

The Mink of the Rabbit Family

OFFICIAL GUIDEBOOK OF THE
HAVANA RABBIT BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

- *2016 Commemorative Year Edition* -
August 2017 Addendum



EST. 1925
HAVANA RABBIT BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

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Havana

*Accepted into the
American Rabbit Breeders Association
in 1916*

LILAC Variety



Color is to be uniform medium dove gray with a pinkish tint on the surface, very lustrous and carried as deep as possible. Color is to be uniform over the entire body. Color to be carried as deep as possible. Toenails to be the same color and show pigmentation.

Eye Color: Blue-gray, with a ruby cast permissible.

Faults: Faded color. Cut severely for brownish tinge or white hairs in the coat.

Received a "Super Pass" from the ARBA Standards Committee and became a recognized variety in 2016. Super Pass is accomplished through two superior presentations in a row and receiving recognition as a variety/breed. Lilac Havanas were the first in ARBA history to accomplish this feat.

Lilac Chronicle

Julie Spier, Lilac COD Presenter



Dera Moorhead, Tiffany Bohlmann and myself (Julie Spier) set out on this journey starting simply with discussions and emails in 2010. We all had a lilac or two pop up in our breeding programs and many times they were nicely typed and furred animals which had to be culled. This trio of breeders began with a common question of “why not have a lilac variety in Havanas?”

Research discovered that fourteen of the ARBA recognized breeds had the lilac variety including the actual Lilac breed. We spoke with a previous Certificate of Development (COD) holder who had started the process but was never able to finish. We discovered the club membership had been generally supportive of this initial effort which was indicative of our 2012 survey results. We worked from the previous proposed standard and began breeding.

A former CA Havana breeder and judge provided us with a very nice lilac Havana buck named “Tucker” to inspire us even more to get started. His son, Tuck, prompted us to submit our letter for COD. We continued to mix up the blue and chocolate varieties to create the range of lilac color for which we, and the club standards committee, were striving. In January 2012, the first full litter of lilac-to-lilac breeding was born.

“Natural Dilute of our varieties and will fit in fine”

—HRBA Club Standards Committee

2012 was a pivotal year as we received breeder affidavits, submitted for our COD from ARBA and presented an exhibition of Lilacs at the Kansas Convention. The HRBA Standards Committee judged the exhibition group and gave us their nod of approval and support. This was followed after Convention by a Havana Club vote of 72-12 in favor of the Lilac COD progressing. We were launched!

Lots of BREEDING followed. There goes the cage space! Havana Club newsletter articles were written, plus website updates, and email communications to keep the lilac conversation going. Early challenges were eye and toenail color. What “shade” of lilac should we breed for was a point of discussion throughout the process. The first COD presentation was in 2014 at Fort Worth, Texas and the lesson learned was too much ticking showing up in the senior coats and they were “too bluey” and light in color. We went home and culled. *Hard.* We came back in 2015 at Portland, Oregon and were right on track with a group of Lilacs that boasted the medium dove gray color. Unanimous pass from the COD Committee.

Interest continued to build with exhibition shows and discussions with judges, breeders, and HRBA membership. We came back in 2016 to the San Diego, CA Convention. Another unanimous pass from the COD Committee. Now, with a “Super Pass” due to the quality of the presentation animals, we have a new variety. *Shock, tears, hugs, followed by gratitude to all who supported our goal over the past seven (7) years.*

Now, time to refocus on breeding those five (5) wonderful Havana varieties!

Bit of Wisdom:

“Cull like you are buying”

Deb Morrison, HRBA VP and National Winner

BRED AND BORN WITH PURPOSE

Deb Morrison, Havana RBA Vice-President & National Show Winner

Our fantastic guidebook has several great articles written by successful Havana breeders on the subject of culling. I would like to take those articles a step further and have you consider pre-planning and scheduling specific breeding dates for specific shows. This may be a common practice for us “old timers,” but humor me for the sake of those new to the rabbit world. Spring National shows normally have their dates set at least a year in advance, the ARBA Conventions have their specific show dates 2 years in advance and most local shows occur about the same time each year. This gives us a good idea of what shows we might plan to attend, so the next step is planning a breeding schedule to have potential show prospects at the correct age and at their prime for those specific shows.

To arrive at this goal, I keep a multi-year calendar exclusively dedicated for future shows and breeding dates. Does are bred with an express purpose to kindle litters that will be at their maximum maturity at any particular show. The first step is to decide on a specific show date, then count back 7 months. This gives you 30-32 days for pregnancy and a date of birth that leaves you right at 6 months for that litter to be shown as juniors. From that potential breeding date, you can adjust by adding a few extra days or a couple weeks, then mark that date to breed your does. If your juniors tend to be on the large side when they are about 6 months old, you may want to give yourself a few more weeks so that they are closer to 5 months old and under the 5-pound junior maximum weight limit for the big show. This pre-planning method reduces the angst of having a very nice young junior getting beat by another very nice junior who might be 6-12 weeks older with an additional 1 or 2 lb. size advantage. That’s when you think, “Man, I wish that my rabbit would have been born 2 months earlier.” The same scenario goes for that 6-1/2 month young senior; it’s just hard to compete with other seniors that have a little more age and maturity.

When I have a specific breeding date I normally breed every open doe available. Advantages for this approach are: 1. All of your does will kindle at the same time; 2. No surprise litters on the wire, because I forgot about a random breeding date; 3. Culling through litters is easier because all of the show prospects will be the same age. For these reasons culling, especially at weaning

age and approximately a month later, becomes very straightforward. I personally find that at the younger ages it is much easier to cull from the bottom. This means getting rid of anything with a fault, poor type, poorly marked broken pattern, runts or frail rabbits. Those kept back after this initial culling are normally separated into pairs of does, or bucks for another 4-6 weeks. I find that having a buddy promotes curiosity and when they see their buddy eating or drinking, they feel the need to do so themselves. The next cull, at about 12-15 weeks, will include the above criteria but, at this point, we will also start to take into consideration the texture and luster of the fur. A harsh coat will **never** have the correct texture or luster. Ultimately, and most importantly, harsh coated individuals will **never** have correct Havana fur and from this time forward will have to go bye-bye. Being critical of texture and luster when the rabbit is at a young age will, in due time, tremendously improve the fur genetics within your bloodlines. After the 2nd cull, rabbits will be cooped in their own pen then every subsequent future cull session will be done as a class. For example; each Black Jr. Doe will be judged/culled against the other Black Jr. Does of the same age. Let's say that there are 15 Black Jr. Does — cull the poorest quality of the group, keep the rest, then let them grow out another few weeks and repeat the process. As I stated before, I find that the easiest way for me to cull is off of the bottom. This is also a good method if you are new to raising show rabbits or tend to be indecisive.

While you're in a pre-planning state of mind and before you decide on a breeding date, go ahead and look at the calendar to see where you might be in 30 days. It may save a litter or two if they are NOT born while you are gone away on a vacation or a 2-day rabbit show. Taking this into consideration is a great way to show gratitude to those who take care of your Rabbitry and it's one less thing for you to worry about while you are away from home.

We have a kids' animated movie featuring a wise old goat whose catch phrase is; "Be prepared, be prepared, this message must be shared"! By taking some time to pre-plan you are planning to raise a winner!

CRITIQUE CULLING

Sarah LaMarra-Hill, Breeder

Culling rabbits can be difficult, time consuming, and just plain frustrating. We all strive to produce the best rabbit possible, but at times it may seem like it is impossible. In order to have a high-quality herd/program, hard culling is a must. Here are some examples and the process I use to cull rabbits:

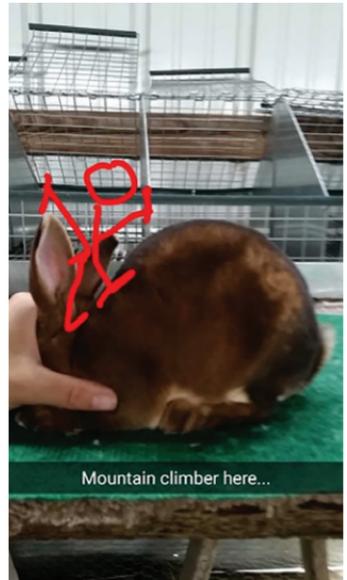
Obvious DQs: Marked rabbits, such as brokens, are easy to cull while still in the nest box. Rabbits that do not meet the breeds marked requirements can be an easy cull fresh in the life cycle without having to “feed them out” for a longer period of time. This also may include kits that have missing toes, partial ears, etc.

At weaning: Weaning time is fun for everyone as the excitement grows to see what the future will be like in your herd when you evaluate weanlings. When I wean litters, they all go into individual cages at weaning. I also wean at 6 weeks of age. At this stage, you may be able to cull kits that have the presence of items listed above that may have been missed previously. I wean and separate litters and continue to evaluate each weaned kit every 2 or 3 weeks.

Type: The first attribute to cull on is type. Place type as the most critical and important item on which to concentrate in your program. Without a good typed rabbit, success will be very hard to find.

The first thing I look for is proper shoulder placement. The first thing the judge touches is the shoulders of the animal when posed. Low and long shoulders is an immediate cull as this trait will not change over time. The example to the right is what I call “Mountain Climbers.”

Rabbits should be evenly balanced throughout. Sloping or sliding hindquarters is another immediate cull. If the slope is severe, that will not change much over the life cycle of the rabbit.





The example to the left I call 'Ski Slopes.'

By eliminating kits with shoulder and hindquarter issues, you tighten up the culling process and eliminate the unwanted characteristics quickly in your herd without having to grow them out.

I also cull on loin shape. If there is a drag in the loin, or pinched hindquarters, those also get culled. By culling hard against the standard, the remaining kits should be balanced and well typed.

From this point, I can further cull on other items such as fur.



Bit of Wisdom:

"I don't mind losing, just not all of the time!"

R.C. Crowe, Breeder

HAVANAS — At A Glance

1898 Chocolate Havana Discovered	2017 5 Varieties
1916 Havana Breed Accepted into ARBA	1925 HRBA Club Established
5 Convention BIS (Open & Youth) Years: 2002-2016	3 Convention – Open BIS
2 Convention – Youth BIS	7 Convention Group Wins
Black, Chocolate, Broken Black Convention Group Win Varieties	
5 Convention Open Group Wins	2 Convention Youth Group Wins
2 West Coast Classic Champion of Champions	2016 23 BIS, 12 RIS, 8 Best Four Class
2007 Broken Havana COD Pass	2016 Lilac Havana – COD Super Pass