

The CAVY Fancy

Presented by

The American Cavy Breeders Association, Inc.

WELCOME! Whatever your interest in cavies, we invite you to share with us in our enjoyment of these small, delightful creatures.

A CAVY (pronounced "K-V") is a domestic guinea pig, enjoyed by generations of pet lovers as an affectionate and interesting companion. Today, the potential cavy owner has several options; you have a choice of several breeds, a selection of varieties (colors); and the chance to own cavies for pets, exhibition, breeding or any combination of these reasons.

BUYING CAVIES: Use the advertisers listed in the pamphlet as a guide in locating stock and obtaining information about cavies. Before you buy, here are a few suggestions:

- (1) Show consideration for the breeder. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope when writing, and when telephoning, take into account time changes and holidays.
- (2) Know your breeder. Check with friends and other breeders in your area before you purchase. If the individual has a good reputation and sells good quality cavies, this counts for a lot.
- (3) Set terms before you buy. Will the seller provide pedigrees? Will he ship? Exactly how much will your shipment cost and how long before you get your animals? Does the seller make any guarantees? Ask questions.
- (4) Know what you want and how much you will spend. Are you looking for show stock, pet animals or breeding stock? What varieties and breeds interest you? Are your expectations reasonable?
- (5) Use common sense, and remember, the Cavy Fancy should be an enjoyable hobby your whole family can participate in. We hope you'll join us!

EXHIBITION: People of all ages and interests enjoy showing cavies. Cavies are judged against a "Standard of Perfection" which describes the desired physical characteristics. They don't have to perform or pose, although some veteran cavies will sit very still while being judged. This is very important for Peruvians and Silkies, who should be trained to stay put and not spoil their painstaking grooming jobs.

Classes are first divided by breed, next by variety and then by sex and size. Junior boars and sows can be up to four months old and weigh a minimum of 12 ounces and a maximum of 22 oz. Intermediate boars and sows are four to six months old and weigh between 22 and 32 oz. Seniors weigh over 32 oz.

Cavies are exhibited in their natural state, without any altering, trimming, dying, etc. No preparations or grooming aids should be detected in the cavy's coat, not even shampoo, so if you must bathe your cavy, do it well before the show.

The ACBA sponsors a sweepstakes contest, which places exhibitors according to points earned during the sweepstakes year (July through June). However, it is not necessary to compete in the Sweepstakes in order to enjoy the experience of showing cavies.

There is a great deal to know about cavies, and space doesn't permit us going into detail, but we'd like to introduce you to some facts about them that may help you decide what your personal interest is.

BREEDS: There are currently eleven accepted breeds of cavies. The term "breed" when applied to cavies is similar to a breed of dogs—a purebred type of animal with distinct characteristics spelled out in a Standard of Perfection. The cavy breeds are as follows:

ABYSSINIAN (or ABY): A challenging breed, having a rough, short coat arranged in rosettes (swirls or cowlicks). The ideal Aby has ten rosettes, evenly positioned over his entire body.

SATIN ABYSSINIAN: The standard is similar to the normal coated Abyssinian except its coat consists of hollow hair shafts giving it a very shiny appearance not unlike that of satin.

AMERICAN: The classic short, smooth-coated cavy. Purebred Americans look much different than what you may have seen in pet shops; the Standard calls for a wide Roman nose and solid cobby body shape, with a soft, glossy coat.

AMERICAN SATIN: The standard is about the same as for the American except for the high sheen the coat must carry. The hair on this animal also consists of the hollow hair shaft which produces the "satin" appearance.

PERUVIAN: Sometimes called the royalty of the cavy world, the Peruvian has a long, silky coat which falls forward over its face. Raising Peruvians takes patience, since the coat must be groomed regularly and wrapped up out of the cavy's way when it is in its cage. The coat, when grown out and groomed, should form a circular shape.

PERUVIAN SATIN: The coat consists of the hollow hair shaft which produces a "satiny" shine. The standard is like that of the normal coated Peruvian with the exception of points awarded for degree of shine.

SILKIE: Similar to the Peruvian in appearance, the Silkie is genetically an American with long hair. The main difference from the Peruvian is that the Silkie's hair grows back and away from its face. Like the Peruvian, the Silkie also requires careful grooming and wrapping. The coat of the Silkie, when properly groomed, should form a teardrop shape.

SILKIE SATIN: The standard is the same as for the normal coated Silkie with the exception of the hollow hair shaft which produces a "satiny" shine and for which there are points awarded.

TEDDY: Named for the teddy bear it resembles, the Teddy cavy has a short, dense, kinky coat that gives a feeling of resiliency when pressed with the open palm.

TEDDY SATIN: Again, the hollow hair shaft produces the "satiny" appearance on which points are awarded. Otherwise, the standard of perfection is like that of the Teddy.

WHITE CRESTED: Similar to the American, but have a single white rosette placed in the center of the forehead. To add to the uniqueness of the Crested, the Standard calls for no white hair to appear anywhere else on the body.

VARIETIES: There are commonly 23 accepted varieties or colors of cavy: Beige, black, blue, chocolate, cream, lilac, red-eyed orange, red, white, dilute agouti, golden agouti, silver agouti, solid dilute, solid golden, solid silver, brindle, roan, broken

color, dalmation, dutch, himalayan, tortoise shell and tortoise shell and white. The White Crested cavy can have no white hair on the body other than the crest; therefore, patterns with white in them are not accepted for this breed.

HOUSING: A good rule of thumb is to allow 2 square feet of space for each cavy you intend to put in the cage. Several sows can be kept together, but until you are breeding, it is best to keep the boar separate from the sows or they will surely get bred over and over again. It is also unwise to keep more than one adult boar in a cage because they will fight. Most breeders remove the father from the breeding cage before a litter is born, because he will chase the sow during or just after she has given birth, and may hurt the young. Check with a breeder in your area about the kind of cages they use. Most breeders recommend a solid-bottom cage, upon which you place newspapers (at least a week old) and then pine shavings, which can be purchased from a feed store. Avoid cedar shavings. They contain resins and fumes which can harm your cavies and stain their coats. In purchasing or constructing a cavy cage, you need to remember a few things: adequate space, sufficient ventilation, freedom from drafts, safety and ease of cleaning. Although cavies will sicken if placed in a draft, they do need air circulation to stay healthy. Hardware cloth or screen sides are helpful in allowing air flow. Make sure you keep all sharp objects tucked away from the cavy. Also build the sides of the cage high enough so the cavy can't leap or climb over the side. Consider the tray at the bottom of the cage...will it be easy for you to lift or slide out to clean? You should do this once or twice a week, so plan ahead. A cavy cage need not be fancy, but a little planning will save you some headaches later.

FEEDING: You can purchase a pelleted cavy ration at your local feed store or pet shop. Try to get fresh pellets, and do not overbuy; storing large amounts of cavy food for periods of time results in a breakdown of vitamins and nutrients in the food. What is the difference between cavy pellets and rabbit pellets besides price? Cavy pellets are usually higher in protein and contain vitamin C. Rabbit pellets don't have vitamin C in them. Beware - If you are going to feed rabbit pellets, you'll have to give vitamin C faithfully. You won't regret investing in a water bottle with a "sipper tube". These usually have a ball bearing at the bottom of the drinking tube. The cavy soon learns to push up on this ball when he wants the water to flow. Open water dishes are a mess; the cavy will walk in them and foul his water, and frequently will dump the whole thing over. If you buy cavies that are accustomed to water bowls, by all means provide them until they get used to the bottles on the sides of their cages. Then make the switch completely. Fresh greens are not only a great treat for your cavy, they provide necessary vitamins and minerals. Lettuce is enjoyed, but contains mostly water. Ice burg lettuce should not be feed as it often results in diarrhea. Other fruits and vegetables can be given and these contain more nutrients. Certain cavies won't eat every fresh food given to them, though, so experiment to discover what yours likes, and don't give more than can be consumed in five or ten minutes. Alfalfa, timothy hay or grass can be given daily; this is very good for digestion, but make sure it isn't moldy and doesn't contain thistles or insecticide sprays. Do watch for foods your cavy might have trouble with. Watch out for

apple cores, pits, hulls, seeds and the like; a cavy can choke on these things. Don't give the cavy anything this is moldy or spoiled, and it is always wise to wash fresh foods first, as you would for yourself. If he doesn't eat or drink what you have given him in a reasonable amount of time, throw it away and begin again.

A BIG TREAT for your cavy is **DANDELIONS**. Be very careful not to feed too much. Be sure the dandelions have not been sprayed with any weed killer, insecticide, fertilizer...anything!

GROOMING: As we already mentioned, long-coated Peruvians and Silkies require extensive grooming, and this procedure is best learned by watching an experienced breeder do it. A soft toothbrush is often used in grooming the rougher coat of the Aby and Teddy breeds. Never use a brush on an American, American Satin, or White Crested cavy; this will cause "breaks" or grooves in the coat, and will spoil their sleek appearance. Most breeders of these short-coated cavies simply wash their hands and then spend several minutes stroking their cavies from head to rump with a firm touch. This removes loose hair and distributes the natural oil in the coat. Bathing is not a good idea unless really necessary. First, most cavies will begin to shed right after you bathe them. Second, it removes natural oil in the coat and can cause dry hair and skin if done too often. However, if you must bathe, use a very mild shampoo and try not to get it in their ears or eyes. Most preparations that are safe for kittens are safe for cavies. Don't overheat him with a hair dryer afterward; you're better off waiting for a warm day and letting the cavy air dry in a draft-free area. You can clip your cavy's toenails yourself, but don't cut them too short or they will bleed. Be ready to apply a styptic powder purchased from your pet shop, and apply firm pressure to the nail until it has stopped bleeding. The cavy's ears may be cleaned out with a small amount of mineral oil on a cotton swab. Don't dig too deeply! If his ears really need cleaning, you'll get some dark waxy material out.

If you are concerned about other aspects of cavy hygiene, ask the breeder you purchased your cavies from, or a District Director of the ACBA. The Secretary/Treasurer will help you find someone in your area who can answer your questions.

ILLNESS: Cavies are most susceptible to respiratory problems; colds and pneumonia, so if you are sick, stay away from your cavy. Another common problem is childbirth. Because cavies have such big, well-developed babies, sometimes sows have trouble passing them. This is something to consider if you are thinking about breeding your cavy. If for some reason, you need to medicate your cavy, **DO NOT** give him penicillin or penicillin-type antibiotics. This will surely kill him. Tetracycline is a commonly used, safe medication; you must get this from your veterinarian and be sure to follow his instructions. You will find that a well cared for cavy rarely gets sick or needs medication. However, it is wise to get into the habit of adding vitamin C to your cavy's water. You can obtain the powder or drops from your local feed store or pet shop. If your cavy does not get enough vitamin C, he will develop a disease called "scurvy" that

masquerades as paralysis. Take this precaution and you'll never need to worry if the pellets contain enough Vitamin C.

WHEN YOU JOIN THE AMERICAN CAVY BREEDERS ASSOCIATION YOU WILL BE GIVEN A "GUIDE BOOK" THAT WILL GIVE YOU MUCH MORE INFORMATION.

ASSOCIATION: The American Cavy Breeders Association is a "specialty club" of the American Rabbit Breeders Association, our parent organization. The ARBA provides us with judges, a Standard of Perfection, show rules and various important record-keeping junctions. It is recommended that the serious cavy enthusiast join both the American Cavy Breeders Association and the American Rabbit Breeders Association. You may obtain information on the ARBA by writing: Secretary, American Rabbit Breeders Assoc., P.O. Box 426, Bloomington, IL 61701.

AMERICAN CAVY BREEDERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I hereby make application for membership in the AMERICAN CAVY BREEDERS ASSOCIATION, and agree to abide by its Constitution and By-Laws; whenever possible to attend and support shows; and to further the interest of the Cavy in every possible way.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Youth Names & Birth Dates:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

DUES: Adult	\$15.00	\$40.00	3 years
Youth (under 18)	\$10.00	\$25.00	3 years
Family	\$20.00	\$50.00	3 years
Subscription		\$10.00	year
			(Receives Journals Only)
Canadian: Additional	\$5.00		
Foreign : Additional	\$10.00		

New memberships receive the Guide Book, Yearbook, Membership card and the ACBA Journal, published quarterly.

Please mail your application and payment to:
Walter Linker, Secretary ACBA
3034 Forest Oaks Drive
Orange Park, FL 32073