



# Broken Satins

By Randy Shumaker, Sanger, CA

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, when I was showing Rex exclusively, I had little knowledge of or exposure to Satins. The only time I even noticed them was when Dave and Fay Hauser, who had been winning a lot in Indiana, would put up one of their beautiful Coppers for Best in Show. While these animals were always one of the most striking on the table, Satins were just not something I was interested in raising. That all changed when I attended my first ARBA Convention in Houston in 1985.

Sometime before 1985 I had quit raising Rex and was attending the Houston convention possibly looking for a new breed. I had heard that Broken Satins were in their final year as a presentation variety. Broken were always my favorite variety of Rex so I was curious about this new variety of Satins and decided to check them out. While in Houston I met Al Lunde. We looked at several Broken, including the ones that won BOV and BOSV. From the moment I first saw a Broken Black I thought they were the most attractive and appealing of all rabbits and remain my favorite to this day.

Unfortunately all Al had left to sell was a Black doe but he graciously agreed to breed her to a fine Broken buck. She kindled and included in her litter were three Broken Blacks! Later in the convention Satins were approved for their third and final showing and would become eligible for competition February 1, 1986. I couldn't wait to get my first three Broken to the table!

The success, and to an even greater degree the quality, of Broken was assured almost immediately. Experienced breeders from around the country had been breeding Broken for some time before their final showing. Just three months after their eligibility, the National Satin show was held in Bloomington, Illinois. Broken were the second largest variety with 90 shown and Jim Wahls' Senior Doe won Best Opposite Sex of Breed! This was only the first of two Best Opposite Sexes and four Best of Breeds in ten years of national competition. Only Whites have won more during the same period at Nation\_ Satin Shows and AREA Conventions. At all but one of these shows Broken have also had the second most entries. Jim Lemon's sweepstakes data shows that for the last five years Broken have been second to Whites in the following categories: total shown, average shown per show, number of Best of Breed wins and number of Best Opposite Sex wins.

During the first ten years of national competition there have been twenty different exhibitors win either a Best or Best Opposite of Variety Broken. Following is a complete list of winning exhibitors and numbers shown during these first ten years.

## Breeding Broken

A lot has already been written about breeding Broken. Al Lunde has written several articles that have appeared over the years. Brian Sawchuk wrote a very good article covering the basics of Broken genetics that appeared in the July-August 1991 issue of the "Satin News." Jack Etnyre's article for the last edition of the guidebook was excellent and covered the history, genetics and exhibition of Broken. Before I go any further I must say I am far from an expert on genetics. I would, however, like to relate to you some of my past experiences and the direction I am currently trying to go with my Broken breeding program.

When I was first breeding for Broken my main goal was to get the highest percentage of show able animals. I knew that if I bred a "charlie" Broken to a solid I would get all showable Broken. However, finding a good "charlie" is fairly difficult since most breeders do not save them and raising a good one can also take some time. The next best option, and the most-commonly recommended, was to breed Broken to solids of the same variety. This proved to

be successful and was the combination I used almost exclusively for the first few years. Usually half the litters were showable Brokens and the other half solids. Many of these solids did very well on the show table. To this day, I almost never breed Black to Black or Chin to Chin solids. I maintain these solid brood animals to help produce Brokens, my main goal.

At some point I became dissatisfied with raising just "showable" Brokens. The improvements made from generation to generation were insignificant, particularly in the area of fur. Most of the Blacks I had seen or raised had a thinner, coarser coat than it was going to take to win big. By continually breeding Brokens to these solid animals improving the fur was very difficult.

During this same period of time I was also raising Whites. The quality of my Whites in both fur and type was significantly better than my Brokens. I decided to try some White to Broken crosses. I would only breed White bucks to Broken Black does. I did not want to tie up my White does raising colored rabbits. This cross, White bucks to Broken Black does, has accounted for about 75% of the Brokens I have put on the table in: the last several years. This includes all three of my Best of Breeds and also Best of Variety Black, Blue, Chin and Brokens at National Shows and ARBA Conventions. Most of these successes were due to a significant improvement in fur. Also interesting, was the fact that the color of the Black, Chin and Blue was very good.

Obviously, the background of the particular Whites and Brokens you cross is significant to the outcome of the litters. All White (albino) animals carry two recessive albino genes that suppress the display of the actual color that the rabbit carries. I feel that most White Satins, unlike a lot of other breeds with white varieties, carry the genetic tendencies for Black and Chin Satins. When bred to Broken Blacks that do not carry the albino gene, the outcome will be the same as if you bred Broken to solid, that being 50% solid and 50% Broken. However, if the Broken does carry an albino gene, the resulting litters should be 50% White. It is for this reason I have tried to only breed Whites to Broken Blacks that do not carry an albino gene. Broken offspring from these crosses can then be bred back to solid Blacks.

A common misconception concerning the above scenario is Whites will be responsible for scattered white hairs or white spots, white nails, light eyes or light foot pads when bred to solids or Brokens. This is simply not true. The double albino gene can only be responsible for a pure white rabbit. The modifying genes responsible for the faults and disqualifications listed above come only from the inhibited color genes the albino genes are suppressing. You may experience a certain degree of these problems when breeding to Whites. This is only because they have not been bred out of the colored animals in the background of the Whites since they would not be expressed, obviously, because they are white.

In ten years of raising Broken Satins I have not come close to experiencing all of the possibilities. This is what makes Brokens so appealing. I have, however, tried to give you a little insight to my experiences with this most intriguing variety. Solid to Broken crosses of the same variety remain the most common and most recommended, especially to the beginner. Whatever path you choose to take will probably have a few bumps and turns but I'm quite sure you will find your experiences with the Satin's newest variety most rewarding and challenging! Good luck!