

YOU MIGHT BE AT THE 2006 BRADFORD EXCEL SMALL LIVESTOCK SHOW IF....

Editor's Note: *The Bradford Show has been held in England since 1921 and features cavies, mice, rabbits and other livestock. It is considered to be one of the most famous small livestock events in the world. Several of our ACBA members went to the 2006 show last January, including Margo Purdy, who provides the following list of observations surrounding the title of this piece, "You might be at the 2006 Bradford Excel Small Livestock Show if..."*



by Margo Purdy

There are no SUVs in the parking lot.

You buy an admission ticket at the door.

You sense that you are in an important place where competition and respect for the animals abound; and you are very happy to be there!

Judging takes place for rabbits, cavies, hamsters, gerbils, rats, and mice.

The only people you recognize are wearing green polo shirts with the ACBA emblem.

You find yourself "parked" in front of the Winking Cavy Store booth.

Peter Gurney is present.

You can have a tall cold one with lunch in the same building as the show! Beer AND a cavy show -- a dream come true??

The mini cafeteria lines and dining area offer a superior eating experience (enhanced by the previously mentioned option if that excites you).

Transport cages are wooden and are called boxes.

The coops are identified by a number, but there is no additional information displayed about the occupant.

The Show Catalog is a magazine one can purchase after the show has begun and it lists all exhibitors. With this and the results list posted on the wall, it is possible to learn who owns individual pigs.

There are both Teddies and Rexes, but you MIGHT not be able to tell them apart.

There are American Cresteds (white cresteds) and English Cresteds (self cresteds), but you can tell THEM apart.

There are few long-haired cavies.

Long-haired exhibitors may choose from several different show boards.

Texels, Alpacas, and Merinos are shown without ringlets -- intentionally, due to preferred presentation and grooming style.

There is so much to observe about the colors that it will require an article all its own!

Cavies are entered in classes "Adult," "5-8," or "Under 5."

With the exception of Black Americans, boars and sows compete in the same class.

The term for the youth exhibitors and their show is "Juveniles."

Juveniles may enter the same cavy in the open show and the Juveniles show.

At the height of the activity there are about 8 judging tables going at once.

Ear tags are not used. Judging is done by coop number taped on ear.

A scale is not evident.

Long-haired cavies are brought up and monitored by their owners with grooming tools in hand. The judge may use a comb as a judging aid.

For other breeds, stewards carry the cavies to and from the show table and ownership is to remain anonymous. Rules require that stewards carry only one cavy at a time.

The judging pens are wooden and resemble straight stalls. They are sized adequately for most cavies, but a white senior from SLM surely could not be extracted from one without the use of kitchen utensils.

The judging tables are all one height, but there is a box on which the judge may place the pig(s) to examine them.

While the front half of the cavy is often posed/set-up, the position of the back half is left to chance and the whim of the animal.

The judge's remarks and placements are recorded in a spiral bound notebook by the

book steward.

The judge makes oral comments for the book steward, but these are not intended for the spectator.

The Best in Show judging has a moderator with a microphone and he announces placements - pigs and owners - as given to him on the judging sheet. The Judge does not speak to the audience.

The thrill and pleasure of watching the show is only slightly diminished by your confusion:

There are divisions called "Self," meaning any self colored animal who is English Shorthair/Smooth Coat/American (choose your term); and "Non-self," meaning EVERYTHING else.

The noun "Breed" does not translate well across the pond.

This means that further attempts to discuss colors/classes/groups is best left to someone who understands both the English system and the American system.

There are classes called "Challenge" and "Support" and probably others!

You aren't sure of the path that the BIS contenders took to get themselves to the Best in Show table.

Also, the origins of the group put up for Reserve in show is unclear.

You are not certain if the 1st place from the Reserve in show class or the 2nd place of the Best in Show class represents the higher achievement.

NONETHELESS, you have confidence that the cavy who is chosen Best in Show has been selected under procedures that allow the best one to rise to the top and be so recognized. The winners are excited and it is a pleasure to watch!

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MANY THANKS to my cohorts: Heather Bondra, the Haileys, and the DeHavens.

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