

So You Want To Raise Rabbits

A Guide To Rabbit Raising

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Hello, Kira here!

I am from the graduated class of 2016 at Cy-Lakes. During my high school period, I dedicated a lot of time, sleep, and a bit of sanity to the FFA. I learned many dos and don'ts in the ways of rabbits, and have written this guide to share them. Now, whether you take these tips, tricks, and advice from me is up to you. Always keep in mind the welfare of your animal.

Believe in yourself.

Happy Hopping!

Terminology

Buck: a male rabbit

Doe: a female rabbit

Kit: a baby rabbit

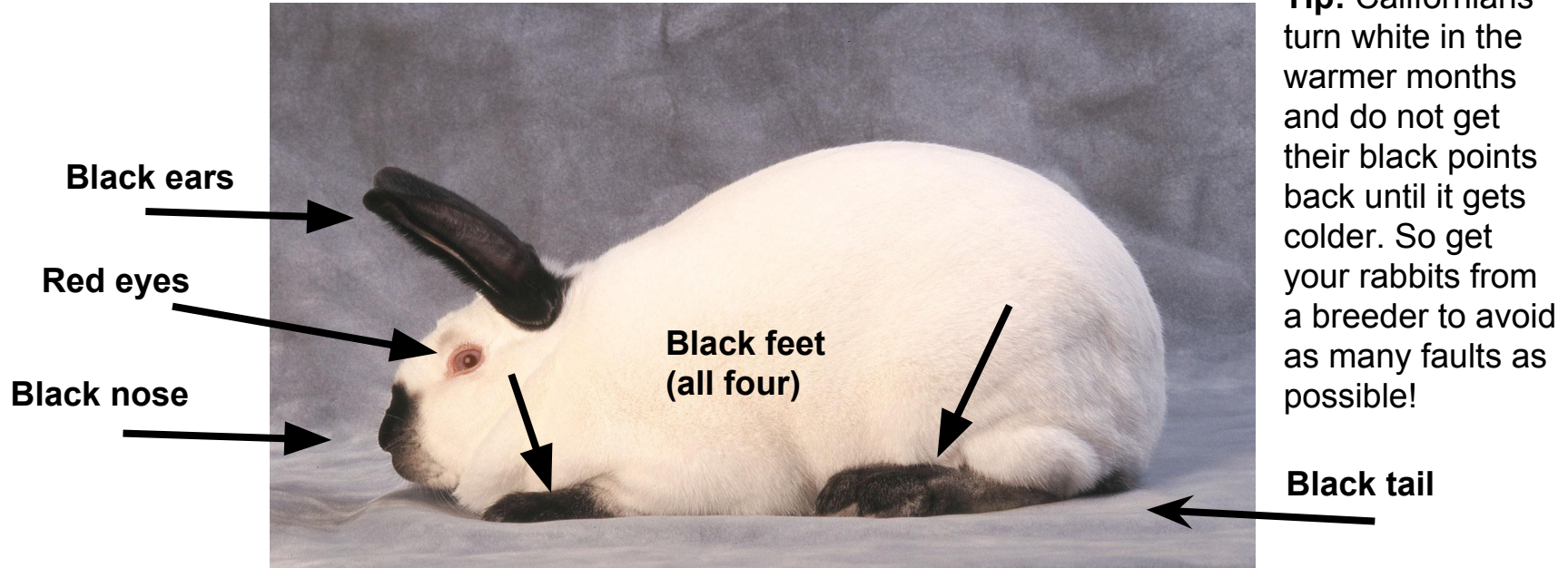
Kindling: birth of a rabbit

Smut: dark, sooty coloring where there should not be.

Frosting: grey hairs along the white of a californian.

The Californian

This is a breed of rabbit you will be raising. It is a large breed, and they will range about 10-12 pounds. A californian will have black points, preferably with as little to no frosting, smut, or grey as possible.



Bad Coloring On A Californian

Here is a doe with multiple faults in her coloring.

The ears should be 100% black without grey, or white hairs.



All toe nails must be uniform

Her nose is unevenly colored, the spots around it is smut.

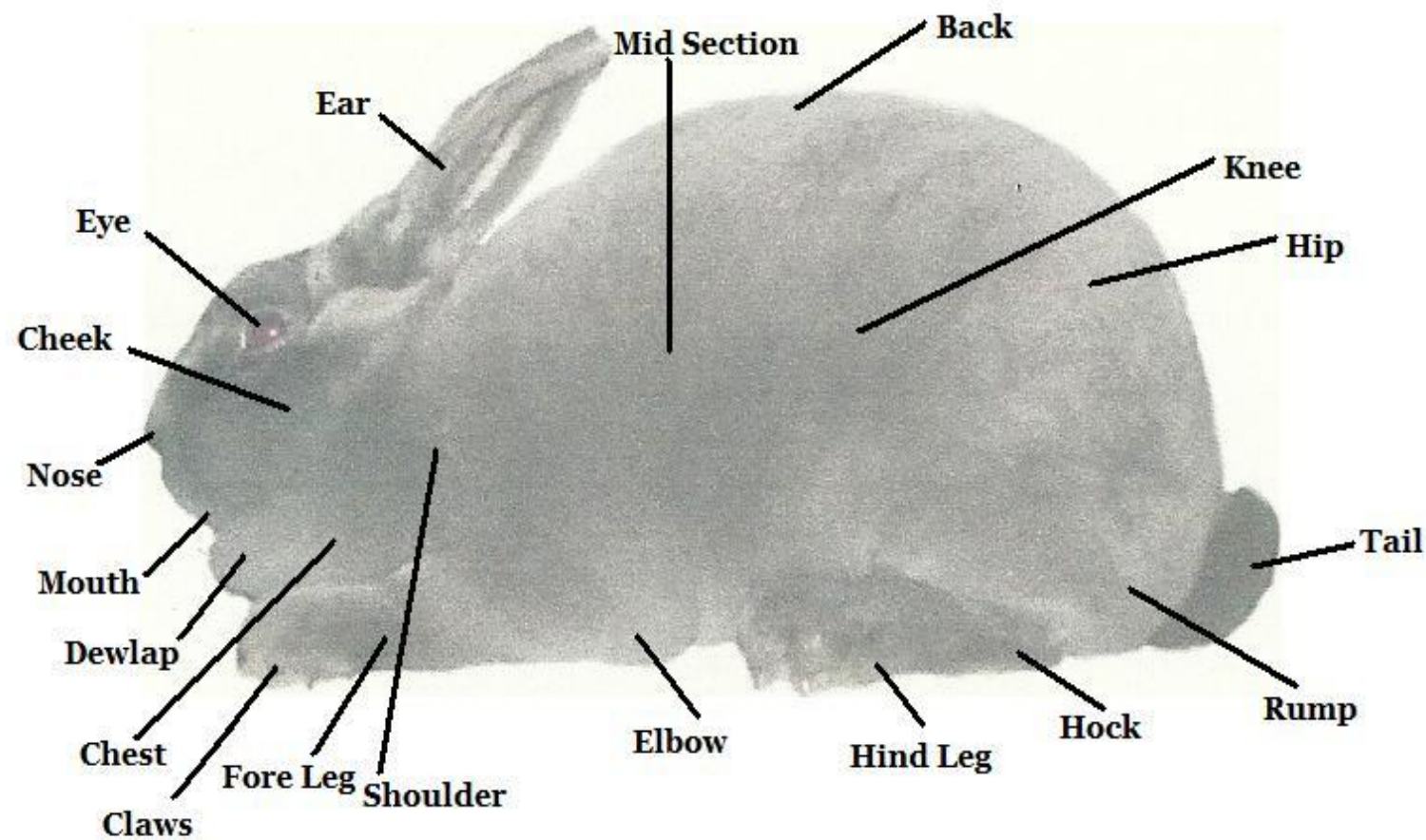
The dewlap should have no coloring at all. She would be disqualified at a show for smut

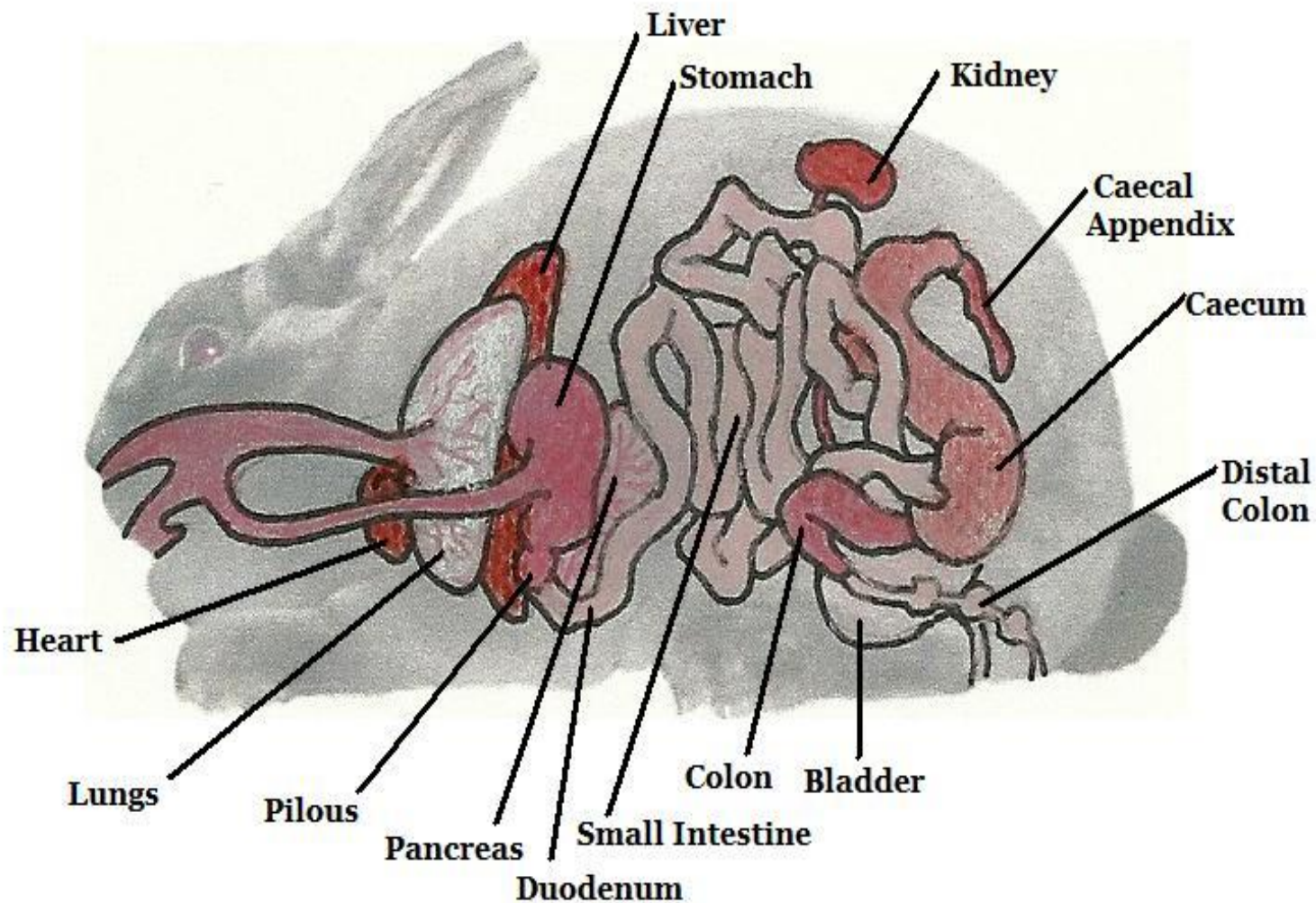
The feet should be 100% black without grey, or white hairs.

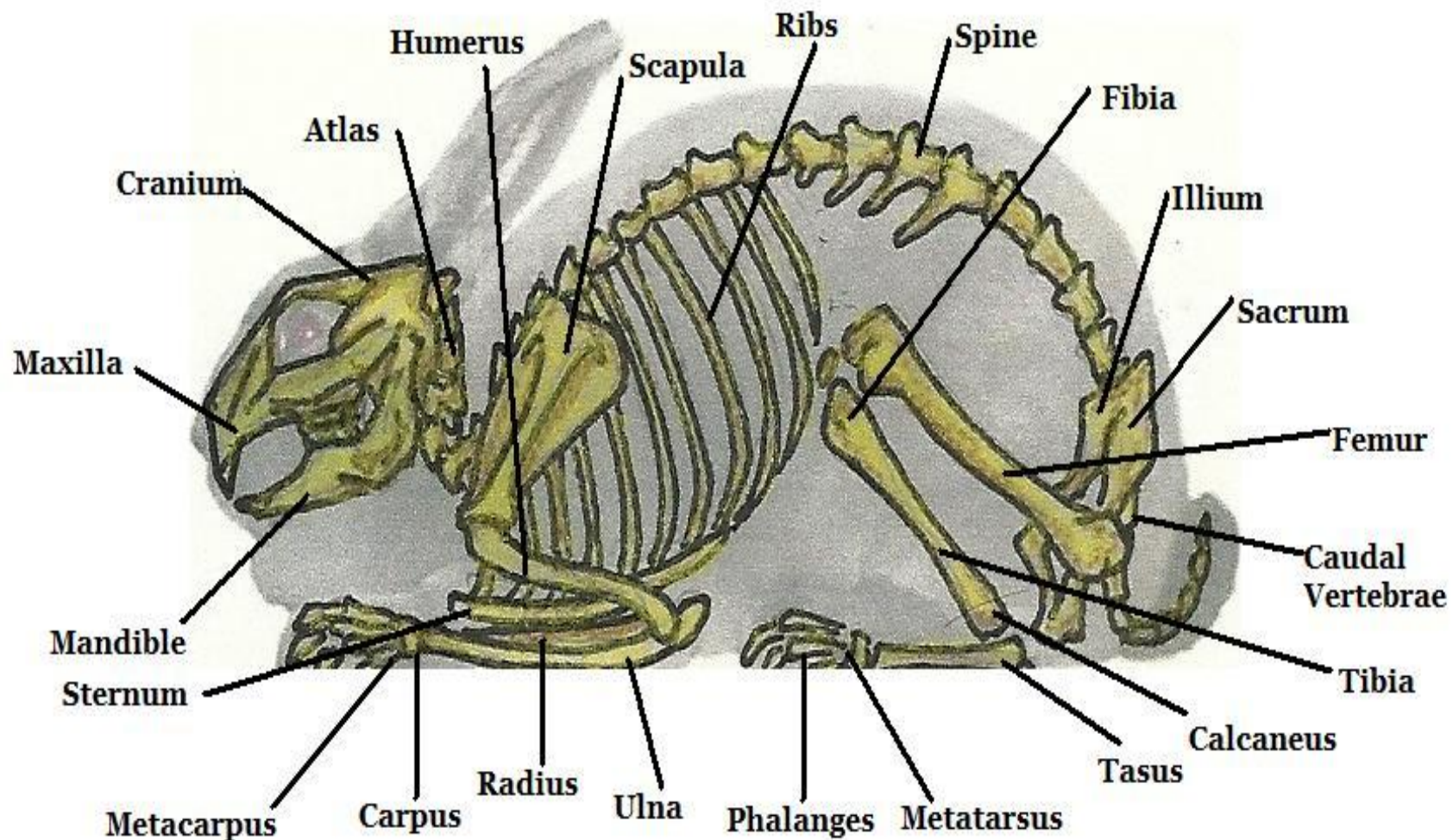
- **Pure white
in color**
- **Red eyes**
- **10-12
pound
rabbit**
- **Should
NEVER
change
color!**

New Zealand









Housing

Rabbits can be kept outside, but the cage needs to be at least 3 feet off of the ground to prevent predatory animals from getting inside, or anything pulling the rabbit's legs underneath. The cage can not be any smaller than 27in wide, 27in long, and 16in high (27x27x16). However, ideal for a Californian is a 30x30x16. Rabbits must be kept in separate cages! Even though they would be a show animal, they still need their space! A rabbit should be able to stand up on their hind legs, be able to stretch when they lay down, and be able to turn around. They will each need a water bottle, and a hay feeder.

Put something flat and smooth in the cage with the rabbit so they have somewhere to go to get of the wire. (*I have found a tile slab from HomeDepot/Lowes works the best!*). As for size, I would say it should not cover more that $\frac{1}{3}$ of the cage space Nothing out of cloth, rope, or hay! The rabbits will block their digestive track if they eat the cloth or rope. Hay will stain their coat if they urinate on it.

Keep temperatures in mind. In hot weather, make sure they are not getting hit with direct sun, and put in a frozen water bottle to help keep the rabbits cool. Along with the frozen bottles, you can use fans, a sunshade, etc depending on how hot it is. (*What do I think is hot enough? Any temperature over 85 degrees. If it is very humid I will also go ahead and put in the bottles*) So long as you keep temperature as a factor, a rabbit can comfortably live outside.

IF A RABBIT GETS TOO HOT THEY CAN DIE. THEY ARE MORE SENSITIVE TO HEAT THAN HUMANS.

How do I tell if my rabbit is too hot? You can tell a rabbit is hot if you feel their ears. Rabbits regulate their body temperature by pumping blood through their ears to cool.. If their ears are warm, they are hot! A hot rabbit will also breather harder/faster than normal.

The hutch must have a roof to help protect from rain. During the colder months, cover the hutch with a tarp to help with wind and chill.

Tip: If you are building your own hutch, make sure to use untreated wood around the cage, in case the rabbit were to chew on it, they would not be harmed.

Housing Continued.



Getting the Rabbits.

You will need to get at least one doe, and one buck. However, it is suggested to get two does, and one buck. This will give options when choosing who to show in a breeding class, and better chances of a good meat pen set if you choose to breed and show market rabbits. You can get the cages at a feed/supply store, order them online, or have a business build them for you.

What **NOT** to do:

- **Buy from competition. Why?** More than likely, you will be getting a rabbit that is low quality, or has not done well in the past. Even if they are your best friend.
- **Buy out of the green sheet/craigslist/ebay etc. Why?** You could be getting a rabbit that has not done well, medical issues, conformation issues, inbred, etc.
- **Buy from a pet store. Why?** These rabbits were not bred, or raised to be show rabbits, and may not meet the standards or quality of a show rabbit.

Getting the Rabbits Cont.

What TO do:

Do your homework and find a breeder that is in your travel comfort, and price range. Why? You will be more familiar with the breeder, what their stock is/has produced, and chose those who best suit your budget.

Talk to those in your household. Why? To discuss where the rabbits will go, expenses, transportation, budget, etc.

Be open with your advisors. Why? They are there to help you, do not be afraid to ask, especially if the health of your rabbit is at risk!

Grooming

You want to groom your rabbits frequently. This will get them used to being handled, and keeping their coats slick and clean. You can buy a rabbit grooming kit at any feed store.

How to get urine stains out of my rabbit: White vinegar and cornstarch. Take your rabbit to a place where you can easily handle it (I use the bathroom in my house). Put vinegar on the spots that are stained, and work cornstarch where there is vinegar using a rag. Brush out. This can take a while, be patient. Do this 1-2 times a week until stains are gone.

Make sure your rabbits nails do not get too long where they begin to curl underneath, they can get caught in the cage and be ripped off!

NEVER, EVER bathe a rabbit!



Diet

RABBITS NEED WATER AND TIMOTHY HAY 24/7! WITHOUT HAY THEIR DIGESTIVE TRACKS WILL STOP WORKING!

Pellets: You can buy bags of rabbit food at any feed store (Tractor Supply, D&D Feed etc.). Do not feed your rabbits what you would normally find at a pet store. These feeds tend to be high in sugars, and have extras that a rabbit does not need. If you're putting a rabbit on new feed than what it was on, be sure to acclimate the rabbit to the new feed. *How?* **Over two weeks, slowly add the new feed to what they are currently on, increasing the amount every few days. This is the mixture I follow: Day 1-3: ¼ new, ¾ old Day 4-6: ¼ new, ¾ old. Day 7-9: ½ new, ½ old Day 10-11: ½ new, ½ old Day 12-13: ¾ new, ¼ old Day 14+: All new**

Store feed in an enclosed container, do not leave the bag open (doesn't matter if you keep the bag inside and outside.) Discard any feed that has bugs in it, and any bag over 2 months old after opening. **TIP: Buy a large bag of feed, fill an outside container, and disperse the rest in gallon bags and place the bags in the freezer. Thaw out the feed 24 hours before use indoors, in an open container (or just open the bag and let it thaw on the counter. This will avoid condensation ruining the feed). This is how I keep my feed.**

If a rabbit is younger than three months, any extras can possibly be deadly to them! With any new animal, introduce new things slowly to be safe. This will help avoid any digestion issues. **Example: Feed a mature rabbit (6+ months old) one leaf of spinach a day for a week. If they show any irritation to the spinach, do not feed it to them again. Irritation can include diarrhea, constipation, and lack of eating.**

IMPORTANT

Amount to feed

Bucks: 1/4 to 1/2 cup pellets per 6 lbs. body weight

Does: 1/4 to 1/2 cup pellets per 6 lbs. body weight

Kits: (Once weaned) Free feed & **alfalfa hay**

Split this amount into two feedings a day. Once in the morning and once in the evening. (Excluding kits!)

****Give the rabbits 30–45 minutes to eat the pellets. Once that time is up, remove anything that is left. This will make sure the rabbits will eat the pellets quickly and get the most out of them. The rabbits will learn if they do not eat it all within that period, the pellets will be taken away.**

Pregnant Does: Continue your regular feeding program until the 14th day of her gestation. Once that time hits, she gets free feed.

Lactating Does: These does get free fed all day and **ALFALFA HAY**, every day until the kits are weaned. She needs the extra calories and energy to produce enough milk for the kits, while still getting nutrients herself. If she does not get free feed, she could decide to not feed the kits in order to care for herself!

Anything extra should always be limited! Too much of anything could harm a rabbit. Rabbits may prefer one over another, introduce anything in small quantities and learn how your rabbit reacts to it.

****INCLUDING CARROTS! They are high in sugar.**

Treats

Safe for rabbits to eat

Apples (no seeds)	
Grapes	Kale
Pears (no seeds)	Carrots
Oranges	Carrot Tops
Strawberries	Mustard Greens
Cherries	Dandelion Greens
Raspberries	Sugar Beets
Blueberries	Parsnips
Papayas	Parsley
Pineapples	Potato Peels
Melons	
Mangoes	
Peaches (no pit)	
Tomatoes	
Peas	
Beans	

Toxic to rabbits

Acorns	Ivy
Almonds	Jack-in-the-Pulpit
Apple Seeds	Jonquil
Apricot Pits	Lily of the Valley
Asparagus Fern	Milkweed
Azalea	Mistletoe
Bleeding Heart	Mustards
Carnations	Nutmeg
Cherry Pits	Oak
Clematis	Peach Pits
Creeping Charlie	Pear Seeds
Daffodil Bulbs	Peony
Daisy	Philodendron
Eucalyptus	Plum Pits
Gladiola	Poinsettia
Hyacinth Bulbs	Rhododendron
Iceberg Lettuce	Rhubarb Leaves
Iris	

Types of Rabbit Poop (yes this is important)

It sounds a little funny, but knowing what type/shape of poop your rabbit is passing is a big health indicator!

Rabbits produce two types of droppings, fecal pellets (the round, dry ones you usually see. They look like coco-puffs) and cecotropes. Cecotropes are produced and re-ingested by the rabbit. They are nutrient-packed dietary items essential to your rabbit's good health. It is equivalent of a cow regurgitating, and re-chewing their cud.





Look for large, light-colored droppings. Not too dry, not too moist. These are optimal for your bunny's health. Droppings that look like these tell you that bunny is eating plenty of hay, getting a good amount of water, and his digestion is working well.



Droppings that are hard, small, and darker in color, usually indicate that bunny is not eating enough hay. Bunny needs more grass hay and plenty of water. You might need to decrease pellets a bit and increase hay.



Droppings that are strung together with fur are called "string of pearls." This indicates that your rabbit is ingesting a lot of fur and the droppings are bound together. This situation could lead to a blockage of the digestive tract, so it's important to ensure you comb away loose fur, make sure bunny eats plenty of grass hay and drinks a lot of fresh water. These droppings are typically seen during times of heavy shedding.



Moist, soft droppings can indicate that bunny's diet is too heavy in proteins or sugars. Cut back on sweets (carrots, fruit, treats, etc.) and increase fresh grass hays. This can also occur if your rabbit's pelleted food is not of high quality (contains dried fruit or seeds) or he's getting too high a quantity. Reduce high-calorie foods and increase consumption of grass hays (Timothy, Orchard Grass, etc.). Consult with your vet if this continues. There may be a secondary reason for soft droppings, such as a parasitic infestation (coccidia, pin worms, etc.).

Common Diseases: Caked Breast (Mastitis)

Cause– The kits are not consuming as much milk as is being produced by the mother. This can occur just after kindling, if the young are not nursing properly, or after weaning.

Signs– Mammary glands are swollen, hard, and feel warm.

Treatment– Withhold pellets for a period of 72 hours. Feed only roughage (hay) and water. Relieve mammary glands of milk periodically. Clean and disinfect all cages.

Prevention– Watch the doe and kits carefully. At first signs of an ill doe, begin treatment.

Ear Mites (Ear Canker)

Cause– Small mites burrow into the ear and lay eggs

Signs– Scabs or crusty accumulation in ears, shaking head, excessive scratching of ears/shaking head

Treatment– Place 3-4 drops of oil (olive oil, coconut oil) into the ear once a day for three days, then repeat the process once a week. This will suffocate the mites. Clean ear gently with cotton swabs. Do not reach in and pull out scabs, this could irritate the ear further. Clean and disinfect all cages.

Prevention: Keep rabbits in a clean environment, and check ears frequently.



Red Urine

Cause– Incomplete breakdown of food nutrients in some animals. A normal condition.

Signs– Red or discolored urine.

Treatment–N/A

This is normal! Do not freak out. It can also look dark brown, and orange

Snuffles

Cause– A specific bacterial infection in the upper respiratory system. The most common and generally accepted cause of snuffles is infection with the bacteria *Pasteurella Multocida*.

Signs– Sneezing, watery eyes, white nasal discharge, breathing difficulty, decreased growth rate.

Treatment– Snuffles is a very contagious and difficult disease to treat, so prevention plays a very critical role in trying to control and eliminate this disease. Isolate the rabbit from any others around it. Snuffles is generally treated with antibiotics for 14-30 days. If you suspect your rabbit has snuffles, take it to the vet for antibiotics and treatment.

Sore Hocks

Cause– Thin fur covering on the foot pad, small foot pad coming into contact with rough places on floor. Too heavy for foot pads.

Signs– Infected sores on the bottom of the feet (usually on the rear, but can occur on the front as well). Rabbit sits nervously, sitting on crock or other smooth objects in cage.

Treatment– Very difficult to treat, provide a dry, flat surface for the rabbit to sit on (board, a tile slab, etc).

Prevention: Do not let your rabbits get overweight, allow rabbits a place in their cage to get off of the wire.



**A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, SAFE
HANDLING, AND GOOD PRACTICES
WILL AID IN DISEASE PREVENTION,
AND INJURY.**

My Show Experience and Advice

What kind of rabbits did I show? Californians, Mini-rex, and Dutch. *What rabbits do you suggest I show?* This is a tricky question. In my experience and opinion, I would only suggest raising Californians. Californians do the best in the school shows, (CFISD). This is solely because of judge preference, and the type of show it is (the majority of the show is always Californians). If you want to raise any other breed, I would show them at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

Why? My senior year of highschool, I showed my Grand Champion Mini-Rex doe at the CFISD show and got 5th place. Now, the fact she did not place highly was not the issue. The issue, is that the judge stated that there was no fault in her, he had no complaints.

So why fifth? Well, when I showed at HLSR, I got the chance to talk to the judge about the earlier show! He said that he loved my rabbit, but he had to take into consideration all of the other participants in the class. Had he chosen my rabbit as first or second place, the entire show would be in a riot due to the fact that 95% of the rabbits were Californian.

This doesn't mean you can't show your rabbit in CFISD shows if it's not a Californian! Just based on my show experience, the Californian is the go-to breed for school shows.

My Show Experience and Advice

Would you suggest showing in HLSR? Absolutely! HLSR is my favorite show to take my rabbits to. **TIP:** If you wanted to show meat pens in the CFISD show, and your rabbit wasn't receptive to breeding, you can try again and show meat pens at HLSR along with breeding rabbits!

"I didn't do well at CFISD, should I still go to HLSR?" Just because you didn't do well at the district show, doesn't mean you can't do fantastic at the rodeo!

"What's different between HLSR and the CFISD show?" Well, at HLSR, everything is divided up between breeds. Whether you show Californians, Mini-Rex, Dutch, New Zealand, etc. You will only be going up against rabbits that are the same breed as yours.

TIP: If you show at HLSR, ALWAYS enter your rabbit in the fur class!

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO
BREED TO SHOW RABBITS

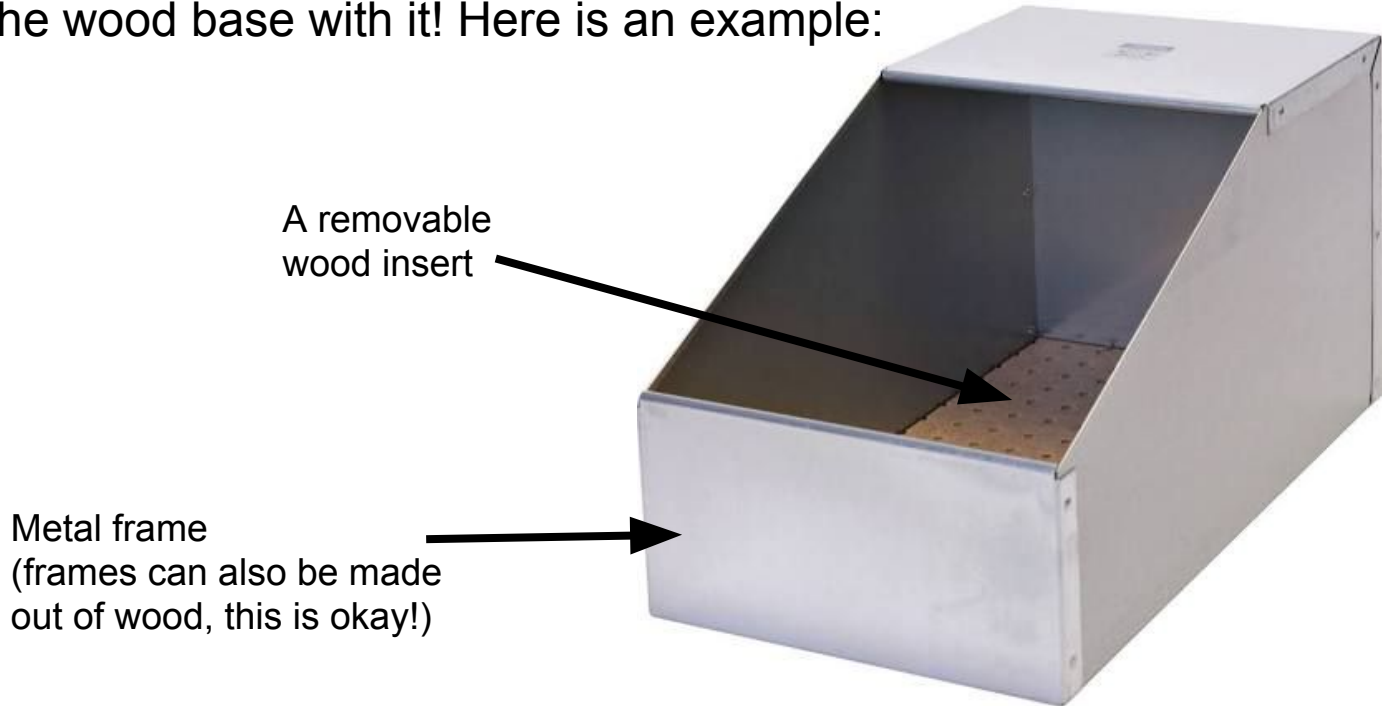
Breeding

Before you think about breeding and showing the kits in a meat pen show, give it a good thought. You do NOT have to breed in order to show rabbits!

1. Think about if you really want to breed, and understand the responsibility of it.
2. Ask yourself, “What will I do with the excess kits?”. You can only show three kits in a meat pen, so if a doe has more than three (or only two!), What will you do with those kits?
3. Understand that you will be raising the kits for consumption.

Breeding

You will need to get a nesting box. You can purchase it at any feed store. Make sure it has the wood base with it! Here is an example:



Breeding

Does are polyestrous (no regular heat cycle). Their eggs are not ovulated until stimulated by mating. This is why you will need to repeat the breeding process (on the next page).

The signs of a receptive breeding usually occur when the buck seizes up, and falls over on his side for one to two seconds. This is 100% normal. Even if you watch a receptive breeding happen, still follow the breeding process.

Does commonly have false pregnancies. It is very difficult to tell the difference between a viable, or false pregnancy. So to be safe, treat her as if she is pregnant. Even if you are almost sure she is not.

Why? From experience! I was 99.9% sure my doe was not pregnant when I first bred! My advisor didn't think so either! The doe showed no unusual behaviors, until the 27th day of her gestation she showed the nesting signs. Even with this, we thought it was a false pregnancy. However, she ended up have five kits! Had I not given her the needs of a pregnant rabbit, she and her kits may have gotten sick, or been unhealthy.

Mark your calendar the day you breed, and count ahead 27 days. The doe should begin showing signs of nesting behavior on day 27. If she doesn't, place the nesting box in her cage anyway. Every doe is different. Better safe than sorry.

Breeding

NOTE: Does do not take care of their kits like cats or dogs do. They do not pick them up, or carry them around to move them. They will only go into the nesting box to make the nest, have the kits, and to feed them once or twice a day.

It is not uncommon to lose one or two kits in the litter, remove it from the rest and dispose of it.

If the doe has her litter outside of the nesting box, very carefully move them into the nesting box.

Nesting behavior: Stuffing mouth with hay, moving it into a corner, restless, pulling out her fur (This is important, she will use it in her nest to keep the kits warm). If you see this behavior before the 27th day, PUT THE NESTING BOX IN. Place a small amount of hay into the box, the doe should begin to build her nest inside of it. **DO NOT** mess with her nest unless you have to! You should not add **ANYTHING** but hay into the nest! Anything extra the doe can ingest and die. **This includes nesting material from a pet store.**

Breeding

1. Take everything out of the buck's cage. (Food bowls, toys, water crocks etc).
2. Put the doe into the buck's cage. (Does are very territorial, if you put the buck in her cage she can injure him)
3. Observe to make sure neither of them are attacking each other. (Running around/chasing each other is a normal behavior)
4. Keep the doe in the buck's cage for at least 10 minutes, or until a breeding is complete. (I would say no more than 30 minutes to an hour)
5. Put the doe back in her cage.
6. Return the buck's items into his cage.
7. Repeat steps eight to twelve hours later for 3-5 days. (**Even if you see a receptive breeding**)

If the doe is not receptive to the buck, repeat this process every 24 hours until there is a receptive breeding.

Breeding

When the kits are born, do a check. Make sure all kits are alive, remove any dead ones. Remove the afterbirth from the nest/cage.

Mark the day they are born. Kits are born pink and hairless.

Their eyes should open around the seven or ten days after birth. When they are big enough to jump out of the nesting box, add in at least two more bowls full of feed into the cage. They will learn from the doe how to eat pellets.

When the kits are 7-8 weeks old, begin weaning them from the doe. Have an empty cage on hand, and place the kits in there with free pellets, water and alfalfa hay for short increments at first and increasing each day, returning them to the doe until fully weaned.

While being weaned the kits should have free feed, and ALFALFA HAY 24/7. If they are gaining too much weight too quickly, that is the only time you should decrease feed(**NOT ALFALFA**). *Be prepared to refill feed/hay 3+ times a day, kits eat A LOT.* Have 2-3 water crocks, bowls, and hay feeders available to the kits (To minimize the competition for food)

Two-three weeks after they are born, weigh each kit using a scale (food scales are the best for kits) and record it. Do this once a week. The closer it gets to show, weigh them more frequently. They can be no less than three pounds, and no more than five. You want to be as close to five as possible come the day of show. Keep in mind they can look up to half a pound during transportation!

Breeding

Watch the kits carefully, check them daily when they are born. Does feed 1-3 times a day. Be sure to check after the doe feeds that each kit has a fully belly (*it will be obvious, they'll have milk bellies and look inflated!*) When you wean, take into consideration the kits size.

If there are any kits that are smaller than the rest, leave those with the doe when you separate the others. This will allow them to have more milk and less competition.

Showing

All rabbits showing must have an identification tattooed into their left ear. Talk to your advisors about getting this done.

If you are doing a meat pen, they will need to be tattooed in the left ear for identification. They will also have to be inspected and tattooed in their right ear before the show. More information on this will follow when it gets closer.

Make sure you have completed all forms for the show! (You will receive more information on this as the show gets closer)

Showing

You will need:

Grooming supplies

A gallon bag full of pellets

A gallon of water

Water crocks

A bowl for feed

A rabbit carrier

Everything for your official dress + a change of clothes

Lint roller

Your rabbit(s)

Hay

Snacks

Safety pins

Anything your advisor tells you to bring

Anything extra you want to bring

Aleve

Conditioning Meat Pens for Show

When the kits are weaned, on alfalfa hay, and are eating pellets, mix some oats into their pellets.

Remember, the kits will eat **A LOT!**

From the time they are weaned, weight your kits once a week. They **MUST** be at least 3.5 pounds by the day of show, and no more than 5 pounds. I would say the magic number is 4.8, you want to be as close to 5 as you can get. **Rabbits lose weight during travel, so being close to 5 will give you a buffer!**

If you have more than 3 kits, pick the three that look most identical, and weigh the most. This will be your trio, save the others for alternates. **ALTERNATES GO TO THE SHOW WITH YOU**

If you only have meat pen rabbits, you will have to take the rabbits to the place of show on the date specified. Your advisors will have more information on this.

You will most likely NOT BE RETURNING HOME
WITH YOUR MEAT PENS

If you have less than three rabbits born, you can
NOT show in meat pens!

Conditioning Rabbits for Show (Breeding Rabbits)

This is for showing breeding rabbits. You want your rabbits to look their best on show day. However, it takes a bit of TLC to get them show ready.

2 months before show: Weigh your rabbits and make sure they are within the standard weight. Begin giving them a conditioning mix once a day. I would suggest as dinner. This mix should be made of sunflower seeds (raw, with the shell, not roasted or seasoned), rolled oats (no flavoring), and pellets. Your rabbit should still be getting the same amount of food they normally would, along with hay. Split up the amount they would normally get between the ingredients. **My suggestion?** Have the ratio be 2:1:1. 2 parts pellets, 1 part sunflower seeds, and 1 part oats. **Watch your rabbit's weight closely! (Weigh once a week)**, if they begin gaining weight, cut back on oats. You want a full rabbit, not a fat one.

1 month before show: Continue the conditioning feed (**Unless your rabbit is too fat!**). Groom daily! Run your hands all along your rabbit's coat. The oils on your hands will make their coat slick, soft, and shiny. It will also help your rabbit become comfortable with behind handled.

Conditioning Rabbits for Show (Breeding Rabbits)

1 week before show: Get everything you are taking to show packed up and ready. Be sure your rabbits nails are clipped, and have **NO STAINS.** **This is extremely important! Looks matter, judges love a clean and healthy looking rabbit.** If your rabbit is shedding, groom them twice a day. Judges do not like being covered in hair when they are handling your rabbit. Do this until show.

The day of show: The morning of show, do not feed your rabbits anything. They can have all the hay and water they want. This will help the rabbits not be as stressed out during the travel. Put your rabbits into their carriers about ten minutes before you leave, this will allow them to get comfortable, place some hay in with them. Place a towel down wherever you are setting the rabbits for transport (on a car seat) and load up your car/truck. The rabbits should be the last things to go into the car besides yourself. When you get to the show, go ahead and give your rabbits pellets and water. **You go home with your rabbits! They do not stay at the show!**

I Have An Emergency! What Do I Do?

Don't Panic!

Take a breath and assess what is going on.

1. My doe is eating her kits!
2. My rabbit is not eating!
3. My rabbit is not eating, drinking, pooping, or urinating!
4. My rabbit got too hot/cold!
5. My rabbit is limping!
6. My rabbit is seriously injured!
7. My rabbit is panicking!
8. My rabbit is unresponsive!

I will provide as much information as I can in this guide. If you have further questions, or your emergency is NOT on this list, CONTACT YOUR ADVISOR(S)!

1. My doe is eating her kits!

It sounds morbid, but this is sometimes a natural thing that some does do. *Why?* She could be an inexperienced mother, and is not sure what to do. There is no known cause, but some suspect stress could be a factor.

Did she kill all of the kits? If she is a first time mom, give her the benefit of the doubt. However, if you know she has had a litter before and eaten them, I would not breed her again.

Is this her first litter? Did she only kill 1-2? She may have been confused on what to do. Dispose of any dead material, and watch her carefully.

You can cut up a few pieces of hot dog and offer them to her, as a distraction if she is eating her kits. If she has a favorite treat/veggie, offer her some as well to distract.

2. My rabbit is not eating!

What could be causing this?

If your rabbit has a feeding schedule (which they should, feed twice a day), and has always previously eaten, it is rare that they would miss a meal. This means that there is an outside factor such as: Weather Change, reaction to new food/treats, stress etc.

How do I fix this? First, do not feed the rabbit anything new until normal eating habits have returned. Closely watch the rabbit's behavior! Make sure they are pooping (uniform shaped pellets), and urinating. If they are, this means their digestive system is still working properly.

If they still have not eaten after 24 hours, go to #3.

3. My rabbit is not eating, drinking, pooping, or urinating!

If this is the case, your rabbit most likely has fur block. An early indicator is their poop being strung together by hair. **Fur block is dangerous, and can be fatal.** Early detection gives you the best chance at healing your rabbit. It will usually happen most when the rabbit is shedding, due to frequent grooming and ingestion of hair.

You will need to force feed your rabbit. **IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE SELF-TREATING, TAKE YOUR RABBIT TO THE VET!** Here is the recipe my family and I created to help our rabbits when they got fur block. Meat tenderizer (**unseasoned check the ingredients**), pineapple juice (**no sugar added**), pedialyte (**unflavored**), baby food (**Garden Vegetable one only!**) and a syringe, no needle.

This is what you will need. I suggest having these in stock BEFORE fur block happens.



Get a bowl. Mix a pinch of meat tenderizer, with 1 tbsp of baby food, 1 tsp of pedialyte, 1 tsp pineapple juice.

Mix it well, and heat up VERY LITTLE, just enough to take the chill off (If the ingredients are unopened/new. After opening, put everything but the meat tenderizer in the fridge). Put the mixture into the syringe.

Secure your rabbit. I find it best to set them on a table wrapped in a towel. Have one arm around the rabbit with a hand on their chest, under their chin. Use this hand to gently hold their head up. With your other hand, SLOWLY inject the mixture into the rabbit's mouth. You do not want to choke your rabbit. Allow it time to swallow. Depending on the size of your syringe, do 1-1½ of them. Repeat this 3 times a day until your rabbit gets better.

Put pedialyte, and ½ a tsp of pineapple juice into their water.

4. My rabbit got too hot/cold!

If your rabbit is too HOT, do NOT put them in water, or take them into your house. This can put them in shock. If your rabbit is hot, get a rag and run it under cool water, wring it out. Holding your rabbit in your lap, gently rub the rag on their ears until condition improves, don't put water IN their ears. You can also take some leafy green they have had before, and run it under water and offer it to them. Put pedialyte into their water. Adjust their hutch/environment to keep it from happening again.

If your rabbit is too COLD, do not take them inside of your house. This can shock them. Get a light blanket and gently wrap your rabbit in it, and hold it in your lap, or against your chest. Use your hands to rub their ears. Adjust their hutch/environment to keep it from happening again.

5. My rabbit is limping!

Rabbits can sometimes tweak themselves from hopping around. Give them 24-48 hours to get better, they may just be sore.

If it worsens, or does not get better, take them to the vet!

6. My rabbit is seriously injured!

If your rabbit is seriously injured, bleeding, hurt etc, immediately take them to the vet.

Always keep your animal's well being and quality of life in mind.

7. My rabbit is panicking!

What does panicking look like? The rabbit look frightened, and is running around its cage in distress.

If your rabbit is panicking, pick them up and hold them firmly to your chest/lap. Rub your hands all over them for a few minutes. Be calm, gently pet your rabbit until they have calmed down.

8. My rabbit is unresponsive!

If you find your rabbit unresponsive, pick them up and hold them to your lap/chest. Using your hands or a rag, rub all over your rabbit to try and stimulate it. Rub their face, over their eyes, nose, ears, belly and body. Gently squeeze their feet, and tail. You want to be firm, but not too hard to injure your rabbit. Do not stop. If 30 minutes of stimulation has passed with no sign of life, your rabbit has passed.

What causes this? Sometimes, things can spook a rabbit into a panic. They may have gotten too cold or hot, or a combination of events may have happened.

**No one is an expert, you learn something new
every day.**

**Grow from your experiences, help those
around you, and believe in yourself.**

You can do this.

Happy Hopping,

Kira K.

