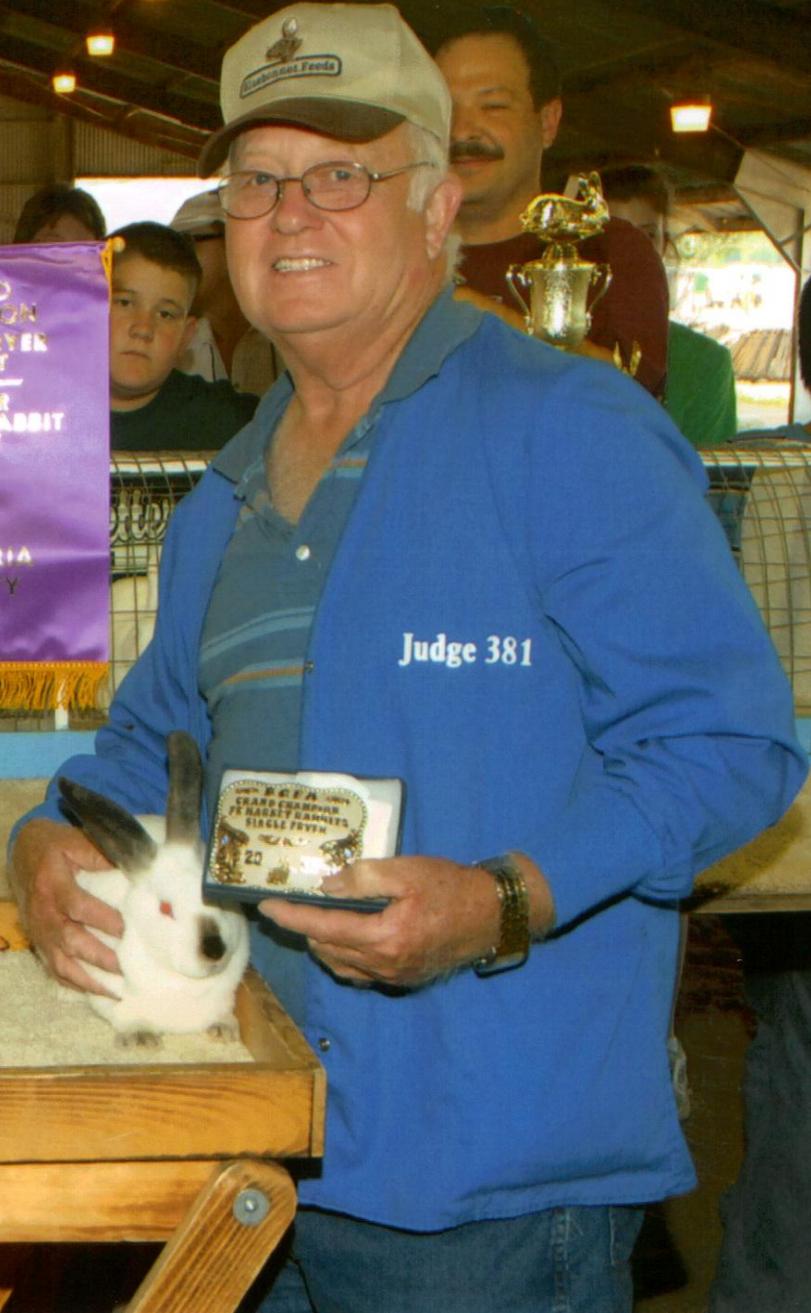
Steve Baker





RESERVE
GRAND
CHAMPION
SINGLE FRYER
RABBIT
JUNIOR
MARKET RABBIT
SHOW
2007
BRAZORIA
COUNTY
FAIR

GRAND
CHAMPION
SINGLE FRYER
RABBIT
JUNIOR
MARKET RABBIT
SHOW
2007
BRAZORIA
COUNTY
FAIR



Judge 381

2007 BRAZORIA COUNTY FAIR
GRAND CHAMPION
SINGLE FRYER
RABBIT
JUNIOR
MARKET RABBIT
SHOW
2007
BRAZORIA
COUNTY
FAIR



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