



# Blue Satins

By Terry Schisler, Ellsworth, OH

I got interested in rabbits back in 1980 when I was helping a friend with her rabbits in 4-H. At that time she had a Red Satin. I enjoy working with the 4-H youth who are interested in rabbits. They seem to like the Satin rabbit for their project but most of the ones that they have or have seen are the Black and the Broken. They haven't seen many of the Blue variety. I try to help as many of them as I can get started with a Blue. I started

showing Reds back in 1982 and then switched to Californians. I bought my first Blue from Mike D' Amico in 1986, and it was love at first sight. I got my next pair of Blues from Walt and Shirley Miller. When I started with the Blues there weren't too many around. Most of my first original Blues came out of Black litters. They still aren't a real popular color, but the numbers are starting to come up at the shows.

I don't have a lot of room for my rabbits. The small barn I have sets behind our garage and holds about 60 holes. Eight of those holes are doe and litter cages so I have to keep an eye on how many I breed at one time. I have to clean house every now and then just to make room for the ones I want to keep from those litters. I keep approximately three bucks to use on my does. I do a lot of in breeding and line breeding. I have been breeding only Blues together for quite a few years. Everything that I show was born and raised in my barn. Occasionally, I will bring in an outside buck. I have a large Black buck that I am using now hoping to improve the quality of my Blues. It has been a real challenge to me trying to improve the Blues.

When my litters are around ten weeks old I will go through them and separate any that have any disqualifications. In about another two weeks I will go through the remaining rabbits and place them into their own cage. Sometimes there are some of these remaining rabbits that I will cull. At this time I will tattoo all the rabbits that I want to keep.

The Standard says that the Satin fur should be fine, dense and have a nice sheen! If you have a Blue that has these three things along with a good body type then you have a good start. Sometimes the fur color on the Blues can range from light to dark. I prefer to keep a Blue that is in the medium to dark color range as long as it has the body type that I'm looking for. I prefer the darker color Blues but have had some real nice Blues with a little lighter color than I like. There have been times that I will even get a Blue that has a real light undercoat almost white. I use to cull these from my litters but found that as they grew older the lighter undercoat would turn darker. I've never had one that stayed lighter.

The eye color on the Blues should be a blue/gray. I have had some with real light, blue/gray eyes. I have occasionally bred by Blues with Blacks but you have to watch, that the eyes don't get a brown cast. I have seen a lot of rabbits sent off of the show table because of the wrong color of the eyes and toenails.

The Blue should have toenails as dark as possible. I have a couple of Blue Broken's that I am starting to breed with so I will have to keep a close eye on the toenails on my Blues.

I feed approximately five to six oz. of 18% protein Rabbit Pellets daily. When I first started with rabbits I fed more than this, and I ended up with my does having very flabby shoulders. I finally cut back and this amount is what I found that works best for me. A couple days a week I will also feed a mixture of sunflower seeds and oats, only about 1 teaspoon. I feel that the sunflower seed oil helps with the natural sheen of the Satin fur.

I really enjoy showing my Blues but you don't see very many of them winning B.O.B. I think that I will always remember the best win I had was in Tampa, Florida in 1990 when I won B.O.S. with a Blue junior buck. If a Blue could win a few more shows like that then they might become just as popular as some of the other varieties.

My goal has been to try to improve the Blues as much as possible and to see a Blue win Best in Show. I enjoy all the help that I get from other breeders and I hope to see more Blues on the table in the near future. I have enjoyed the challenge of raising and showing a variety that was not very popular but is becoming so more and more. If you're just getting into raising rabbits and you have chosen the Satin breed then I invite you to give the Blues a try.