

# JUDGING HIMALAYAN CAVIES

by Carol Sandler

In order to really understand what you are looking at when judging Himalayan Cavies, you need to understand how their markings develop at the different stages you may see on the table.

Himi Cavies are born covered with white hairs, looking exactly like their Red Eyed White cousins. The second day, the ears are already turning dark and the footpads soon follow with a lovely grey cast. By the time they are weaned – those destined for the show table have black foot pads, dark ears, and a dark tip on the nose.

Since there was already white hair on their feet – only the bottom pads are dark right away – in fact, this white hair will take months to finally molt off, being replaced by black hair on the top of the feet. It is not a DQ to have these white hairs on the feet, but the ones with better color should place higher, as DENSITY of Markings is very important (15 points on an American).

When judging young Himalayan cavies – Juniors and Intermediates – you will find there is still some of this white hair on the feet that has not been molted off.



face - often with a group of very white hairs going cross-wise (almost in a line or "band") in the middle of the dark as it goes up the nose. This is simply the development of extremely good face markings and should not be faulted and definitely not Disqualified in young Himis.

Ear color is to be black to the base. Be careful here. There is not a clear line where the base of the ear ends and therefore the color changes from black to white by fading slightly from one color to the other.

On breeds other than Americans, markings have the same number of points as actual body color: 12

points on an Am Satin, 7 ½ points on Teddy, 5 points on a Peruvian & Texel, and 2 ½ on a Silkie.

However, on Americans - with 10 points on body color - actual markings carry more weight (50 points): Density of Markings – 15, Nose – 15, Feet – 10, Ears – 10.

## Faults – smutty body color – light or faded markings:

Smutty body color – while a fault – must be judged against the "color" points for the breed: 10 points on American, 12 points on a Am Satin, 7 ½ points on Teddy, 5 points on a Peruvian & Texel , 2 ½ on a Silkie. Smutty color is much more important on all breeds except American since those breeds also have the same number of points on their markings as on their body color (where as American have 50 points on markings)

Light or faded markings during warm weather do not change the color on the bottom of the feet. Weather changes are most often seen on the tops of the feet as some hairs coming in then are lighter in warm weather and produce a "mealy" effect which will affect the marking points, but not Disqualify them. As noted in the Standard, the genitalia may be effected and also darken or lighten with weather changes.

Unworthy of Award – regardless of age – Himis should have Black footpads if entered in a show. Some may be entered too early but good Himis will have Black footpads by 12 ounces. By giving those youngsters with grey footpads UOA, the owners will realize that they need to wait until they get enough markings to be shown. Flesh spots on feet should be Disqualified.



Therefore, it is best to judge color on young feet by looking at the footpads which should be BLACK by the time they are old enough to be shown. Be sure there is no color other than Black – no Chocolate feet, no flesh spots on the feet pads – only Black – regardless of the time of year. (Young animals without Black feet can be used for breeding to darker animals but should not be shown).

Himi toenails are white when born. These white nails must grow out (dark) and be worn off to get rid of the white tips. While white toenails are a DQ, - the white tips on young Cavies (with the dark color coming in), should not be of any concern as it is simply a developmental process.

Density of Markings and the Nose Smut are the most important in any breed of Himi Cavy. The Nose Smut should carry up on the face as far as possible in a black, egg-shaped marking. In Juniors and young Intermediates, this will begin as a dark marking above the nose and extend up the

