

AGING: WHY RABBITS CANNOT BE SHOWN FOREVER

Provided by Blue Ribbon Rabbitry

The concept of aging and deterioration of show quality is very simple. Absolutely every time I explain it to someone I can see the light bulb go off in their head. I explain it to people using human concepts regarding aging. Just think of it this way: Humans are "in their prime" in terms of beauty for a certain period of time...late teens and 20s. If you look at the Miss America contestants they are all 20 something year old ladies. At a point, things start going south. I am not saying an older woman cannot be beautiful. But ask absolutely any woman (or man!) and they will admit that our bodies definitely start to change at a certain point and continue to change as we age more and more.

Rabbits are the same way! They are not going to stay young and gorgeous forever. Now remember that rabbits have a much shorter life span than humans. If you think about it, it's really not shocking that a rabbit might be in its "show prime" for only a few months.

We can apply similar principles to breeding. Any woman who is a mother can tell you that her body changed from pregnancy. It is no wonder then that a rabbit's body will change from the process of gestation, birth and nursing of a litter of rabbits (multiples!).

Of course, there are the Jennifer Lopez's of the world that look absolutely amazing in their 40's and have had kids. But let's be honest. Those people are exceptionally rare. Also, if you asked one of those gorgeous women I am sure she would still be able to list an array of bodily things that have changed for the worse as she has gotten older.

There are definitely some exceptions. Again, just like Jennifer Lopez, some rabbits regardless of the breed are going to bounce back after babies and/or to hold their show prime longer than others. Some breeds are more likely to be shown for a greater length of time (think: Hollands and Dwarfs). Other breeds are less likely to lose flesh and will be able to more readily bounce back after a litter (think: New Zealands).

Nevertheless, I think it safe to say that *in general* you should not anticipate being able to purchase a show rabbit and have that rabbit remain competitive year after year. And certainly NO animal is able to be competitive indefinitely. For this reason, showing rabbits competitively is really not a hobby fit for people who are not able or interested in breeding and raising their own rabbits.

Please note the word "competitively" in the last sentence of the last paragraph. Many people just want to show their pet rabbit and have fun. Others want to engage in contests not related to conformation, such as hopping or agility. That is 100% fine! Those are very valid reasons to own and show rabbits. In that case, none of this really applies. This post is more geared towards those wanting to win and wondering how they can have that edge.