

Though Dave and I have been involved with Dutch rabbits for many years, we actually have only been raising them for three years. Prior to that, the rabbits belonged to Kristy Grinold (Hume) which she kept at our house. We participated in her hobby, but she had the decision making and control of her rabbits. We learned a lot from her, but keep in mind; we are actually very new at raising them ourselves.

1. What is your fondest memory of the Dutch rabbit?

Julie: When I married Dave, Kristy sold all her rabbits and got into showing horses. After a few years she decided to get back into rabbits, we bought a trio from Tommy D. One of them was a junior doe that was very nice. We went to our first show (my very first rabbit show) and she won best of breed with that rabbit. Then this strange guy (Herb Six) chased her around asking where she bought that rabbit. The next week the rabbit was DQd for stray white hairs, but we were already hooked.

Dave: Traveling across the country for rabbit shows, meeting new friends and talking with old friends, but winning our 1st “Best in Show” was pretty good too!

2. What do you look for in a herd buck?

Julie: Body type is first consideration. You will never find a perfect Dutch, but purchase the best you can afford. Evaluate your brood does; what do they need to improve the breed? If you have a number of low shoulders, don't buy a buck with low shoulders no matter how great he is in all other considerations. If you buy or raise a herd buck that is NOT improving your line, cut your losses and buy something better. A herd buck has the biggest impact on your line. If you get a good son from your herd buck, test him for what he produces before you replace his sire.

Dave: Best type, best markings you can find.

3. How would you breed to clean up markings?

Julie: Evaluate your does to what buck to breed them to. If your doe has low cheeks, don't breed to a low cheek buck. Keep track of what markings your buck tends to throw.

Dave: Do breedings that counteract marking flaws, avoid breeding rabbits with the same faults.

4. How do you keep your rabbits in condition?

Julie: Buy the freshest food available; learn to check dates on the bag. Don't switch feeds on a whim; it will impact your herd for about a year. Clean, fresh water is vital too.

Dave: We use jumping bars in the cages; the rabbits have to jump back and forth for food and water. This encourages condition over the top line.

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

Julie: Set time aside to get your show rabbits out frequently, handle and pose them. I handle babies occasionally while in the nest box and more often as they come out. Once they are weaned, I pose them a lot to get them used to what I want them to do. But I handle all the show rabbits, just to refresh and keep track of who is in condition. I do morning chores and when I am done, I get three to four rabbits out each morning.

Dave: Cleaning and ventilation. Keep the bottom of the cage clean; remove loose poop & hair, cleaning bowls out weekly. Ventilation is a big factor in the summer and winter. Cross ventilation in the summer and exhaust fan on timer in winter for good air quality.

6. Where do you see the Dutch breed in the future?

Julie & Dave: We think we will see more varieties approved. I have mixed feelings about this, I like the colors, but I am not a fan of using other breeds to attempt new colors. I am more in favor of naturally occurring color. We have enough trouble getting correct body type without introducing other breeds.

7. What do you most enjoy about being an ADRC/MDRC member?

Julie: I love going to the big shows, National Dutch Show and ARBA Convention. You really get a feel of how your rabbits stack up against top breeders. And I like the opportunity to purchase quality stock.

Dave: I like to talk to people from across the county.

8. Has there been 1 rabbit that has made a huge difference to your rabbitry?

Julie & Dave: We would choose Webster, who is our oldest herd sire. Webster was an OK show rabbit, has decent type, nice head, decent markings, nothing wow worthy. BUT, he rarely throws mismarks, on numerous does he will throw entire litters of show marked rabbits. And he out produces himself, his babies tend to be better than he is. Unfortunately, he tends to throw does, so we haven't gotten a son I like better than him.