

Interviewer: Allison Schaeding

Interviewee: Kevin Hooper

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Interview

1. What drew you to the dutch rabbit? I wasn't drawn to the Dutch, it came to me. My brother brought home a mismarked black doe from one of his friends when I was 8. That was my first Dutch. They took off from there.

2. Is there a memorable moment at a rabbit show that you will never forget? Winning Best In Show in 2006 at the ARBA Convention in Ft Worth, TX. Didn't know how to react to that win!

3. What is the farthest you've traveled to show your rabbits? Pleasanton, California for the 1993 NDS, and Portland, Oregon for the 2015 ARBA Convention.

4. How many National Dutch Shows have you attended? I'm not sure. Attended my first show in 1982 in Hutchinson, Kansas. I think I have had rabbits at every NDS since then, although I didn't attend in 1986 and 1987 maybe? The NDS was in Des Moines, Iowa, and somewhere in Texas in those years I think? I also could not attend in 2008 in Illinois as my wife was due to have our second daughter about that time.

5. What is one thing you do to help your herd as a whole? I cull for "Fancy" looking Dutch. Looking like a Florida White with markings is not what I want. To have a good shaped head, thick ear, bold eye and good bone are a must.

6 What do you most enjoy about being an ARBA Judge? Seeing good quality animals in different breeds and how different areas are stronger in some breeds than they are in others.

7. Has there been one rabbit that has had a huge influence on your herd? I can think of three actually. CJ13 was a \$4 gray JR buck I bought at our

county fair in about 1979. He not only won a bunch, but he produced a bunch a few years after I started. Those were my foundation.

Then, I bought a tort buck from Todd Uran in about 1992. He had brought me one that he liked. I liked the ugly cull he had in with some other breed. The fur had been chewed off of one side of it's face, but it was what I wanted. He was the foundation of my torts and produced Kt139 - "The Old Man" - tort buck. He ended up with 52 legs. His last win was at the ARBA Convention in Louisville where he won the Sr Buck class at 5 1/2 years old. He was a mutant. Lastly, X14 who I bought from David Stuart at the ARBA Convention in Indianapolis around 2012? He was 100% my stock and he produced bunches of good ones for not only me, but everyone I loaned him to.

8. What are some of your favorite rabbit shows during the year?

Pennsylvania State Convention, all Ohio Dutch Shows and the NDS. I like the ARBA Convention, but prefer the others.

9. What is something you learned from another breeder that has stuck with you? I can think of two things. I bought a couple of my first Dutch from Elmer Hand in Lancaster, Ohio. He taught me how to groom them using a hack saw blade and Groom and Clean, a men's hair care product. I still use both to this day. The other thing that comes to mind is some advice from ADRC Hall Of Fame member Jack Wireman. He told me to keep torts that I got in color when they were young as they will darken as they age.

10. What advice would you give to youth just starting in the dutch breed?

Start with only a few rabbits and only a couple of colors. Grow slowly and learn how they develop and what works, or doesn't work, before getting many of the colors of Dutch. Most of our colors of Dutch can breed the same color to the same color, if you start with ones that have good color.

