

Rabbit Education Society Breeder and Pet Owner Survey Results

Nov 1998-Jan 1999 Results

The survey consisted of 38 questions (#38 was for comments) on a variety of breeder issues. 1-7 focused on length of breeding experience & organization membership. 8-16 focused on breeding practices and husbandry. 17-26 dealt with legislative issues and animal rights. After question 26 I asked those who didn't raise or sell pet rabbits to end the survey and submit their answers. 27-37 focused on pet rabbit issues such as sales volume and price, take back policies, care instructions, and programs breeders would like ARBA to undertake. Since this was on-line and advertised on both my web site and on Showbunny the respondents are likely hobby show breeders and I believe the results show that. For those who have participated in this survey I thank you for your time. Anyone wishing to publish the results in a magazine or newsletter please contact me for my permission.

What this survey does show is that the majority of breeders do take good care of their animals and do their best to make sure pets wind up in responsible homes. The results also point out that there is no money in pet sales and most of these breeders are pursuing rabbit breeding as a hobby, not a business. I was surprised at some of the results, mainly that so many provide written instructions and take back policies. I'm sure the rabbit rescuers out there will be pleased to see that breeders do work to educate their buyers.

The Results:

1) The length of time breeding varied from a low of 3 months to a high of 35 years (2 breeders).

0-4 yrs: 32%

5 yrs- <10 yrs: 32%

10 yrs & up: 36%

2) Where do you live? Responses came from all over the US which was very nice to see

3) 90% were ARBA members

4) 76% were members of a National Breed Specialty Club

5) Only 1 was a member of House Rabbit Society

7) Member of a: State All Breed Club 53%

State Specialty Club: 39%

Local All Breed Club: 39%

None of the above: 28%

8) Do you Breed Rabbits For:

Show 90%

Pets 65%

Meat 38%

Wool 15%

Fur 14%

9) Do you breed rabbits primarily:

As a hobby 85%

As a Business 8%

Both: 7%

10) Do you believe there is a pet rabbit overpopulation crisis?

67% No

21% Yes

13% Maybe

12) Do you provide toys? 79% Yes

13) Do you provide exercise? 78% Yes **Only 11% provide neither toys or exercise

14) Would you take a sick rabbit to the vet (assuming it was treatable but beyond your ability to treat) 81% said Yes and another 3% said their local vets calls them for consultation on sick rabbits

15) Do you consider a non-breeding or show quality rabbit to be inferior as a pet? 11% Yes *3 said depends or maybe. 89% said no showing the vast majority of breeders don't look down on pets, but we already knew that.

16) Factors you consider when breeding your rabbits: Health 94%, Improve your line & breed 94%, Breed towards the standard 92%, Temperament 86%, Will breed rabbits with genetic problems: only 1 person checked this off, No consideration just want money: No one chose this.

***78% picked all of the first 4 factors

17) Do you support breeder licensing?

56% No

22% Not sure or need more info

22% Yes

18) **Those that said yes to question 17 did so because they wanted to make sure irresponsible breeders were discouraged. But studies have shown that breeder licensing doesn't prevent irresponsible breeders or abandoned pets.

19) Have you checked your state laws regarding rabbits? 63% No, 38% Yes

20) Local Laws regarding rabbits? 47% No, 53% Yes

21) Do you monitor local government to prevent legislation that would adversely affect rabbits? 46% Yes

22) Do you monitor state and/or Federal government? 33% yes

23) Have you read the Animal Welfare Act? 21% yes

24) Are you required to be licensed under AWA? 4% Yes, 51% No, 44% don't know

25) Have you had problems with ARAs? 17% Yes, 83% No

26) Have you had rabbits stolen? 22% Yes, 78% No **of those 17% from #25 7% answered yes to this question to.

27) Demand for pet rabbits is: 51% Low, 37% Medium, 12% High

28) Do you provide written care instructions? 92% Yes

29) Do you only provide verbal instructions? 8% **Only 1 person provides no instructions

31) Do you have a Take Back Policy if buyer no longer wants the rabbit? 84% Yes

32) Average Number of pet rabbits sold by a breeder: 33-34 *#32-#34 is per year

Breakdown of number sold as pets:

1 to 25 rabbits: 70%
26-50 rabbits: 15%
51-75 rabbits: 7%
over 76 rabbits: 7%

33) Average Number of pet rabbits sold directly to the pet owner: 25-27

34) Average number sold to pet store or other outlet: 18 ***53% don't or won't sell to a pet store

35) Average price for a pet rabbit: \$13-\$19

36) Average price for a show or breeding quality rabbit: \$31-\$61

37) What assistance would you like from ARBA in regard to pet rabbits:

67% Detailed pet care info on ARBA web site

62% National ad campaign promoting buying from a breeder

62% National ad campaign promoting responsible pet ownership

56% More detailed pet care pamphlet

56% Pet rabbit care booklet to sell to buyers

49% Info in Domestic Rabbits about pet care & new pet medical info

6% None of the Above

Breeder Survey II Jan 2000 Results

1. Are you a member of ARBA?

97% said yes

2. What purposes do you raise rabbits for?

Show 96%

Pet 73%

Meat 45%

Wool 15%

Other 11%

Fur 7%

3. Rank in order of primary purpose on down what your culls are used for:

Total:

Meat 53%

Breeding/show 30%

Fur 2%

Pets 78%

Wool 2%

Other 16%

#1 purpose:

Pet	46%
Meat	34%
Breeding/show	14%
Other	1%

#2 purpose:

Pets	24%
Meat	14%
Breeding/show	13%
Other	7%
Wool	2%
Fur	1%

4. How many different breeds do you raise?

1 breed	38%
2 breeds	24%
3 breeds	15%
4 breeds	8%
5+ breeds	14%

5. Average herd size? I broke this down into averages based on the number of breeds

1 breed	27 rabbits
2 breeds	33 rabbits
3 breeds	49 rabbits
4 breeds	74 rabbits
5+ breeds	100 rabbits

6. Average number of litters produced per year

1 breed	14 litters
2 breeds	21 litters
3 breeds	25 litters
4 breeds	37 litters
5+ breeds	60 litters

7. Average number of times you breed a single doe in one year

Once	7%
Twice	33%

Three times	39%
Four times	10%
5 or more times	11%

8. Do you raise rabbits as a hobby? 90%

As a business 5%

Both 5%

9. Do you? Profit 7%

Break even 29%

Lose money 64%

10. Do you provide toys for your bunnies? 80% yes

11. Exercise? 73% yes

12. Do you require a license as per the Animal Welfare Act? None

12a. 6% have had problems with zoning.

12b. The problems include: Numbers restrictions, zoned against, 50' distance from any residential use, neighbor complaints about odor, breeding permit, not allowed to compost waste on property

13. Demand for pet rabbits?

Low 51%

Moderate 44%

High 6%

14. Do you provide written care instructions? 90% yes

15. A take back policy? 88% yes

16. Average number of pet rabbits you sell:

1-10 48%

11-25 30%

26-50 14%

51-75 1%

76-100	1%
100-150	4%
200+	1%

17. How many do you sell to a pet store?

0-will not sell to a pet store: 63%

1-10	23%
11-25	10%
26-50	3%
51-75	0
over 75	1%

18. Average price for a pet rabbit \$15-\$20

19. Average price for breeding or show stock \$33-\$65

Pet Owner Survey Results (10/98-8/99):

Length of time owning rabbits:

45%	0-2 years
17%	over 2-5 years
27%	Over 5-10 years
8%	over 10 years

Where did you get your rabbits:

32%	a pet store
27%	a breeder
15%	Animal Shelter
6%	Rescue group
15%	Gift or other
4%	Stray

Where would you get your next rabbit?

33%	Animal Shelter
42%	Breeder
10%	Rescue Group
7%	Pet Store
7%	Other

*Of respondents who answered yes to knowing the number of rabbits their shelter takes in: half said they would get their next rabbit from a shelter or rescue group 44% said their next rabbit would come from a rabbit breeder None chose a pet store for their next rabbit

76% of the respondents are not members of HRS. Only 24% are

13% are members of ARBA

Do you think breeding & showing rabbits is wrong? 11% yes

Do you think raising rabbits for meat is wrong & should be abolished? 39% yes

Do you believe there is a pet rabbit overpopulation crisis? 39% yes. Unfortunately it appears that the propaganda campaign run by rabbit rightists has worked since 75% of respondents do not know how many rabbits their local shelter takes in.

Do you know how many rabbits your local shelter takes in per year? 25%-yes 75%-no

Are your rabbits spayed or neutered? 44% yes 56% no. I had expected more rabbits to be altered. In addition 40% of respondents who believe in a rabbit overpopulation don't have their rabbits spayed or neutered. Only 79% of the HRS members have their rabbits spayed/neutered despite the groups adamant stand on no more breeding.

Are your rabbits kept indoors or out? 58%-in 20%-out 22%-both. 94% of owners who keep their rabbits indoors are not members of HRS, so I guess that blows the theory out of the water that HRS "invented" the house rabbit. That and the fact that ARBA publications from prior to the HRS book contained information about litterbox training, bunny-proofing, and keeping rabbits indoors.

What are your favorite pet rabbit care books? 51% none, 9% Hop to It, 3% Lops As Pets, 6% Rabbits by Pavia, 31% other (misc titles that didn't garner a high percentage of responses), 3%

New Rabbit Handbook, 3% Dwarf Rabbits by Wegler, 2% Vet Guides, 2% Rabbit Production, 2% ARBA Guidebook,

Favorite Rabbit magazines? 58% None, 12% Rabbits Annual, 10% Domestic Rabbits, 8% Rabbits Only, 3% RNRQ, 3% HRJ, 3% Dwarf Digest, 2% Minilop Advocate, 1% Hollander. What is surprising is that so many have no favorite magazine, also interesting is that most HRS members didn't even list HRJ as a favorite magazine, only 11% of HRS members listed HRJ as a favorite magazine. It was nice to see RNRQ on the list, hopefully more pet owners will give that new magazine a try.

Do you feed rabbit pellets? 99% yes

Do you support breeder licensing? 42%-yes, 32%-no, 26%-not sure Again breeder licensing doesn't ensure breeders are responsible which was the comment given for 'why'. Breeder licensing is also a way for animal rights activists to eventually do away with pet ownership

Respondents that were HRS members: 68% said yes to breeder licensing.

Do you know any breeders? 38%-yes 62%-no

Have you ever been to a rabbit show? 30%-yes 70%-no

What statements about breeders do you think are accurate regarding the majority?

Breed for temperament and health as well as to the standard 51%

Breed & show rabbits for enjoyment 62%

Are responsible and educate buyers 44%

Care about their rabbits and provide toys & exercise 29%

Are greedy & raise rabbits solely for profit? 9%

Are to blame for rabbits ending up in shelters 15%

Breed rabbits with health problems or genetic defects 8%

If you compare some of the answers with the results from the breeder survey you will see the unfortunate misunderstanding some pet owners have about breeders. For example 8% of the pet owners think most breeders breed rabbits with genetic or health problems but from the breeder survey none chose breed rabbits with genetic problems and 94% of breeders said they consider health an important factor when breeding.

Do you know how many rabbits your shelter takes in each year?

25%-yes and 75%-no. Only 16% of respondents saying they know the number of rabbits their shelter takes in also said they believe there is rabbit overpopulation.

What Health problems have your rabbit(s) had? 34% reported 1 or more health problems in their rabbit(s), 66% reported no health problems.

Of the 34% that reported a health problem 61% reported multiple health problems.

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