



Southern Alberta Rabbit Breeder's Association

Established in 1944

In this issue:

- New ARBA Standard
- AGM & Annual Potluck Invitation & Details (page 2)
- Nomination Forms (page 3)
- Introduction to Coat Colour Genetics (page 4)
- Tips & Techniques (page 6)

Regular Features:

Editor's Comments	1
Upcoming Events	1
Membership Application	5
2010 Executive	6
Newsletter Policies	6

Editor's Comments

Hope everyone has had a good summer, even if the weather has been miserable.

Fall events went well this year. We had members with rabbits at the Millarville Fair, the Heritage Park Fall Fair, The Bearspaw Fair, and the Chestermere Fall Fair. The turnouts were enthusiastic but small – let's have more members next year!

It's renewal time again. Please check the membership list enclosed

with this newsletter to see if your membership is up at the end of this year.

Also nominations & elections are taking place at the upcoming AGM. Nomination forms and ballots are on page 2.

ALSO: Please be sure to check your snail-mail boxes for a notice of a motion that will be brought before the club at the AGM.

The new ARBA standard is coming out (2011-2015) and the Club will purchase a number of copies for re-

sale, along with a few ARBA Cookbooks. If you want either of these publications, please let Ruth know. They will probably cost on the order of \$20.00 each. Individual shipping costs are about \$15.00 so this is a good deal.

Finally, I want to remind people that contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. This is the only club communication that some members have, so let's try and make it something people will look forward to.

Upcoming Events

Other Meeting Dates
(tentative)

NEXT MEETING:

AGM

Saturday,
November 6,
2010, at 2:00 PM

Chestermere
Recreation
Center.

- Sat. Jan. 22 at Ruth Blazenko's House (?)
- Sun. March 27 at Chestermere Rec Centre at 2 p.m.
- Sun. June 5 at Chestermere Rec Centre at 2 p.m.
- Sat. August 20 at Millarville Fair Show
- Sat. Sept. 17 Chestermere Fall Fair
- [AGM] Sat. Nov 5 at Chestermere Rec Centre at 2:00 p.m. - AGM

SHOWS:

Upcoming Shows:

If you know of any, share!

For Listings, See:

<http://www.arbadist1.com/shows.htm>



“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

2011 Notice of Nominations and General Elections Meeting & Potluck

The Southern Alberta Rabbit Breeder's Association members are hereby invited to our

Annual General Meeting, Potluck & Election

on Saturday, November 6, 2010 at 2:00 pm, in the Green Room (upstairs from the hockey area) at the Chestermere Recreation Centre, 201 West Chestermere Drive, Chestermere, Alberta

Elections will be held for our 2010 Executive, so please get your nominations or proxy votes in to Katrin at
to: SARBA, Mink Hollow,

If you want to nominate someone who isn't you, please make sure that person is willing to let their name stand first. You will find nomination forms on page 3.

The meeting includes a potluck dinner, so please bring your favorite dish; coffee and tea will be provided, but if you would like pop, juice, or water please bring your own.

Let's make this the best turn out ever, so please come, have some fun, and enjoy some great company!

Introduction to Coat Colour Genetics, Part I by Katrin Becker

I've been raising Rex for nearly 20 years and I have always enjoyed playing with the colours of my rabbits. Although Rex do not carry all of the colour genes that can occur in rabbits, they have enough variation to generate some interesting results. This multi-part article will give you a primer on how coat colours work in rabbits, with a particular focus on Rex.

We'll start with some basic genetics and the principles of colour in rabbits and then go through each of the major genes in turn.

When it comes to coat colour, there are only two Fundamental Pigments: **Black & Yellow** (red). The expressed colour (the colour you actually see) is a function of how much black or yellow pigment exists in the hair, which can change from hair to hair, and also along the length of a single hair. For example, the chinchilla colour is an agouti pattern but with most of the yellow removed.



In a newborn, the skin of a chinchilla will look browner than the skin of an agouti.

In rabbits, there can be as many as five bands of colour on a single hair. In addition, most animals have two types of hair: 'outer' guard hairs which are stiffer, thicker, and often straighter than the finer, wavier, and softer undercoat hairs. The

outer coat consists of guard hairs that protect the animal, while the undercoat provides insulation.



In Rex, the guard hairs are very short giving the rabbit a very plush look and feel. In Angoras, both the guard hairs and the undercoat are very long. The short hairs of the Rex make the coat colour look more intense and the long hairs of the Angora make it look diluted, but both have the same amount of colour.

Basic Genetics

All genes come in pairs. One gene of a pair is often called an *allele*. If both alleles of a pair are the same, it is said to be *homozygous* for that trait. If they are different, it is called *heterozygous*.

Genotype refers to the gene itself, while **phenotype** is what we can see.

Sometimes a phenotype will imply a certain combination of genes but the actual genotype is different. The best way to discover an animal's genotype is through test breeding with an animal whose genotype is known.

Some genes are *dominant* to others, which means that if the animal has one dominant and one *recessive* gene, then all you will see expressed is the dominant one. Example: The agouti pattern (**A**) is dominant over both the tan (**at**) and the self (**a**) so the rabbit only needs one of the alleles to be '**A**' for it to look like an agouti, and we can't actually tell what the other allele is unless we know something about the genetic makeup of the parents. The dominant allele is usually written as a capital letter (**A**) and if we aren't sure of the other gene, we write it like this: **A-**. In the pattern genes, the self colour (**a**) is recessive to BOTH agouti AND tan so

the only way for a rabbit to be self (solid) is if BOTH A-genes are **a** (written as: **aa**). Suppose we have an animal whose pattern genes are: **Aa**. That means we have one dominant and one recessive gene. What we will SEE (the phenotype) is an agouti, but the genotype is heterozygous, so we say that the animal is "agouti carrying self". Since each parent only passes one gene to its babies, some of its babies will get the '**A**' for agouti and some will get the '**a**' for self. Who gets what is basically a coin-toss.

Since each parent contributes a single allele to the baby, it will always get one gene from each parent. If we know the genetic makeup of the parents, we can easily predict what genes the babies will have by making a table where each gene from one parent gets matched up with each gene from the other parent. There are 4 possible combinations; each one is *statistically* likely to turn up 25% of the time. Let's suppose that one parent is an agouti carrying tan (**Aat**) and the other is a self (**aa**).

	Parent ONE (A at)		
Parent TWO (a a)	A	a	
a	Aa	aa	ata
a	Aa	aa	ata

In this example, we can expect half the babies to be **Aa** – they'll look like agoutis (castor), and the other half to be **aa** – they'll look tan (otter). ALL of them will be carrying the gene for self but NONE of them will be solid coloured. Now, since these combinations come together basically by random chance, it is possible that all of the babies in any given litter could look like one or the other. If instead we had mated an otter (tan) carrying self (parent 3: **ata**) to parent 1 (**Aat**), we would could get any of these: **Aat**, **Aa**, **atat**, **ata**. The first two will look agouti and the other two will look tan. Finally, if we mate parent 2 (**aa**) to parent 3 (**ata**) these are the possible combinations: **ata**, **ata**, **aa**, **aa** – we would could get tan and self babies.

next time: The 5 Main Groups: A(agouti), B(black), C(colour), D(dilution), E(extension)



Southern Alberta Rabbit Breeders Association

Membership Application and Dues 2011

Membership is normally for one (1) year, renewable in January of each year. New members joining after July may pay half the yearly dues.

Please check one:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Membership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Renewal

Please check or circle one:			
	Adult:	Youth:	Family
1 year:	\$18.00	\$12.00	\$25.00
3 years:	\$48.00	\$30.00	\$60.00

I hereby make application to and agree to abide by the constitution and bylaws of the Southern Alberta Rabbit Breeders Association. I understand that said membership includes a bi-monthly copy of the club newsletter and all privileges and benefits of the Association.

Date:		A.R.B.A. Membership #:	
Name:			
Birth Date (if under 10):			
Address:			
City:		Province / State:	
Phone:		Postal Code:	
Email:			
Website:			
Rabbitry Name:		A.R.B.A. #	
Breeds Raised:			
Recommended by:			

Please make cheque or money order payable to the **Southern Alberta Rabbit Breeders Association (S.A.R.B.A.)** and send with application to:

**SARBA, Katrin Becker
MINK HOLLOW FARM**

Received (dates):		Payment Details:		Entered:	
Treasurer:		Cheque #:		Accounts:	
Secretary:		Bank:		Membership:	
Filed:		Amount:		Email:	
Acknowledgement Sent:		Email / Letter			

S.A.R.B.A. 2010 Executive

President:

Valdine Short

- Club Historian

Vice-President:

Chris Berry

Secretary:

Katrin Becker, 

- Webmaster
- Newsletter Editor (temporary)

Treasurer:

Ruth Blazenko,

Directors:

- **Tony Berry**
- **Sylvia Moore**
- **Steve Stoyko**

Show Secretary: *Leona Dekoter*

Silent Auctions: *Chris Berry*

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.sarba.ca

Tips & Techniques

Collectively, we have many decades of experience working with rabbits and over the years we have all picked up various tricks and techniques that we have found useful. This space is a place to share that information with other members.

Send me YOUR ideas and I'll add them when-ever we have some space.

Bathroom corners in an outdoor hutch:

Our first contribution comes from Valdine Short. I was complaining that the young rabbits in my growing hutches have decided to use the enclosed, 'house' part of their hutch as their bathroom, which means they often end up sitting in the bathroom when the weather isn't nice – and getting pretty dirty.

The solution?

When you first put the bunnies in their new space, block off the house-part for several days until they establish a place for their bathroom. Once they've done that, you can give them access to the enclosed part of the hutch and they will (usually) keep using the bathroom corner they first set up.

Thanks Valdine!

Breeder's Profile: *Katrin Becker*

Most of you know me by now. I'm Katrin Becker, current Secretary of SARBA, and temporary Newsletter Editor. I also look after the website. I breed rabbits under the name **Mink Hollow**

I started in rabbits back in 1992 when I was working for Ruth Ludwig at Butterfield Acres Farm. Every year, Ruth gets dozens of calls from people who got a rabbit (usually as an impulse purchase around Easter) and don't want it any more. As usual, Ruth had taken as many rabbits as she could house and they still kept coming. Among the growing crowds were two Flemish cross does and a very friendly,

medium sized, charlie coloured 'mongrel' buck. I always thought it a good idea to 'learn' on inexpensive stock so I took the trio home. I was hooked.

After building three hutches from construction site scraps, we were set. It wasn't long before I started looking at getting into pedigreed rabbits. I was looking for a meat rabbit and like so many people before me, I was struck by the amazing coats of the Rex rabbits. I bought my first pair of Rex from Yvonne Dokken in January 1993 and I have never looked back. Although my connection with SARBA has lapsed a few times since then, I have maintained my Rex



herd and many of my rabbits can still trace their ancestry back to those first two.

I'm fascinated by colour genetics and have been playing around with colours for as long as I've had Rex. I've had all the colours except Seal, Sable, and Californian.

These days I'm discovering how the extension gene works.

SARBA Newsletter Editorial Policy

The SARBA Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Southern Alberta Rabbit Breeder's Association dedicated to the advancement of the domestic rabbit and the domestic rabbit breeder. SARBA reserves the right to refuse to accept for publication any advertising or articles which it deems are not in the best interest of members. Lengthy articles may be edited.

Articles, statements or opinions published may not necessarily be those of SARBA, and are the sole responsibility of the author.

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