

GUIDE TO SELECTING 4-H RABBITS

Provided by Blue Ribbon Rabbitry

I have noticed lately that there is a tendency for newbies to brag about their wins with rabbits they have bought without acknowledging the original breeder. Even worse, I have noticed that the name of the rabbit(s) is often changed to something of the newbie's choosing, which may give the false impression they raised the rabbit. I do not think for a second that most people do this intentionally with the goal of slighting the original breeder.

I should also probably note that this blog post is not directed at anyone specifically. I had a conversation with a fellow breeder the other day about this and since I have noticed this problem myself I simply thought this would be a potentially helpful blog post to those new to the hobby.

Regarding this issue, there are two big "rules" that all newbies should be aware of:

1. ALWAYS acknowledge the original breeder when discussing a rabbit you did not raise.

This is not a formal rule, but it is nevertheless well accepted. Always include the pedigreed name of the rabbit when discussing it (this includes the breeder prefix). The pedigreed name is generally regarded as sufficient (e.g. Flynn's Suspicious Minds) but you can always include the full name of the breeder and the rabbitry as well if you would like.

2. DO NOT change the name of a rabbit you buy.

Unless a breeder gives you permission, you should never rename rabbits you buy. I think when dealing with children this can be a bit tricky as their rabbit may not be just a show animal, but also a pet.

I think it might help to relate this idea to the AKC world. If you buy an AKC registered dog from a breeder, it likely had some silly name. And assuming you bought the dog as a pet you likely renamed the animal. No harm is really done here. And the same would be true if you bought a rabbit and never showed it or bred it and it remained only a pet.

But if you are showing or breeding the rabbit, it is being introduced to the rabbit world. Other breeders will learn of your wins and wonder where that animal came from. Or since you did not acknowledge the breeder they might make an assumption that you raised the animal. If you credit that rabbit as Mr. Snuggles and not as Flynn's Suspicious Minds (made up example) you are not giving credit to the original breeder. As you can see, this relates directly to the first point I tried to make.

Please remember that of course no one can (or should) dictate your behavior in the privacy of

your own home. In reality, as long as you keep the pedigreed name and refer to the rabbit publicly by it...whatever name you refer to the rabbit in private is nothing more than a nickname.

Exceptions:

I strongly believe there is no exception to rule #1. However, rule #2 can occasionally be broken if the original breeder explicitly says you can rename the rabbit. Some breeders will actually even have it spelled out in their sales policy that it is okay. I do not believe that to be the norm, but I know some people do allow changes.

Personally, I would not give a rabbit a name without consulting the breeder first. Some breeders prefer to refer to their rabbits by ear number, not name, and I think that should be respected (e.g. Flynn's KFA1). Additionally, what happens if the breeder already has a rabbit by the name you have selected? It does not take much effort to consult the original breeder first.

Why is this so important?

Basically, the golden rule applies...treat people as you wish to be treated. Once someone has spent time, money and energy raising their own animals, I think that person can easily understand why we all want acknowledgement for our hard work. As a breeder my rabbit is a reflection of not just my herd, but of me as well even after it leaves my possession.