

Interviewer: Allison Schaeding

Interviewee: Troy and Jill Ihrke

Date of Interview: April 6, 2021

Breeder Interview

1. Do you use DQ rabbits in your breeding program?

Jill and Troy keep certain DQs, but not all. They don't keep any white ears or eyespots.

2. Do you use crocs, watering systems, or bottles for watering your rabbits?

The Ihrke's have a watering system that's automatic gives their rabbits soft water.

3. Do you see yourself breeding dutch through the future?

Jill's Response: Yes, the goal is to always improve the breed.

Troy's Response: Try to improve breed specifically Chocolates.

4. What markings are you currently struggling with in your barn?

Jill's Response: You can tell who's babies they are based on the markings that the babies have.

Troy's Response: It depends on the line there are certain struggles in each line.

Chinchillas like to be narrow. Looking for those cookie-cut markings.

5. What is your favorite variety? Why?

Jill's Response: Blue, Steel, and Chinchilla

Troy's Response: Chocolate

6. What variety of Dutch did you start with?

Troy's Response: Steel and Chocolate

Jill's Response: Black. Jill got a doe first and went back later to get a buck.

7. Where do you see the dutch breed in 10 years?

Troy's Response: Still breeding, hopefully, and hopefully we can grow the breed and grow the popularity of the breed.

Jill's Response: Chins will be more competitive with other varieties. Since Chins help steels, adding more varieties that bring out more in the other varieties will be helpful.

8. Do you believe that the new CODs for Dutch (Lilac and Gold) will be passed?

Troy's Response: It's up to the board of the standards committee.

Jill's Response: Jill hopes so since they've added some varieties that support others. Accepting it looking at it the way it is, is the key. Jill has been in dutch for 30 years. Back when she was in 4-H, torts and grays looked like Belgian hares! It took about 10 years of breeders taking on the variety to get the torts and grays we know today. When you have to put color and markings together, show you're moving forward. Strive to make the varieties better.

9. What's one thing in your barn that you do to help your herd?

Jill's Response: Always two eyes better than one! Squabbling to get honest opinions are important. Asking "Are you better than your parents to keep moving forward?", If yes then they keep it. Especially during chin COD, this was the case. Asking if they're better than the generation before opens it up if there are limited holes. Since Jill and Troy raise different colors, when both agree it's a hot rabbit, it's a hot rabbit.

10. What drew you to dutch rabbits?

Jill's Response: Her very first was steel pair was not pedigreed. She bought a black doe and went to show and kept winning her classes. So she went back and got a buck. It helped with her confidence to raise the breed.

Troy's Response: Troy had lops first. Youth breed Nick Wayner in his ear about Dutch. Told him that at about three days old you can tell it's showable. It convinced him to start looking for a Dutch.

Fun fact: Jill is from the West Coast and Troy is from Minnesota. There's a difference in desired body type depending on where you're located. So Jilly and Troy both look for different things when looking at the body type.

Thank You for Participating in the MDRC Breeder Interviews.

This Interview was done over the phone so the responses are sometimes in 3rd person.