

Going to your first rabbit show?

You and your rabbit can have a lot of fun showing – and it's a great way to make new friends!



Firstly, welcome to the rabbit fancy! Another show season is about to begin so it's a great time to start showing your rabbits and enjoying the camaraderie of competing against fellow fanciers.

Make sure your rabbit is rung - i.e. that it has a British Rabbit Council numbered ring on one of its hind legs/ear tattoo and that the number is registered to you as the new owner.

If it isn't, ask the former owner to complete a ring transfer form which you should send to the BRC for approval.) The transfer fee is £5 per rabbit. Any problems, contact the British Rabbit Council (01636 676042 or email info@thebrc.org).

Enclosed with this issue is our annual guide to agricultural, county and special events, *Great Days Out*, so why not scan the pages to find out what's on in your area.

It's important to bear in mind that not all the agricultural/county shows in our booklet will have a rabbit show, so check the dates in our BRC Show Diary (see this issue pages 22/24).

All rabbit shows held under BRC rules are advertised in their official journal *Fur & Feather*. Challenge Certificates are offered for breed winners, rated from one, two or three stars, with four stars offered for selected championship shows (listed in *Great Days Out*) with five star CCs for the two annual two-day classics, Bradford and London Ch shows).

Let's take two popular shows that have been advertised in this issue: the Essex Championship Show (April 22) and the Southern championship Show (May 6). The first is a three star show while the Southern is our first four star show of the 2018 season. Enclosed with this issue of *Fur & Feather* is the official entry form for the Southern Ch Show.

At Essex the fee for entering your rabbit is on a block entry basis, which means that your exhibit will cost you £4.00 to compete in all eligible classes. This means if you have, say, an Red Eyed White Miniature Lop, it will be entered in its breed class, then into an age Challenge (two sections, one for rabbits aged under 5 months and one for adults plus an all-age Challenge in the Lop section followed by a Grand Challenge).

If the rabbit owner is aged 16 or under, there are also free additional classes for juniors. this is called a "Junior CoM show".

The closing date for entry at Essex is 10 April and entry has to be sent to the section secretary by post, stating name of breed (i.e. REW Miniature Lop under five months or adult) with name and address of owner. Remember to enclose a cheque for the entry fee.

On the day of the show, set out in good time, especially at agricultural shows where the roads to the venue can get clogged around opening time.

Take your rabbit into the show hall or marquee, ask for the show manager and say you wish to book in. You will be directed to the booking in table where you will confirm the rabbit's ring number, then issued with a pen number.

You are ready to put your rabbit in its numbered show pen. A basic layer of shavings is usually supplied but additional bedding – or the choice of Vetbed or other show cushions – must be supplied by the exhibitor, plus an optional biscuit of hay.

Hay is usually sufficient to keep your rabbit happy for the day – it certainly does not want to be continually picked up and taken out of the pen on a full stomach!

It is a BRC rule that all rabbits should have a suitable supply of water while they are in their show pens. Water bottles are most popular – for sale in all pet shops or for a fancier favourite turn to the John Hopewell Marketing advert in this issue to view their Ezi-Filla bottles which can be easily affixed to the pen.

If you decide to bring sawdust or shavings to provide extra bedding, do remember that the show pens have to be cleaned at the end of the day, so it is a small courtesy to clean your pen before you leave the showhall, in fact many clubs now request it.)

The entry fee for one-rabbit-all-classes at the Southern Ch Show is £4.50. If you have a second rabbit of the same breed/colour it is an additional £3.50. The entries have to be completed on an entry form (enclosed with this issue) and posted to the Secretary to be received by 19 April.

Both show advertisements do not include a contact for queries so if you find the entry process confusing for these or any other shows that you are thinking of entering, telephone Fur & Feather (01473 652789 office hours) and we'll be glad to guide you through the details.

A number of local clubs now accept entries by email (check the show advertisement) and accept entry fees on the day or via Paypal. If you have a query do contact the club.

Please remember, if after entering you decide not to go to the show, you will still have to pay the entry fees.

If after attending a few shows you may feel confident to help at the judging tables. Approach the book steward, who will be assisting the judge. You don't have to wear a white coat, but it helps protect your clothing.

You may be happy to stand at the table to hold the exhibits while more experienced stewards do all the fetching and carrying.

The book steward's job is to assist the judge by filling in the awards slips and asking the stewards to collect the numbered rabbits entered in the book and bringing them to the table.

When the book steward catches your eye and says "No 78", that is the rabbit you must get. It may be your own rabbit, but the judge must not know that. He is judging rabbits by numbers, not their owners.

When your own rabbit comes on to the table, it may be the first one to go back to its pen, or it may stay on and end up being awarded a 1st, 2nd or 3rd prize card; it is important that you do not convey your emotions to the judge until after all the judging is finished!

When judging of the last class is completed and the judge has finished signing his certificates etc you may then approach the judge and say: "Will you please let me know what you thought of my rabbit, no 78?" The judge will consult his notes, and in all probability may say to you: "Bring it out on the table." He will then explain to you its good and bad points. This is the best way to learn.

Even if you are first off the table in the first class to be judged, your rabbit must remain in its pen until all the classes are finished and the show manager has given you permission to leave.

By the end of the day you will have learned a lot, and probably made a few new friends in the rabbit world. There may even be someone from *Fur & Feather* there, so please come and introduce yourself to us – we can't 'arf rabbit!

Fur & Feather factsheet

RECOMMENDED READING

Shop online (www.furandfeather.co.uk) or ring 01473 652789 for a copy of our booklist which includes:

- 11 rabbit breed titles, from Dutch to rex
- 4 titles covering **feeding and nutrition**
- 8 titles covering **reproduction, breeding, health and husbandry, rabbit behaviour**
- **Showing:** BRC breeds standards 2016-2020. rabbit judgship
- 2 titles covering **genetics**
- 10 titles for **mice, hamsters, cavies, poultry**
- **Rabbit and cavy posters**
- **Back issues; Fur & Feather binder**