

ACBA: Breeds and Varieties

PERUVIANS

(From the 1974 ACBA Guidebook)

Peruvians provide perhaps the greatest challenge to the breeder's skill for they require all the careful breeding that goes into any show quality cavy, as well as skill in grooming and show preparation. The challenge is well worth the effort, since a good Peruvian in show coat is a great satisfaction, as well as quite a sight to behold.

In selecting Peruvian stock, you are looking for many of the qualities found in any show cavy; good body condition, good type, and good health with vigorous growth. A Peruvian that stays small in body may show well as a youngster, but never achieves the size necessary to show its coat off to best advantage.

In a Peruvian, you are also looking for coat quality. A baby Peruvian should have a very silky coat. The coat should also have good density, which can be felt by stroking the coat against the direction of hair growth. Beware of false density. A cavy with a coarse coat will feel denser than it is.

Once you have a youngster of high quality, you must groom it to show it off to advantage. Grooming starts at an early age. You should handle the animal when it is a youngster and brush it periodically even if the coat is not long enough to need it. This gets the animal used to handling and brushing.

When the coat is about three inches long, it is time to start wrapping it. In order to wrap the coat, you take a piece of paper about 2 1/2 to 3 inches square. You fold it into three sections. Put the hair from the rear

sweep into the middle section and fold the two side panels over the hair. You then fold the paper up to form a package about 1 inch square. You fasten the package with a rubber band. When the cavy is adjusted to its rear wrapper, you repeat the same procedure on each side. Do not try to put a wrapper in the head furnishings. The cavy will try and very often succeed in getting out of his wrappers. Perseverance at this stage is a necessity.

At least one week before you show an animal, it should be bathed. This can be done in a sink using warm water and dish soap, or baby shampoo. The cavy is thoroughly soaped and then rinsed completely free of any remaining suds. The easiest way to dry a cavy is with a hot comb or a hair dryer that has a hose.

When washing, it is important, to make sure that you do not get the hair tangled in the cavy's feet. It is important to make sure that the cavy is completely dry before you try to brush or re-wrap the coat.

Peruvians require a little extra attention. Solid floors are a good idea for animals in show coat. Many Peruvians become nervous on wire floors and chew their coats. Two other aids to prevent chewing are hay and Calf Manna. Hay adds roughage to the diet and gives the Peruvian something to chew on when it is bored besides its coat. Since a Peruvian's coat is protein, a high protein supplement, such as Calf Manna gives the animal an extra source of this important nutrient.

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