



**American Rabbit Breeders Assn.**  
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## Rabbit and Cavy Showmanship

### About Showmanship

Showmanship is an important skill that can be used to teach youth about their animals and the judging process. The ARBA method for judging rabbits and cavies is "judge based" not "handler based", as it is for most other animal species. The ARBA judge poses and handles the exhibition animals. The judge is charged with giving the animal an opportunity to be its best. The ARBA Showmanship Standard and contests are designed to teach and demonstrate the participant's ability to properly handle, pose and exhibit their animal. In today's climate, all animal organizations must be mindful of public perception and proper handling and care are an important consideration. It also benefits the youth and other breeders since youth who run through showmanship with their animals before a show, should find most DQ's before they reach the show table.

### When to hold showmanship contests

The ARBA will be holding showmanship contests at the national convention, starting with the younger youth in 2011. We encourage state and local clubs to adopt the standard and hold local contests frequently so that youth are given a year round opportunity to learn these skills and prepare for the national contests. Many clubs have found that holding showmanship contests with their regular shows draws more youth to the show and causes them to be more involved. It also helps build the skills and knowledge that we need in our next generation of judges.

### Judging showmanship

The score sheets were developed to evaluate the manual skills in transporting, handling, and properly posing the animal; and to evaluate the use of proper terminology and knowledge necessary for judging the animal. Showmanship judges should be mindful that they are judging the contestant and not the animal. Showmanship contests should always be a learning experience, so judges should provide written comments to the contestants, which clearly show what they need to practice or learn to improve.

### Study Materials

ARBA has many publications that can help the contestant gain the knowledge they need to be both successful breeders and contestants. Breed clubs and 4-H also have publications which can be quite useful. Some of the ARBA publications are:

*Standard of Perfection 2011- 2016*: Must have- This is the standard by which all rabbits and cavies are judged and includes show rules and proper terminology.

*Raising Better Rabbits and Cavies*: A compendium of articles with in-depth discussions of many important topics.

*Registrar's Study Guide to Rabbits, Registrar's Study Guide to Cavies*: Companion guides to the Standard of Perfection with the information organized uniformly, comparisons of characteristics between breeds and hundreds of sample questions. They include detailed information on writing registration varieties and how to become a registrar or judge.

Breed ID Study Guide: A 5-page excerpt from the Standard of Perfection that discusses Breed identification and writing a registration variety on a pedigree.