



## WHAT IS "SHOW CONDITION"

Judges often refer to exhibits regarding their 'show condition', but what does this really mean? By asking the following questions you can help ensure your rabbit is able to best represent itself on the show table.

### **\*\*\*HOW TO ENSURE YOUR RABBIT IS IN SHOW CONDITION\*\*\***

- Is my rabbit clean and free from staining?
  - Check under your rabbit, as under tail and feet can often be stained from bedding. Make sure you clean your rabbit prior to show day. Keeping bedding clean and changing regularly can help ensure your rabbit stays free from stains.
  - Check vent, scent glands and genitals for cleanliness.
- Is my rabbit free from parasites?
  - Some parasites, such as hay mite, are harder to see than others like fleas. Rabbits with identifiable parasites will be disqualified by the judge. Inspect your rabbits regularly and if you identify parasites, treat accordingly. Rabbits with parasites should be left at home. Ask a committee member if you are unsure how to identify or treat parasites – we've all been there and it's better to ask and learn.
- Is my rabbit free from disease?
  - Indications of disease can include (but is not limited to) discharge from the eyes, ears, nose or genitals.
  - Indications of nasal or eye discharge (where they may not be currently running) can be crusty or dried staining on the muzzle and/or on the inside of the front paws from where the rabbit has been rubbing their eyes or nose.
  - Coughs or sneezes can be a sign of disease
  - Diarrhea or scouring can indicate disease
- Is my rabbit well fleshed?
  - Your rabbit should be covered with well muscled flesh. Prominent ribs, chest bones and spine indicate a rabbit that is under condition.
  - Weight is not always an indicator of condition. A rabbit that exceeds the weight limits for its breed, can still be under condition. Not adequately feeding a rabbit so it makes show weight is a breach of the code of ethics and will not fool the judge.
- Does my rabbit display signs of good health?
  - Rabbits in good health will have bright eyes, a healthy coat, be firm in flesh and not display signs of lethargy.
  - Skin will be clear and free of scabs, sores, flaky or loose skin and adhesions.
- Are my rabbits toenails clipped?
  - Long toenails can get caught and cause injury to the rabbits, as well as to those handling it. These should be regularly trimmed, particularly prior to a show where they are to be handled multiple times during the day.
- Is my rabbit an appropriate size for its age?
  - Some rabbits develop at a slower rate than others. Even though a rabbit may be old enough to enter a show, if it is small for its age or breed then it should be left at home to develop. Showing a rabbit can cause stress. Leave the little ones at home even if it means missing showing in junior age groups.
  - Some rabbits are never meant to be show rabbits. A smaller sized rabbit may have a place in your breeding program, however may not be suitable for the stresses associated with shows. Leave these rabbits at home.
- Is my rabbit well groomed?
  - Regular grooming with wet hands through short coated rabbits will remove loose hairs and help with moult.
  - Rabbits use energy to moult and this can affect their physical condition, not just their coats. Excessively moulty rabbits should be left at home to allow them to maintain good condition and reduce stress.
  - Grooming longer coated rabbits regularly (roller combs, blowing) helps reduce matts in coats. Check armpits and groin for matts and groom accordingly.

**\*\*\*If you've answered YES to all these questions – your rabbit is ready for the show!\*\*\***