

ACBA: Husbandry

TIPS FOR PRODUCING BETTER SHOW ANIMALS

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All varieties of cavies come in different shades. Young animals will always appear darker at birth and gradually fade as they mature. The most common mistake in showing cavies is how to determine exactly what color the entry animal is during the intermediate stage. At that time, their color at the end of the coat may be their baby color and the base of the coat will be their true color with maturity. Reds, Lilacs and Creams are well known for this (both longhairs and shorthairs).

Goldens are very light orange with dark eyes. They are not creams. Goldens are accepted England as a variety. Here in the U.S., Goldens are not showable. Be careful- you may have a light red/white baby born out of a crossing of two Cream/White. These babies will become dark Cream/White (almost golden in color) when they get older. Our Standard describes the Cream variety as delicate, the lighter the better (on Americans, Americans, Satins, and Abys).

On longhairs, color is only 5-10 points, so a dark Cream could/ would lose a few points on color. Longhairs are primarily judged on coat texture, density and length. That's what counts the most (65 points out of 100).

Peruvians. Another error with exhibitors and breeders occurs when purchasing young animals. They look for the markings rather than the type and coat. If it is possible, ask if they could show you (show card or actual animal) a relative or parent of the baby you wish to buy. Feel the density and texture. Check to see if they or the baby have more than two rosettes on their hips. Are there rosettes on their back. These types of Peruvians must have their coats trained to lay for a better presentation. The higher the rear rosettes are, the more density the rear sweep will have.

Agoutis, like all the other colors, come in different shades. Just because it is not an excellent Golden or Silver does not mean it is a Dilute. Only certain color combinations are accepted in the book of Standards. Ex: An animal has a medium gray base color with a cream tip and dark eyes. Most exhibitors would think this is a Dilute. Lilacs have pink eyes or dark (pink eyes) eyes, not blue or brown eyes. Our Standard has a color description for the Blue coat. They look exactly like a Blue Jersey (darker on face and lighter on body color with blue eyes). Silver genes and Dals have blue eyes. Some have a red cast to them and some don't. Therefore, this Dilute is not showable. It's not a Dilute, Golden, or Silver. It's a Blue pig with a Cream tip.

Another example: I saw an exhibitor showing the most faded Silver Agouti as a Dilute. It was a faded out Silver. The base color was as silver as could be, it was not Lilac or Gray. It could be shown as a Silver, but it would lose points on color. Again, it is not a Dilute.

Reds. The darker the Red color, the more likely it will have black ears. This is caused from breeding Red to Black. Reds should be bred to dark and I mean super dark Chocolates, not milk chocolate, or cappuccino chocolate or chocolates that look almost Black. A Hershey chocolate that looks Chocolate from across the room is the best way to improve Reds. No doubt or question on what a good Chocolate looks like.

Remember, all young animals are darker in youth and fade as they get older. Solid Agouti (Golden) are born almost Black. Their ticking improves gradually as they mature. And like all the agoutis, the ears and feet should not have any white or light color spots or markings. Check the feet. They should be ticked like the rest of the body. The narrower the belly band, the better.

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