

A March Through ACBA History

CAVY STANDARD CHANGES The First 25 Years

By Carol Sandler
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The year was 1944, the country was at war in Europe and in the Pacific. Rationing was the name of the game - food, gas, tires. What a time to raise cavies (hardly a food source) and to try to hold shows.

This was the year (in February/March) that the ACBA became officially organized and was affiliated with the American Rabbit & Cavy Breeders Association. All memberships to the ACBA had to be recommended by an ACBA member and if there were any objections, the memberships would be voted on by the Board. Memberships cost \$1.00.

The First Edition of the Official Guide Book of the ACBA was published in 1945. Although the war was still in progress and funds were tight, the Guide Book contained 102 ads, most 1/2 page or full page size. Do you support the ACBA as well today?

Of the people listed in the ads, I only recognize one, Emma Parks (wife of the late Ernie Parks - a Cavy Judge who was on the first Board of Directors) advertising her Black "English" cavies. Here are some interesting facts from 1945:

Cavies were show in 3 Breeds- Abyssinian, English and Peruvian. They were shown only in Junior (Under 4 mo. and not over 22 ounces) Senior (over 4 months) classes.

There was also the Working Standard for "Giant White English Cavies," shown only in white, one class (no Juniors or Seniors). Minimum weight was 48 oz. for Boars and 42 oz. for Sows. Type stressed well developed shoulders.

Although the Abys were accepted in Black, Cream, Golden Agouti, Red, TSW, White, Broken Color - they were only shown in groups as Broken or Solids (I'm not sure where the Golden Agoutis were shown). Peruvians were shown in 2 Groups as Solids (in Black, Cream, Red, White) and in Broken Color (any 2 or more colors). The terms of "Self" and "Solid" were used opposite of the way they are used today, i.e., as Solid Red and Self Golden & Silver.

"English" were shown in most of the colors we have today except there were NO Brindles, Roans, REO's, or Dals. Also, Cinnamon were shown instead of Dilutes in Agouti and no solid in Cinnamon, although there were solids in Silver & Golden. Beige and Lilac were being shown under Working Standards in the English breed only. In English, each variety was shown separately. The Standard had most of the varieties covered by an article on breeding tips from a prominent breeder. Ernie Parks wrote on the TSWs - as at the time he seemed to be doing quite well with them (his full page ad showed a TSW "My Baby", which it was noted had won 10 shows and had never been beaten). There are only one small picture each of the Abyssinian & Peruvian- the quality of these breeds seems very poor. There are black and white photos of all of the different varieties in the English breed. The pictures of the Red, Dutch and TSW English are of animals that would be very competitive on the table today.

As we skip through time to the 1967 Guidebook, we see that more colors have been added: TortoiseShell (with "small patches, the smaller and more uniform the better"), Solid Cinnamon,, Blue, REO, Brindle. Although all three breeds may shown in any of the accepted colors, Abys and Peruvians are still grouped into Solids and Broken. We now have added Intermediates (4 - 6 months of age and 22 ounces up to 30 ounces). No picture of an Aby (just a drawing) and one picture of a fairly good Peruvian. Only four very small pictures of Americans (no longer called "English") which seem to show improvement in type on the American and a good TSW.

By 1970, we have reached more current terminology within our colors. Selfs are now Black, White, etc. The term Solid is now applied to Solid Silvers, Solid Goldens, Solid Cinnamon. Still no Roans or Dalmatians. This Guide book has more pictures that the 1967 Guide, showing improvement in type. The Abys and Peruvians are no longer grouped and are shown by varieties.

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