

Interviewer: Allison Schaeding

Interviewee: Todd Biddle

Date: April 20, 2020

## Interview

### 1. What is your fondest memory of your dutch?

I love the litter project I do with my student each year. I love watching their excitement as they nurse the newborn kits on the does and take full responsibility for the welfare of their litter. I am also equally excited to watch the Dutch jump over the hurdles in my Assisted Animal Therapy sessions my students conduct.

### 2. How do you keep good coats on your rabbits?

Selection for good coated rabbits is key. You're looking for length, texture, and density. However, you study the molt patterns in each rabbit too. I have torts that molt once a year and come back into coat within days. Rabbits who have long molts are culled. I groom my show string by spitting on my hand and then rubbing the spit into the coat. The natural enzymes of the spit help catalyze the dead hair and lift it. I never use any products other than if I have to clean some dirt off the coat.

### 3. What do you look for in a herd buck?

In my barn, balance is key. I like rabbits that are strong in type, fur, and markings. If you had excellent type, but poor markings or a dq, I would cull. If a rabbit is good to excellent in all three they have a higher probability of making the cut. I typically do very well on the show table and I credit my success to this way of thinking.

Now, as I use different bucks, I create different challenges that need fixed. So, as I look for a new herd buck, I look for a balanced buck that is exceptional in the trait I am trying to fix. Right now in torts I am working on head shape and fullness of hindquarters. I am a purist, so I do not cross colors and try to fix the challenges with other rabbits available or raised in the color I am breeding.

### 4. What do you most enjoy about being an ADRC member?

I very much enjoy being a director and the chair of the youth committee. I am very disappointed with the negative energy seen on Facebook these days. I am a doer...I put actions behind my words. A lot of people just like to complain, but never really do anything to make a difference. Leadership is important to me as I teach it to my students.

### 5. What are some of your long term goals as a breeder?

To keep the spark for the breed alive. While my rabbitry is competitive, there are many variables that can impact a national win. If I like what I put on the table, I am happy. I am honored when top breeders ask me for their next herdbuck! My focus is to maintain a herd that is strong from one year to the next despite any challenge I may face as a breeder. I have strong christian beliefs. The focus of my herd is based on my love for the rabbit, never trying to outdo someone else. If I do right by my rabbits and make good choices, god will reward me with success!

6. How many National Dutch Shows have you attended?

I have exhibited at every National Dutch show since 2010. I took a break from rabbits two years prior, but attended several national shows prior.

7. What is your favorite show of the year?

Not one in particular...I love traveling out of the area to exhibit. It is very important to embrace competition. It tells you where you stand at the National level. Some people are happy doing well in their local area, but me I like to step it up a notch and see how I fare against the best of the best.

8. Do you currently have AOVs in your barn?

No, but I love golds.

9. You're known for your chocolates, what do you like best about them?

I love the dark chocolate color! I would even venture to say few breeders have chocolates as dark as mine. I could never really figure out my fascination with chocolates and torts, until one day a horse friend made a comment. We have red sorrels and blondes (the Belgian term for more Palomino appearing horses). Dad always culled any horse without a blaze. In our hitch, we work hard to establish uniformity. In my goat barn, all my goats are white. So, there are a number of things that attract me to the prettiest creature on earth--the Dutch rabbit. I have tried other breeds, but I am pretty much convinced Dutch are the only breed for me.

10. What has kept you dedicated to the dutch breed?

I have made some wonderful friends who have impacted my life in many different ways. When I got back into Dutch in 2010, I was an Atheist. The friendships I rekindled and good people I have met have helped me rekindle and connect with my Christian upbringing. Some of my rabbit friends are my BEST friends. Their actions show me time and time again I am loved.