

# Introduction to Rare Meat Rabbit Breeds



ALBC Annual Conference  
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# Domestic Rabbits in Brief

- Origin
- Breeds
- ARBA
- Standard-bred Rabbits
- Trends



# 8 Rare & Wonderful Breeds

- American
- American Chinchilla
- Silver Fox
- Blanc de Hotot
- Beveren
- Crème D'Argent
- Giant Chinchilla
- Lilac

# Breed Hay Day

1850 1860 1870 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000

American

American Chinchilla

Silver Fox

Blanc De Hotot

Beveren

Crème d'Argent

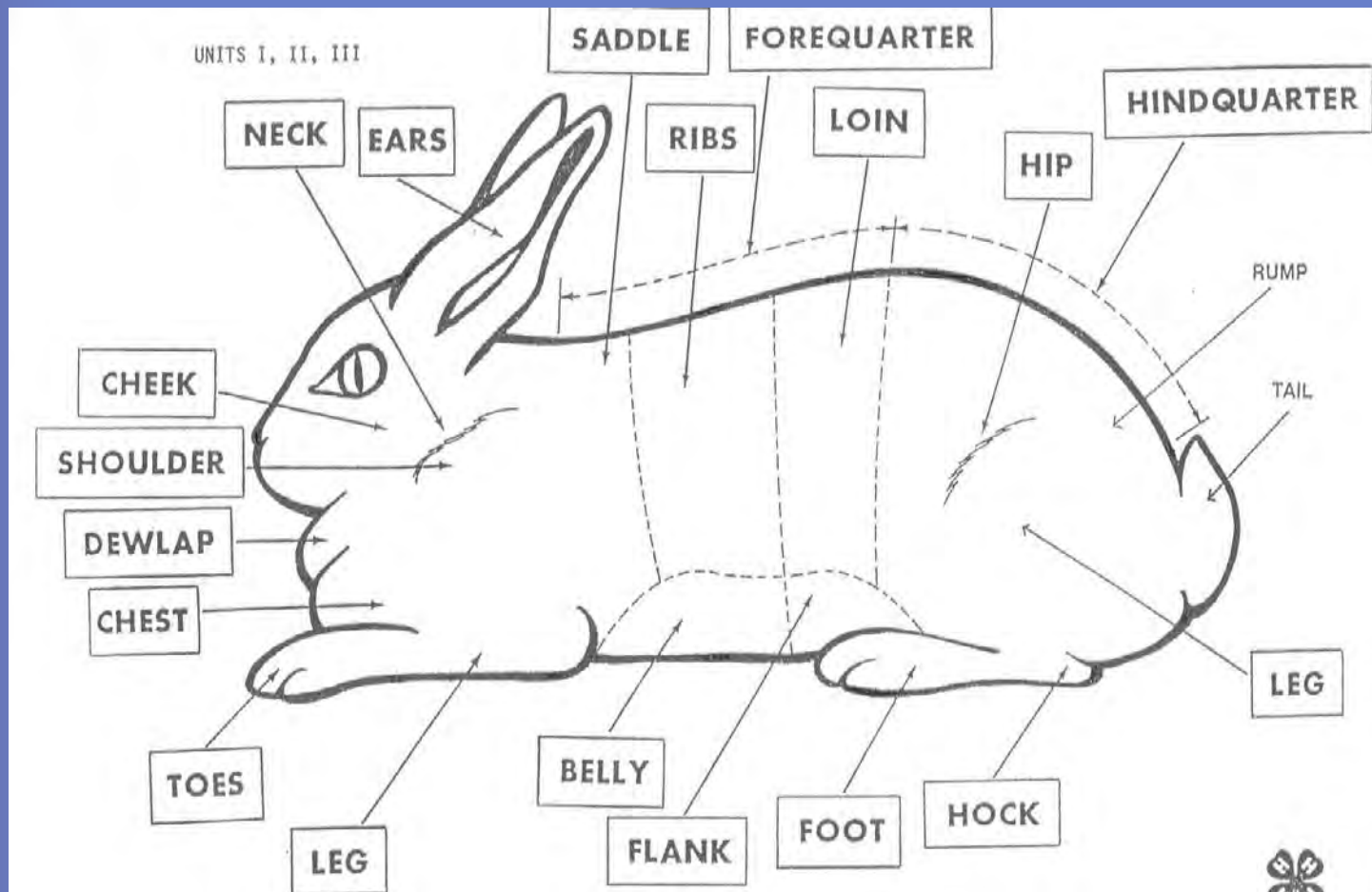
Giant Chinchilla

Lilac

# How Rare are They?

Breed	Total Shown	% of Total
American	48	0.60%
American Chinchilla	19	0.24%
Silver Fox	67	0.84%
Blanc de Hotot	26	0.27%
Beveren	10	0.13%
Crème D'Argent	15	0.19%
Giant Chinchilla	19	0.24%
Lilac	39	0.49%

# Body Types



# American

*The American was originally recognized as the German Blue Vienna in 1918, but was later renamed the American Blue Rabbit because of circumstances surrounding World War I.*





# American History

- Recognized by the ARBA in 1918 as the German Blue Vienna
- Name changed following World War II
- Introduced by Lewis H. Salisbury
- Breeding was kept secret, but believe Flemish Giants were used
- White variety accepted in 1925
- Popular until the 1950's for their fur and meat
- Pelts were highly sought after for the richly colored pelts
- One of the rarest breeds in the US



# American Facts

Status	Critical
Origin	German
Varieties	Blue, White
Body Type	Mandolin
Size	Bucks: 9 to 11 pounds Does: 10 to 12 pounds
Characteristics	Hardy, docile, large litters
Uniqueness	Deepest blue of all breeds

# American Chinchilla

*The Chinchilla rabbit has contributed to the development of more breeds and varieties of rabbit worldwide than any other breed of domestic rabbit.*





# American Chinchilla History

- Developed by French engineer M.J. Dybowski and first shown in France in 1913
- World-wide popularity as an ideal fur rabbit
- First imported into England by Haidee Lacy-Hulbert
- Arrived in the US at the New York State Fair in 1919
- Edward H. Stahl and Jack Harris perfected the US standard for the breed
- The American Chinchilla was born in the 1920s using Standard Chinchillas for body and pelt size
- Formerly called the American Heavyweight Chinchilla
- Record 17,328 registered between November, 1928 and November 1929
- Contribution to other breeds and varieties substantial



# American Chinchilla Facts

Status	Critical
Origin	France/USA
Varieties	Standard
Body Type	Commercial
Size	Bucks: 9 to 11 pounds Does: 10 to 12 pounds
Characteristics	Hardy, gentle, good mothers, large litters, reach market weight quickly.
Uniqueness	4-layer hair shaft color

# Silver Fox – The “Teddy Bear”

- *Silver Fox rabbits are "Gently Giants" and love attention. Big and blocky, it is hard to keep your hands off them. They easily adapt to any climate and sudden changes in temperature does not appear to bother them.*





# Silver Fox History

- Third breed developed in the United States
- Developed by Walter B. Garland of North Canton, Ohio
- Standard approved in 1925 as the American Heavyweight Silver
- Recognized in Blue and Black varieties since inception
- Detrimental drop in popularity in 1970s
- Background unknown, Checkered Giants and Champagne D'Argents probably, American Blue to improve meat and pelt
- Only breed recognized with a standing coat



# Silver Fox Facts

Status	Critical
Origin	USA
Varieties	Standard
Body Type	Commercial
Size	Bucks: 9 to 11 pounds Does: 10 to 12 pounds
Characteristics	Hardy, gentle, excellent mothers, large litters, 65% dress out ratio
Uniqueness	Standing fur coats

# Blanc de Hotot

*The Blanc de Hotot nearly went extinct during World War II but was rescued in 1978 when the late Bob Whitman imported eight. It was accepted by the American Rabbit Breeders Association in 1979.*





# Blanc de Hotot History

- Second breed in history to be developed by women in the Hoto-en-Auge region of France
- Madame Eugenie Bernhard, chatelaine du Calvados aimed for prized for meat and fur
- Began crossing the Geant Papillon Francais in 1902
- 500 breedings later, she had what is now known as Blanc de Hotot
- First arrived in the US 1921-1922 but did not gain popularity
- Nearly extinct due to WWII
- Bob Whitman imported 8 into the US in 1978
- Crossed with BEW Beverens, NZWs, and White Satins to widen gene pool and improve body type
- Accepted into the ARBA in 1979



# Blanc de Hotot Facts

Status	Threatened
Origin	France
Varieties	Standard
Body Type	Commercial
Size	Bucks: 8 to 10 pounds Does: 9 to 11 pounds
Characteristics	Active, hardy, good mothers
Uniqueness	Eye bands

# Beveren – “Peace”

*The Beveren is said to be the origin of the “peace” sign. As soldiers walked jubilantly through the country near the end of WWII, they came upon some Beveren that carry their ears in a “V”. The rest is history.*





# Beveren History

- One of oldest and rarest breeds of fur rabbit
- Named after town of same name in Western Belgium
- Recognized in 1898
- Blue Beverens imported into England by Mrs. A.M. Martin in 1905
- Beveren Club founded there in 1918
- Popularity as most popular fur breed sky-rocketed
- Standard and Giant Beverens arrived in US in 1915
- Several blue breeds already in the US at this time
- Edward H. Stahl imported the BEW Beveren in 1933
- Recognized now in blue, black and BEW



# Beveren Facts

Status	Watch
Origin	Belgium
Varieties	Standard
Body Type	Mandolin
Size	Bucks: 8 to 11 pounds Does: 9 to 12 pounds
Characteristics	Docile, clean, smart, curious
Uniqueness	Famous “v-shaped” ears

# Crème d'Argent

*The Crème d'Argent has become extinct in all countries except the US and the United Kingdom. The global population is estimated to be under 1000 animals.*





# Crème d'Argent History

- Developed in France mid to late 1800s
- Origin unclear, but it is the oldest of seven Argent breeds
- Description appeared at exhibition near Paris in 1877
- Fur became popular for trimmings
- Imported into the US by 1924 by breeders in New York
- Crossed with other breeds including Golden Palomino
- First shown at the Indiana Convention in 1936
- Working Standard introduced in 1938
- Global population is estimated at no more than 1,000 animals



# Crème d'Argent Facts

Status	Watch
Origin	France
Varieties	Standard
Body Type	Commercial
Size	Bucks: 8 to 10.5 pounds Does: 8.5 to 11 pounds
Characteristics	Relaxed, reliable mothers, smaller litters
Uniqueness	Color

# Giant Chinchilla

*Edward H. Stahl,  
“Father of the  
Domestic Rabbit  
Industry in America”,  
is the first and only  
individual to ever  
make a million  
dollars from the sale  
of rabbit breeding  
stock.*





# Giant Chinchilla History

- Edward H. Stahl active in breeding of Chinchilla breeds
- Incorporated NZWs, White Flemish Giants, and American Blue does
- Envisioned a large breed that could offer meat and large pelt
- 1921 the birth of the “Million Dollar Princess”
- Recognized by the ARBA in 1928



# Giant Chinchilla Facts

Status	Watch
Origin	USA
Varieties	Standard
Body Type	Mandolin
Size	Bucks: 12 to 15 pounds Does: 13 to 16 pounds
Characteristics	Hardy, excellent mothers, large litters, reach market size quickly, need solid floors

# Lilac

*It is the British that can claim to have achieved the best coloration for the breed – their Lilacs are truly the pinkish dove gray called for in the breed standard.*





# Lilac History

Developed simultaneously in The Netherlands and England

- Crossed with Blue Beverens and Havanas by famed geneticist R.C. Punnet in 1922
- Both British and European varieties were brought to the US
- Numerous imports 1922-1926
- Popularity strong on US West Coast, spread East
- Standard established unchanged from 1939 to 1944
- 25 shown at 1940 National Convention
- Club had become inactive by 1951
- In 1952, “Mr. Lilac” Ken Fehrman, became secretary endeavoring to bring the breed back
- 1973 National Convention had 31 entered by 8 exhibitors
- 1996 National Convention had 36 shown by 10 exhibitors



# Lilac Facts

Status	Watch
Origin	Netherlands/England
Varieties	Standard
Body Type	Compact
Size	Bucks: 5.5 to 7.5 pounds Does: 6 to 8 pounds
Characteristics	Hardy, docile, slightly shy, smaller litters
Uniqueness	Color



Thank you

Preserving their heritage  
preserves ours



# Resources

- **The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy**, Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312, (919) 542-5704, email [albc@albc-usa.org](mailto:albc@albc-usa.org), [www.albc-usa.org](http://www.albc-usa.org)
- **American Rabbit Breeders Association**, Inc., PO Box 426, Bloomington, IL 61702, (309) 664-7500, Fax (309) 664-0941, email [ARBAPOST@aol.com](mailto:ARBAPOST@aol.com), or visit [www.arba.net](http://www.arba.net)
- **American Blue and White Rabbit Club**, 7433 N. State Road 59, Brazil, IN 47834, (812) 448-2304, [www.rabbitgeek.com/abwrc.html](http://www.rabbitgeek.com/abwrc.html)
- **American Chinchilla Rabbit Breeders Association**, Crystal Krienke-Bonkoski, Secretary/Treasurer, R16827 Cherry Road, Ringle, WI 54771, email [clkrienke@yahoo.com](mailto:clkrienke@yahoo.com)
- **National Silver Fox Rabbit Club**, Rae Harris, Secretary/Treasurer, 4177 Olive Branch Road, Galien, MI 49113 (269) 545-2534, [silver\\_fox@hughes.net](mailto:silver_fox@hughes.net)
- **Hotot Rabbit Breeders International**, c/o Laurie Staley-Jones, 51 S. Olive Church Rd., Paragon, IN 46166, (765) 537-2432, email [lazyslops@yahoo.com](mailto:lazyslops@yahoo.com), or visit [www.geocities.com/blancdehototclub/](http://www.geocities.com/blancdehototclub/)
- **American Beveren Rabbit Club**, c/o Meg Whitehouse, 480 Colts Neck Road, Farmingdale, NJ 07727, or visit [www.beverens.8m.com](http://www.beverens.8m.com)
- **Crème d'Argent Rabbit Federation**, Travis West, Secretary, 2293 Factory Rd., Albany, OH 45710, (740) 698-7285, [cremedargent@hotmail.com](mailto:cremedargent@hotmail.com), or visit [www.cremedargentfederation.com/](http://www.cremedargentfederation.com/)
- **Giant Chinchilla Rabbit Association**, 4195 Country Road 115, Mt. Gilead, OH 43338, (419) 864-7936, email [Miley4@bright.net](mailto:Miley4@bright.net)
- **National Lilac Rabbit Club of America**, Judy Bustle, 132 Farmers Lane, State Road, NC 28676, email [rogr\\_rabbit@msn.com](mailto:rogr_rabbit@msn.com) or visit <http://www.geocities.com/nlrca2002/>