



Southern Alberta Rabbit Breeder's Association

Established in 1944

In this issue:

- Winter Litters *p.2-3*
- Tips and Techniques *p.6*



Regular Features:

- Editor's Comments 1
- Upcoming Events 1
- Membership Application 5
- 2012 Executive 6
- Newsletter Policies 6

Editor's Comments

Here we are nearing the end of SARBA's 68th year.

Our AGM was held last month and as usual, there are few changes. Sylvia and I are stepping down as Directors to be replaced by Shannon Moore and Mark Buckley. Chris and Valdine are trading places and Sylvia is returning for another term as treasurer.

I'll continue to look after the website as well as edit the newsletter. Remember that our newsletter is how most people see our club,

so it is important. It should have interesting articles and contributions from our members - not just me!

Have an idea to share? Send it in! Hear some interesting rabbit news? Share!

Please remember that renewals are due!!



So, here's wishing you all a safe and happy season.

Merry Christmas to all!!!

~~~~~ Upcoming Events ~~~~~

NEXT MEETING:

Meeting Dates 2011
(tentative)

**Saturday,
February 4, 2012,
at 2:00 PM**

**Chestermere
Recreation
Center.**

- Sat. Feb. 4 at 2 p.m.
- Sat. March 25 at 2 p.m.
- Sun. June 3 at 2 p.m.
- no August meeting planned
- Sat. Sept. 8
Chestermere Fall Fair
- [AGM] Sat. Nov 3 at 2:00 p.m.

All meetings held at the Chestermere Rec Centre

SHOWS:

Upcoming Shows:

If you know of any, share!

For Listings, See:
<http://www.arbadist1.com/shows.htm>



It's getting to be that time of year in the Northern Hemisphere when the nights get colder and sometimes the days don't get much warmer than the nights. I've been raising Rex for nearly 20 years and I usually don't breed in the winter but I've had occasional litters in the past when the temperatures were well below freezing - usually they do fine. I've had a few does loose singleton babies when it was 40 below but I rarely loose babies to the cold.



This past year I tried breeding year round for the first time. My rabbits live in an unheated garage during the winter and I don't use extra heat. I live far enough in the country that if a fire were to start anywhere I'd have almost no hope of saving anything. As a result I really hate using heat lamps and try to avoid them whenever possible. The only time I ever I hung a heat lamp above a nest box I ended up losing the whole litter. It was in the minus teens and when I checked on a just born litter the nest fur was crusty on the outside - the moisture from the babies breathing must have condensed and then frozen. I felt sorry for them (even though they were toasty warm when I put my hand in the nest) so I hung a heat lamp about 12 inches above the nest. When I came back 2 hours later they were all dead. The lesson I learned: I should have trusted their mom and left them alone.

I know many people fret when the temperatures drop below freezing, but if

you take some precautions, you don't have to suffer losses to the cold.

Use nest boxes made out of material that insulates and make sure your does have plenty of nesting material.



I use either wooden nest boxes with lids or plastic storage bins (about 18" x 12" x 8" high) with a 6" hole cut in one side and the lid on.



I set that on top of a piece of plywood so there are several layers of something between the babies and the cage wire. Remember that babies wiggling around will often end up on the bare floor of the nestbox so it's important that that not be metal.



My nest boxes are big enough that the does can sit inside next to the babies without sitting on them. Many of my does sit near the babies when it's really cold. I make sure the does have plenty of straw for bedding.



The cold will usually not be a problem if the doe has been able to make a good nest. I give them as much hay or straw as they can stuff into the nest box, and rabbit fur is a VERY good insulator.



I had litters born Dec. 8, 25 (2010), Jan 12, and Mar 6 (2011). They are in an UNheated garage.

Winter Litters, continued

Like I said above, I have two different kinds of nest boxes and both are covered. One is a wooden box that is open on one end but has a 4" high board across the lower part.



The other is a plastic storage bin with the lid on and a 6" hole cut at the end of one side.



I usually put some plywood underneath the nest box and when I take the box out to check babies that board is often warm underneath where the babies are. I also try and make sure none of the hay in the nest gets flattened down and that the doe's fur is carefully arranged over the babies after I've checked them. I check them daily for the first 4-5 days, then every other day after that. I often take them out to photograph them but if it's really cold I just count them without picking them up.

When the first December litters were born, the temps were around freezing during the day and -14 or so at night. There were days when it was much

colder. We even had a few nights where it dipped below -20.

I also think it helps if the litters are big enough (6-8) to keep each other warm, and it also helps if the weather cooperates so that it isn't bitterly cold (i.e. below zero) until the babies have some fur, but that only takes a few days.



I was worried about one of the litters born January 8 because one doe was a first-time mom who only had 4 kits and it was VERY cold. One baby was quite chilled when I found them, so I heated it under my coat for a while and put it back. When I checked an hour later, it was cold again so I took the nestbox in the house and put a fan heater on it for about an hour. Then I wrapped the whole box in an old sheet (except for a space for the doe to get in and out) and took it back outside. The baby who got chilled was also smaller than the rest so I kind of expected to lose it..



The week they were born was bitterly cold: lows around -10F and highs around 0F. The weather was all over the map this past winter - going as high as 60F and as low as -20F. At four weeks those four kits were the hoppiest and most playful babies I've had in a very long time. The one that got chilled is the silliest of the bunch.



Of the 10 litters I had this past winter, with one exception, the only babies I lost were to first time moms, and none of them lost more than I would expect to lose at any other time of the year. I did lose one baby that ended up outside the nestbox. If it had been summer, it still would have died.

I try to keep my stock strong and healthy, and as natural as possible. Good mothering ability is something we can select for. I think does that can't or won't look after their babies properly should probably be replaced. For me that includes being able to raise litters in the winter without heat.

-Katrin



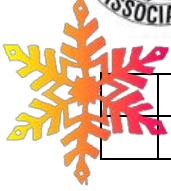




Southern Alberta Rabbit Breeders Association

Membership Application and Dues 2012

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:		Please check or circle one: <input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> New Membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult:	Youth: <input type="checkbox"/>	Family: <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>	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, Sylvia Moore



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:

Chris Berry

Vice-President:

Valdine Short -

- Club Historian

Secretary/Membership Chair:

Ruth Blazenko, -

Treasurer:

Sylvia Moore -

Directors:

- **Tony Berry** -
-

- **Mark Buckley** -
-

- **Shannon Moore** - -
-

Show Secretary: *Ruth Blazenko*

Silent Auctions: *Chris Berry*

Webmaster & Newsletter Editor

Katrin Becker, [REDACTED]

We're on the Web!

See us at:

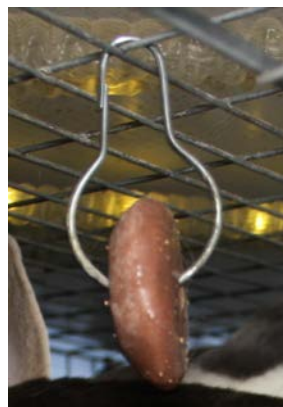
www.sarba.ca

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 whenever we have some space.

I use them for everything from hanging salt wheels,



to attaching ID tags,



to simple latch locks and clips for hanging lights and securing electrical cords.

When it comes to ID tags, I use 2 kinds: one is specially made using my

rabbit database and then slipped into a badge holder.

The others are cattle ear tags: pink and blue for names; white for cautions and green to indicate a litter - I can even write the number of babies on the tag.



Other than the name tags, they can easily be re-used and they last a very long time.



Essential Items

One item I would consider to be essential around any rabbitry is a good supply of shower curtain rings. Yup, you read that right. I'm talking about the simplest kind: the plain metal ones.



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.

Publication Dates:

Submit Materials By:	For Publication In:
February 15	March
May 15	June
August 15	September
November	December

