

Interviewer: Allison Schaeding

Interviewee: Dan Schwandt

Date of Interview: April 7, 2021

Breeder Interview

1. Where did you get your first dutch rabbit?

I received my first Dutch, a chocolate doe, from my parents who were raising rabbits.

2. You're known for your tortoise dutch, what is it you like best about this variety?

Tort Dutch are the best! I love the orange bunnies bouncing out of the nestbox. Many are quick to giving a critique of the torts based only on the cleanliness and brightness of the orange color on top without even seeing the underside. Important to breed for a balance of color on the complete rabbit. It's not easy but the fun is in the challenge.

3. What other breeders have impacted your showing and had an influence on you?

As a kid, my parents were the biggest influence on the rabbits, making sure I was always caring for them, paying the feed bill, and hauling me to swaps and shows. My main focus was breeding for pets with the best marked being kept for breeding stock, fair, and the few local shows. I got back into Dutch after college, I stopped at Sue Strandwitz's house in 2003, on the way to visit friends. I brought about a dozen of my Dutch along for her to evaluate for type, she only picked 2 1/2 out of them to keep. I had always kept them based on markings but needed to learn how to select for type. I took those rabbits home and continued to feel them till I learned how to pick for a body.

Theresa, my wife, has certainly made the greatest impact on my Dutch. As we go through the rabbits to pick who we keep and who we cull, it's easy to agree on the good ones but we often disagree on others as we have different qualities we focus on and desire.

4. Do you like NDS or ARBA Convention better?

It often depends on the location of the show as to which I like better. NDS has so much going on in a short amount of time that you miss out on things but I like it's all Dutch. The ARBA Convention is always a day too long and should be shortened. I do enjoy going out with other breeders each night to talk rabbits during Convention.

5. What is your fondest memory of your dutch rabbits?

My fondest moments in rabbits are watching my kids having success in Dutch.

6. What has been the biggest litter you have ever had and raised in your barn?

Not sure the biggest litter. We often have some with 12 each year and we currently have a doe that has had 13. Have had a doe raise 12 years ago but now I thin the litters to 4-7 depending on the time of year.

7. What advice would you give to someone just starting out in dutch?

One should learn about the breed and what is desired by the SOP. Watch the Dutch being judged several times to see how to evaluate, what to look for, and who's animals stand out for top quality. Don't just find anyone with rabbits for sale. Sometimes you have to wait to get quality. Talk to the breeders that do well in the show, they may

not have any available there but are more willing to help find you some when impressed by the individual. When you get your Dutch, show for a little while then BREED THEM! Your fellow breeders have a greater respect for those breeding their stock rather than continuing to buy more for their show string. Plus, you'll take a much greater pride in your success when it comes, while learning from mistakes along the way.

8. Is there a memorable moment at a rabbit show that you will never forget?

I raised Dutch for many years with very little to no success in showing, took about 20 years before I earned the first leg. I liked the Dutch but hadn't learned what to breed for. I was no threat at shows, others enjoyed the extra points I brought them. I will always remember the Wisconsin State Convention, which always had over 100 open Dutch back then, when I took Best of Breed and the reaction by Warren Wiltman. Warren had a herd of Dutch of tremendous quality back then and won many of the shows. I'm sure I was the last person he was worried about losing to that day.

9. How many National Dutch Shows have you attended?

I have attended all the National shows, except for Rhode Island, since 2004.

10. Currently, How many dutch rabbits do you have?

Currently, we have less than one hundred Dutch in our breeding herd which contains all seven varieties.

Thank You for Participating in the MDRC Breeder Interviews.