

ACBA: Husbandry

## HOW TO KNOW IF YOUR CAVY IS IN SEASON

by Julie Wright

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Cavy heat periods are quite obvious and easy to detect. Cavies come into season or heat about every 18 days and stay in season for about two days. It is only during this time that they can be bred and conceive.

When a sow is not in heat, there is what appears to be a transparent membrane sealing the entrance to the vagina. When a sow comes into heat, this membrane disappears and the area is usually red and swollen. The easiest way to learn to recognize heat is to check your own sows until you find one that fits this description.

**SOW EXHIBITING CLOSURE:** Vent appearance when not in heat; vaginal entrance sealed by membrane.



**SOW EXHIBITING ESTROUS:** vent appearance when in heat; membrane is gone, and the area deepens in color and is swollen.



It is handy to be able to detect heat when you are trying to save a coat or flesh condition for showing, but still want to breed the animal. You can put the pair together a few minutes at a time over the duration of the sow's heat. You can keep showing a boar indefinitely this way and a sow can safely be shown through her fourth week of pregnancy.

Knowing the exact due date of your litters makes the waiting a bit easier. It can also prove valuable if a

sow gets into trouble littering. Knowing when she is due can avoid false alarms and premature C-sections and help you make the difficult decision whether to try to save a litter (if it isn't full term, forget it)I have only a few Abys now that I keep as pets, so I haven't used this method of breeding extensively. I hope other breeders who have (perhaps those of you who raise Peruvians) will write to give us some additional information.

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