

THE AMAZING TAN CAVY

SPECIAL SECTION

Mary Lou Eisel compiled this extensive section on the Tan cavy. Mary Lou is a licensed ARBA cavy judge as well as a license Ontario Cavy Club judge. She currently lives in Sarnia, Ontario, but she has bought a house in Oil Springs, Ontario (see page 12 for picture). Mary Lou is the ACBA District 8 Director and sits on the ACBA Board of Directors in that capacity. Mary Lou began exhibiting cavies back in 1985 and has been actively showing in both Canada and the United States ever since, formally becoming an ARBA judge in 2004.

recently judged a show in Quebec and while there were no tans entered, there was interest in tans and I took several to sell to breeders.

The first tans were imported as mentioned above by Tracy Iverson in 2000. Several breeders responded that their original stock came from Tracy Iverson, Jim Hupp and Steve Lussier.

Below is an accounting by Tony Cooke of England of the discovery of the tan gene.

INTRODUCTION by Mary Lou Eisel

I did a survey of tan breeders and received input from breeders across the US and Canada from NY, MA, PA, GA, MI, WV, TN, WA, IL, OR, BC, ON. Most are working on American tans only and mostly in the black color. Several breeders of black tans report having chocolate tans in some litters which half a dozen actively working on chocolate tans. Another half a dozen breeders are working on lilac tans. There are only three working on blues but a few indicated that they would like to work on blue tans. One is working on beige tans (non-standard).

There are breeders working on tan Teddies, Texels, Abyssinians, Coronets, Silkies, Peruvians and American Satins. Again most are working on black tans.

The marten variety has the same pattern as the tan but the tan color is replaced with white. Ron Smelt is the current COD holder and is presenting the Marten Americans for the first time in California at this year's convention. Many of the survey responders are also working on marten Americans again mostly in the black variety. Laurel Christopher who has the COD for tan Teddies is working on lilac marten teddies.

The otter variety has cream where the tan would have tan. There are only 2 breeders who report working on otters, one in Americans and then myself in Texels and Silkies.

Breeders on the west coast are reporting have entries of up to 15 tan Americans at a show. This may be due to the fact that they were first imported to the US by Tracy Iverson in Oregon. MI and ON are seeing numbers of up to 10 tan Americans. The SW are reporting on having tan Abyssinians and tan Silkies shown as non-competitive. Numbers are low in the Mid-Atlantic area, the northeast and the mid-west with only a couple being shown. The northeast is seeing tan teddies and MI and ON are seeing tan Texels. I

Serendipity

by Tony Cooke

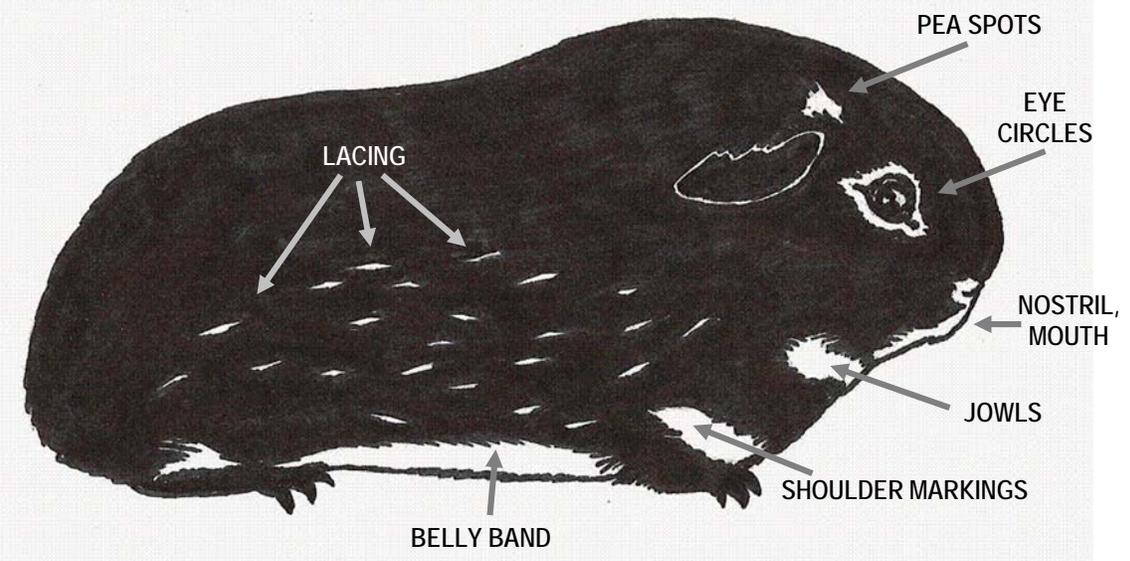
I have always been blessed with serendipity. The dictionary defines it as 'the art of accidentally happening on interesting things', (or something like that). It started in my school When we all went off to France on a school exchange visit, my classmates spent their visits the Paris suburbs but my exchange family took me off to visit 'granny' who lived in Monaco!

My two years National Service took me through the USA and Hawaii into the centre of the Pacific Ocean for the H-bomb tests. A change of job, from meteorology to chemistry then took me unexpectedly into a position which led me to travel all over the world, from South Korea, Paraguay, Poland and Cuba to Haiti, Pakistan and Peru, seeing the most incredible sights and experiencing cultures I could have only dreamed of as a boy. But serendipity has also worked for in other areas than just travel and this article is about one such occasion.

When Gill and I joined the Cavy Fancy from the mouse fancy about twenty five years ago we were struck by a number of differences between the two fancies. The mouse fancy had a single controlling organization (the National Mouse Club) which covered rules, show regs, standards, etc.

They also had their judging system split into five

DRAWING BY JULIET BARRERA





Hannah Mowry inspecting a Marten American

'sections': Selves, Tans, Marked, Satins (which we had introduced) and AOVs each of which brought a single 'candidate' up for Best in Show. No referee judges needed here!). Now there were no Tans in the Cavy Fancy and that seemed to a serious 'gap'. After all mice had them, so did rabbits and even dogs (Doberman, dachshund, Rottweiler, etc.) so why shouldn't we?

So twenty five years ago we started to search. I got in touch with a contact in the research field to see if he knew of any in UK laboratory stock however this didn't yield anything worthwhile. Through him I obtained a copy of the world listing of laboratory stocks of known genes in all laboratory animals. (I swapped a copy of my mouse hardback book to obtain this list). Sadly, after scouring the listings with a magnifying glass it was clear that there did not appear to be any examples of the blacktan gene in cavies anywhere in the world.

So, back to the drawing board. If they didn't exist then the only way to get them was for a spontaneous mutation to occur and for someone to recognize the importance and to propagate it. Because one thing that was certain, this is not a case of 'mixing' up existing genes and arriving at new combination. What we were

needing was a new gene (new to the Cavy Fancy that is) which as known in other species but which did not so far exist in the cavy.

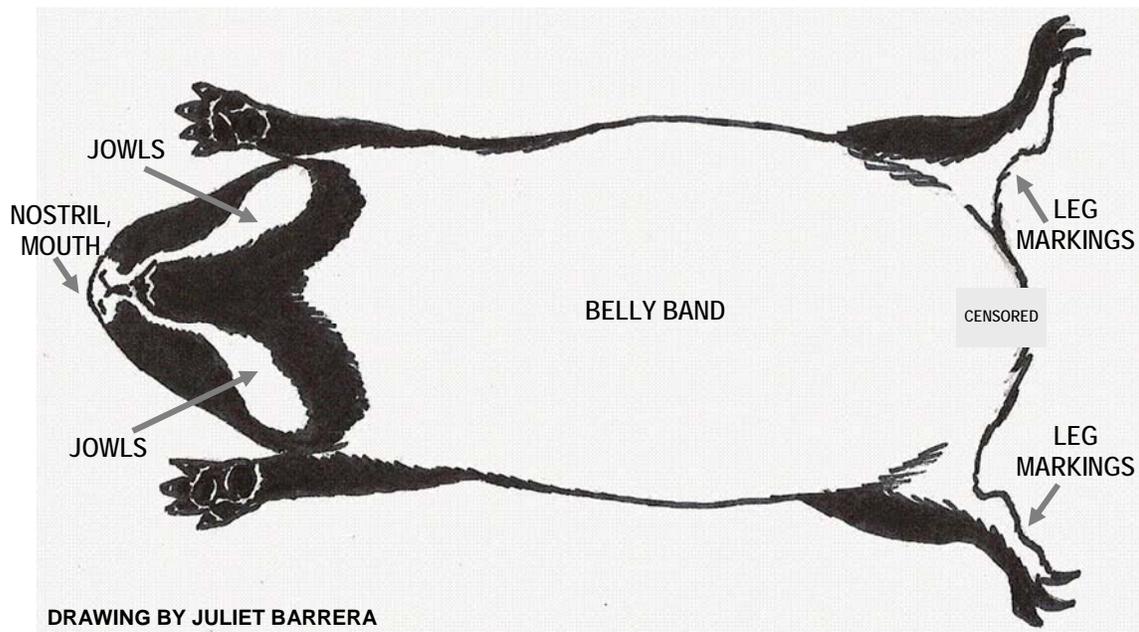
My various old friends in the mouse fancy knew of our lack of the blacktan gene and the ongoing search. After all, they had had Tans since the 1920's. About seventeen years ago we got a call from an old mouse fancier who, although no longer active was still keeping a range of fancy animals - mice, rats, cavies, etc. "Hallo Tony - I think that I have found your missing Tans for you," said Mike Foley. "Come up and take a look. I've got chocolate tans and beige tans!" He was living in the wilds of Cambridgeshire. So I took a day's leave off work and we trekked up there to see if he could deliver.

I have to say that on first sight they did look promising. Perhaps we had in fact found Shangri La. One slight problem was that his pigs were all 'free range' and whilst he knew who the mothers were the boar was a bit more problematical. Anyway, to cut a long story short, we came away from Cambridgeshire with three or four 'tans' and set about trying to breed some more. Sadly, as they grew up it became apparent that these were not in fact tans (which have a self top colour) but were simply pink eyed agouties ("argentes") of rather mixed origin. The pink eyed effect had 'brightened' the belly colour to the point where it grabbed attention. As they grew on the top colour gradually became agouti-like and was quite clearly not the single self colour that we were seeking. We bred them for a couple of generations in the hope that the tan bellies could be transferred onto selves but it was all a red herring. Off to the pet shop with them all.

So, once again it was back to the drawing board. Every new town we visited over the next fifteen years or so involved a sniff round the pet shops in the hope of finding a tan (or a perfect Tortie and White). Always a dead end. But we knew that sooner or later the mutation would occur. If only a fancier was in the right place at the right time. And this is where serendipity kicked in. Older fanciers will know John and Isobel Day, now living in Switzerland. John was a former NCC General Secretary. Some ten years ago John phoned me and asked if I would like to go over there judging. I pointed out that at that time I wasn't on any judging panels and said no. A year later John called again and this time managed to persuade us to go. If I had gone when first invited then I wouldn't have been writing this article now.

Anyway, in early 1998 we flew to Zurich and I found

myself with about 150 pigs to judge. You may have noticed my 'show report' in "Cavies" magazine in spring 1998. The show went well and I was pleased with the very nice 5-8 month Himalayan which I had given Best in Show to. It was getting cooler and darker at the end of the day and there were just a few 'unstandardised' (mostly, frankly, pets) to end the day. Up came what at first sight was a self black. I turned it over to reveal a tan belly!!! Bells started ringing. After finishing judging I asked the owner (who had just won Best in Show with the Himalayan - whew) if the blacktan, a boar,



DRAWING BY JULIET BARRERA



HOW'S THIS FOR A SET OF NOSTRIL, MOUTH, AND JOWL MARKINGS?

was fertile? "Well, its father is" she said. She had two of them! The original one she had found in a pet shop near the German border. Had she not spotted it in the pet shop, or not bothered to buy it, or not bothered to try showing it, or had I not judged that particular show it would probably have been missed.

71 days later the UK's first fox boar was born - a Lilac! And in the next four days we had two more litters - two black (known as Silver in the other two fancies) fox sows a black fox boar and a Chocolate fox sow. So, we now had some stock to show at Bradford Champ for the 'launch', but more importantly they were clearly vigorous and fertile.

The next job was to decide on a 'naming' system for our records. After 20 years in the fancy ordinary human names were starting to run out. Our son pointed out that Black and Tan was a drink and so we decided to name them all after drinks. We acquired a list of cocktails and a large drinks dictionary from a cheap bookshop and the first name leapt out at us. The Lilac Fox became Freddy Fudpucker (yes, that's the name of a cocktail!) and the ChocFox was Cocoa. We later added Daiquiri, Drambuie, Guinness and many others.

The rest, as they say, is history. They were now breeding well and numbers are growing steadily. Before setting off to Doncaster2000 for the launch in January, we had a quick count up and we had a total of 22 tans and 13 foxes. We were able to enter seven for the show, and I think that it would be fair to say that they were well received by those who saw them.

I explained to the Swiss fanciers just how important this development was and we started to plan the way forward. They use UK Standards for their judging so it was in their interest to get the breed to the UK and into our 'system' as soon as possible. So we did a deal. They would build up the numbers to the point where there were enough for us to arrange for importation into the UK. We would pay the cost of the importation, get them breeding in the UK and plan to give them a launch at Bradford Championship in January 2000. Also, we did not want the 'secret' to get out early in case there were any problems along the way. We didn't want to excite people and then disappoint them. So the Swiss agreed to not show any visitors what they had until the deed was done. We would like to thank them for all their help along the way. It was an 'eventful' 2 1/2 years since that fateful day. (The Days are included on our British Telecom 'Friends and Family' phone list!).

We got them out to other fanciers as quickly as possible. The nice thing with them was that you only need one tan boar (and a couple of Self black sows) to get a stud started. Then it's up to the breeder, selecting for tan and trying not to lose the type contributed by the self mothers. They are required to have a tan eye circle and tan 'ticking' along the flanks, plus a rich tan belly.

Foxes were a bit slower in being distributed because (a) we had less of them and (b) they were not so easy/simple to produce by means of an 'outcross'. The relationship of the fox to the tan is the same as the relationship of the Silver Agouti to the Golden Agouti. It is the same pig apart from carrying a double dose of the recessive gene which removes all red pigment from the coat. So whilst for the tan you will get quick results using a self black sow, the corresponding 'outcross' for the fox is the 'dilute' (i.e. poor self black) which comes out of Silver Agouti breeding and obviously they are not to be found in sales pens. You have to get a Silver Agouti breeder to provide you with them via agouti breeding) and these are not commonly available or identifiable. So the best way forward if you want to breed foxes is to buy a trio from a breeder who already has them established.

The first job was to get them breeding in Switzerland though. Based on my mouse experience I advised them to put the boars mostly with selfs, since the tan gene in mice is 'dominant' over 'self', so you get tans in the first generation. But most importantly to get them breeding.

By late 1998 we had worked out that if the gene behaved exactly the same as in mice or rabbits then theoretically we should be able to produce 'Silver Foxes'(Martens) from tans. I suggested this to John when phoning him starting to make arrangements for the importation visit, and he said "Oh, yes, we've got them already!" So the paperwork was set in motion for the importation of four black tans and five silver foxes as foundation breeding stock. The wait seemed interminable but at the end of May 1999 the UK Ministry vet gave us the OK and they were finally and legally ours. The foxes were a bit older and better developed than the tans so the foxes were immediately paired up.

For anyone interested in their genetics, I will keep it `short and sweet`. Agouti (A) is dominant over Tan (at) which is dominant over Self (a). So an agouti marked pig can `carry` tan or self, and a tan can `carry` self, but a self cannot `carry` tan or agouti. And if you have a tan (or fox of course) you can `modify` the top colour from, say black to choc or lilac or beige in the same way as you would for selfs. That`s it! Exactly the same as in mice or rabbits.



I'M A PROPERLY MARKED REAR FOOT. NOTICE MY MARKING GOES ALL THE WAY DOWN TO MY NAILS!

AND I AM RON SMELT'S THUMB. NOTICE HOW REALLY CLEAN I AM!

NOTE: To elaborate on Tony's comments, there are 4 possible genes at the A locus - A (agouti), ar (solid), at (tan) and a (self). The dominance of A over ar and a is well documented as is the dominance of ar over a but no scientific research has been done on the tan gene.

We all have found that it is dominant over the a gene but there is a bit of mystery concerning the relationship between ar and at. Many have found that when crossing solids with tans the resulting offspring show characteristics of both ie they have the tipping of the solid as well as the belly band and markings of the tan. - Mary Lou Eisel

Tans Come to North America

by Mary Lou Eisel

The tan gene was first imported to North America by Tracy Iverson and Juliet Hamak Barrera. In 2000, Juliet while on vacation in England procured the first four tans from Tony and Gill Cooke and arranged for them to be shipped to Seattle. There were three brothers all carrying the marten gene and a fourth boar carrying the self black gene. The three marten carriers were very light in tan color and very over marked. The boar carrying the self gene was very dark in color with minimal markings and a very narrow belly band. Tracy put all four boars immediately into breeding. Eventually three of the boars went to Juliet in California. Tracy's first litters were born in July 2000 and he applied for the COD for the American tan shortly after that. On that application, Tracy asked for a tan group consisting of black, chocolate, lilac and beige in line with agoutis and solids. The certificate was approved but the ARBA standards committee said that the tan cavy group had to be the same as the tan rabbit group which is black, chocolate, lilac and blue. Since there is no blue cavy in the ARBA standard, Tracy asked if the slate blue would be accepted as a blue in the tan group and was told yes. While Tracy realized that the slate blue was not the same blue that we commonly recognize as blue in other species, he felt it was the closest color that we currently have. While it is possible that the color was misnamed within the tan group, he felt that acquiescing at this point would be best and that it could possibly be changed in the future. The door has also been left open should a true blue gene in cavies be discovered.

Tracy originally worked with all five color varieties of tans plus black silver martens. The first presentation to the ARBA

standards committee was in fall of 2002 and consisted of chocolate tans. ARBA requires that a pair and 2 of their junior offspring be shown (one of each sex). Tracy put ten sows into breeding hoping that the timing would be right and he would have the 4 required animals. Out of all ten sows, there was one litter that met the requirements taking into account abortions, misses, babies growing too quickly, wrong sexes, etc. The ARBA standards committee passed this presentation in spite of the senior sow being slightly pregnant. Quoting Tracy, "The idea when presenting your breed/variety is to bring along the best that you have and to show some improvement in the next two years. There is a lot of pressure doing the presentations to be successful and not disappoint fellow breeders who are depending on you to get this new breed or variety standardized."

Personally I feel that if the original presentation is of high quality it is difficult to show improvement so I feel that consistency is as important as improvement.

It is most important to keep accurate pedigrees on your presentation animals. The pedigrees have to be a full three generation and be pure for breed but not necessarily for color. One of the most difficult requirements is that two of the animals from the first presentation must return for the second presentation. Consequently, Tracy wisely pampered those four animals from the first presentation and two of them were able to make the second presentation. As Tracy wanted to show the blue/slate tan to the ARBA standards committee, the second presentation consisted of two blues, two blacks and the original two chocolates. There was some debate over the blues but the presentation was passed. The third and final showing also passed and tans were eligible for competition in February of 2005.



A Close Look at Tans

A
C
B
A

by Mary Lou Eisel

All breeders are reporting that tans are as vigorous and growthy as other varieties. Litter size is good. The odd one does not make senior weight. A couple of breeders reported polydactyl toes.

As there were only a few tans originally exported to North America, breeders had to cross in other colors to increase the tan numbers. Most breeders opted to breed their original tans to the self color that matched the top color of the tan, i.e. black to black tan, chocolate to chocolate tan, lilac to lilac tan and blue to blue tan. Black in particular improved the type on the tans. Personally I have found that crossing in blacks diminishes the tan markings giving offspring with small eye circles and pea spots and narrow muddy belly bands. Those born with excess mealiness generally end up with more pronounced eye circles and pea spots. Several breeders have crossed red in to the black and chocolate tans and REO in to the lilac tans. These crosses have improved the intensity of the tan color when the red or REO parent has good intense color. The problems associated with crossing in solids was outlined above. Those working on tans in different breeds have found their own unique color problems depending on what base stock they had available to make the initial tan crosses. Those who have crossed in tri-roans or brindles are still weeding out the ep tans, i.e. tans with red spots in the body color. Those who crossed in white spotting are finding that it can be difficult to weed out as well. Ideally one should cross to tan to tan to intensify the markings and set the pattern.

While the tan gene is dominant and the variety is generally

healthy, breeders have not been without problems. Numbers are still limited in many parts of the country and that makes outcross stock still a challenge to find in some areas. Weeding out the undesirable color traits mentioned above from different color crosses has been an issue to some.

Muddy bellies, narrow eye circles, small pea spots are all issues that breeders are running into. Blues have been a particular challenge due to the shortage of base stock to work with here in North America. Ron Smelt having some excellent red color to work with has found fewer color issues than some breeders but has had trouble getting the type that he wants. There are also some judging issues – I quote cavy judge Frank Westley here – "Making judges realize that you should allow some mealiness around the muzzle to get good markings. Also, trying to get judges to judge the tans on their markings instead of just type and forgetting about markings. That you need the lacing on the sides to make a nicely showed animal. I hate seeing an animal without pea spots and eye circles win the variety over nicely marked animals."

PROPER TAN MARKINGS

Now onto a closer look at what is expected on a good tan cavy. I often hear the comment that what is bad on an agouti is good on a tan and basically that is true. Agoutis require a narrow belly band



and a tan a wide belly band. Eye circles are necessary on tans and undesirable on agoutis.

I have used **marten** pictures to illustrate the markings as the contrast shows up better in black and white. I am going to cover the markings first and then the body color. Direct quotes from the standard are in italics. *Tan markings are to consist of tan tipped hairs. Long tip color is desirable, minimal undercolor. Undercolor is to match the top color. The tan color is to be rich and vibrant.*

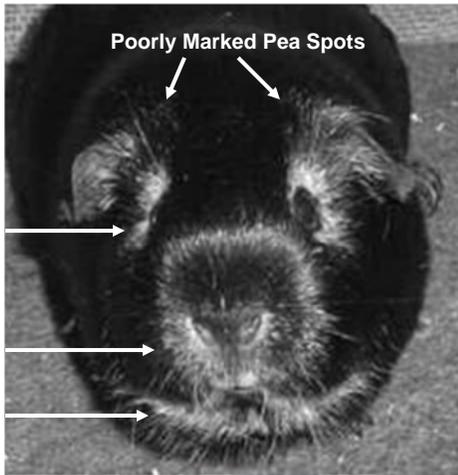


The hairs on the inside of the ears are tan but there are no points for this characteristic.

Over marked cavy showing extreme mealiness

Mealiness is defined as *tan on the nostrils extending up into the eye circles giving a mealy appearance.* This is a fault. This picture shows extreme mealiness where the entire area between the mouth and the eyes is sprinkled with light hairs. The eye circles and nose markings are indistinct due to the mealiness. This is only a fault and while it is distracting as the face is the first part of the animal that you look at, remember that it is only a small part of the whole cavy.

Head Markings



Poorly Marked Pea Spots

Eye circles – this carries the most weight – 5 points

Nostril markings

Jowl markings



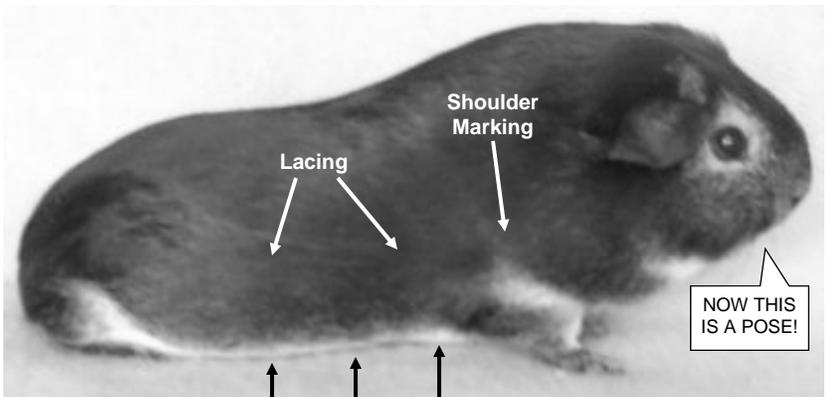
Overly Marked and Elongated Pea Spots

Overly Prominent Eye Circles

Considerable mealiness around muzzle

NOW THIS IS A POSE!

Body Markings



Belly line of demarcation, wider the better

Line of demarcation is worth 5 points. *The lines on the sides and on the throat are to be high, clean and distinct.*

Lacing is worth 3 points. The sides should be evenly and thickly laced with tan tipped hairs, extending well up the sides. This lacing of tan tipped hairs serves to enhance the tan markings

Shoulder markings are worth 3 points. *Shoulder markings are to be a bold tapered line, beginning at the top of the chest, continuing over each shoulder and up the sides.*

Faults – stray tan hairs in the top color, not to be confused with desirable side lacing.

Disqualifications from Competition: *Patches of foreign color including Tan, Red or Orange in Top Color--not to be confused with Tan tipped lacing hairs on flanks. Flesh spots on foot-pads or ears on Black, Chocolate, and Blue.*

Pea Spots are worth 3 points are to be prominent. They are located at or slightly above the top corner of both ears.

Eye Circles are worth 5 points and are to be well defined and prominent around the entire eye.

Nostril and jowl markings are worth 3 points. *The nostril and mouth should be prominently outlined. Jowl markings should be clear, wide and long, following the jaw line.*



Better Pea Spot

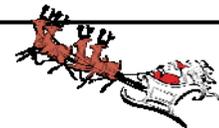
Better Eye Circle and Jowl



IF I'M ALREADY A DUTCH, DOES THIS MEAN I CAN'T EVER BE A TAN?

YES





Belly Markings

A true flesh spot on a marten Texel



A flesh spot is not an area of lighter pigment on the foot pad created by the width of the belly band and the extension of the markings down the legs.

Foot and Leg Markings



Foot and leg markings are worth 3 Points. The feet and legs, on the inside of each, should show tan, with top color on the outside. The tan extends down the first two inside toes on the front feet and the one inside toe on the back feet. Toenails are to match the top color. The markings on these feet are not ideal as the lines of color running down the feet are not even.



Throat line of demarcation

Wide clean belly band – of major importance as it is worth 10 points



This belly band is of good width but you can see the darker undercolor showing through affecting its clarity and evenness. Referred to as a muddy belly.

Belly markings are worth 10 points. *The belly markings are to be as wide as possible, clear and free of muddiness. Belly color should be visible from the sides of the posed cavy. Chest markings are to be full, clear and high.*

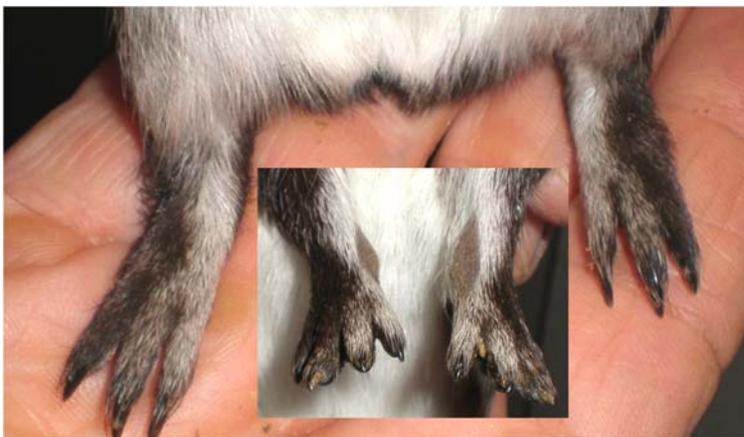
The line of demarcation on sides and throat is worth 5 points and is to be *high, clear and distinct.* Fault for a very muddy belly.

Top Color

The different colors are black, chocolate, blue and lilac. Black is by far the commonest color in tans. Next would be chocolates followed by lilac with only the odd blue around.

Black-Color is to be a deep, rich black, carried to the skin; ears and foot pads to match. Eyes: Dark

Blue-Color is to be a deep gray with an even slate cast, carried to



the skin; ears and foot pads to match. Eyes: Dark with Ruby cast.

Tan Pattern American Standard

Chocolate-Color is to be a deep rich chocolate, carried to the skin; ears and foot pads to match. Eyes: Dark with a Ruby cast.

Lilac-Color is to be a light gray with and even purple cast, carried to the skin; ears and foot pads to match. Eyes: Pink.

Beige tan is also possible but not accepted in the ARBA standard. I do get these in my tan Silkie line and do find that there is little contrast between the beige and the tan colors.

Tan – Black, Blue, Chocolate and Lilac

Type	20
Tan markings	35
Top color	25
Eyes & ears	5
Coat	5
Condition	<u>10</u>
Total	100

I WANT MORE
ABY ARTICLES



A Judge's Perspective on Tans

by Jim Hupp

When judging the Tans I feel that the markings are what make the Variety distinct.

With Tan markings being a total of 25 points, and top color 25, that is one half the total points for the Variety. The qualities of the color markings are of utmost importance.

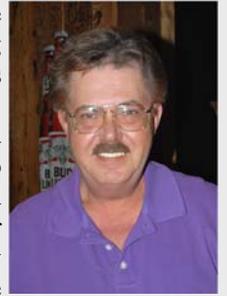
I want to be able to look at the animal and to noticeably see eye circles, pea spots, side lacing, line of demarcation of the side and bottom of the throat, followed by the shoulder markings.

In order for these markings to stand out, and to extend the width of the belly to be able to see that belly band when viewed

from the side, and to accentuate the visible side lacing, I personally feel that you are going to have to allow for some form of mealiness around the muzzle, between the nose and eyes.

With that said, in reality the color and the markings are of prime importance, but do not just be satisfied with producing and showing animals with excellent color markings, with no type. If you want to stay competitive on the breed level, strive for those extra points for type and condition.

I have had the pleasure of awarding Tans Best of Breed, and trust me the decision wasn't made on color markings alone.



Developing the Tan Silkie

by Sandy Dumitru

Like so many others, I had fallen into showing cavies quite by accident – having purchased a pet store Peruvian for my son. My research quickly yielded information about a virtual smorgasbord of breeds and color varieties. Having always been something of a genetics buff since middle school, raising any kind of livestock had always been out of the question - until now. Now I'd found an outlet for my energies.

I was still a relative novice to cavy breeding when Tan Americans appeared on the scene. Since I'd chosen to pursue the longhaired breeds – Silkies in particular – my immediate reaction was that Tan Silkies would be stunning animals, and I loved the idea of a real "long-term" project from scratch. Not all of my exhibitor friends

were as enthusiastic. Some thought that a tan longhair would be a waste of time.

Eventually, I was lucky enough to purchase a Tan American boar. At that time, longhaired selfs in just about any color were almost unheard of in my part of the country. And I needed not just any selfs, but selfs that weren't carrying "ep" – the gene responsible for tortoiseshell markings. Tan cavies would only be accepted as selfs, and I didn't want the "ep" gene to sabotage my program later down the road.

I had one chocolate Texel sow, her chocolate Texel sire, and a few black Texels to work with. A year and a half later, I had a fledgling group of tan Silkies and Texels. It was now clear that the tan longhair was not a waste of time – they were beautiful! I started bringing my tan babies to shows to get the opinions of the judges.

Playing with the tans had been a lot of fun, but by 2005 I needed to pick a direction. As I prepared to apply for a Certificate of Development, I had tan Peruvians, Silkies, Coronets and a pair of Texels in my barn. But I had to choose, and my first real passion – Silkies, were the logical choice. With the Silkie, as presented on a board, the markings would be clearly obvious, not obscured by the Peruvians frontal or the coronets crest. Silkies were a popular breed, and therefore would likely have greater appeal to breeders overall, generating more interest in the variety. I applied for and received the ARBA "Certificate of Development – Tan Silkie."

The proposed standard for the Tan Silkie represents the basic Silkie Standard, modified to adapt the color / markings language that was used for the Tan American Standard. Some



changes were necessary because of the nature of the long haired cavy and it's effect upon how the markings would be viewed. But in very general terms, the Tan Silkie's markings should be very much like the Tan American's markings in color and definition. There are two exceptions to take into consideration with the Tan Silkie. First, lacing does not apply due to the nature of the appearance of the long coat. Secondly, the belly band is not visible from the side as the coat gets longer and should be examined the same as an agouti belly band by either lifting the coat or by direct examination of the underside of the animal by the judge.

There is still some variability in markings as there is in the Tan American from extremely over marked animals to those with minimal markings. As the variety continues to be refined, markings in well maintained lines should become more consistent, but there will likely always be some degree of variation on markings, just like any other variety.



Developing the Tan Teddy

by Laurel Christopher

Believe it or not, we've been developing the Tan Teddies since 2002. We got a pair of Tan Americans from Steve Lussier that spring and those animals were only a couple of generations out of the original imports. We developed decent animals fairly quickly, but there was some confusion regarding another person who was supposed to be presenting them. As a result, our line has expanded and contracted and expanded again. We've made some breeding choices color-wise that resulted in a lot of unshowable intermediate junk, but the end result has been some decent tans with nice teddy coats.

In order to develop the teddy coat, we crossed with our existing stock. So, we bred the tans to roans and solid goldens as well as a few reds and blacks. The best coats were in the roans and solids, so most of the crosses occurred there. As a result, we got a lot of interesting things: Tan roans, Tan brindles, Tan tri roans & ticked tans.

Obviously, some of those crosses are not ideal. I still have mismarks popping out from the brindle genes and the ticked tans are lovely but not showable despite their general resemblance to agoutis. In general, I find the safest crosses are to black series selfs (black, choc, lilac). I've had to learn the hard way that breeding to reds can be a tricky proposition. A lot of our reds came from our

solid program, and they harbor the genes for solid. As a result, I got more solids and ticked tans from those breedings than I had hoped.



Things have gone surprisingly well in the development of the tan teddy. I still have to work to overcome the repercussions of the initial crosses because the mismarks always seem to come out of nowhere. Improving the markings has also been challenging. In one case, three litters from my line were born at three different houses. The litter at my house was the same as I was used to seeing with decent markings. The second litter was tremendously over marked with the eye circles covering much of the face. The third litter was fairly under marked, yet mealy. We all traded the animals, so I have one of each in my caviary. Months later, I couldn't tell you by sight which was which. They seem to have evened out. I've never had animals born in my caviary that were as extremely over marked as that one litter.



When we finally made the choice to present them ourselves, we made a conscious choice to have the first presentation this year. Hopefully all the animals will cooperate.



Developing the Tan Texel

by Heather Bondra



Working on the Tan Texels, I started with Black Selves that carried the Himi (ca) gene. I felt that way I could control issues with the spotting gene popping up. I have been breeding for approximately two years to create my Tan to Tan breeding program. I have successfully set out pairs and trios for other breeders to help in the process. I am ready to send in my COD as the animals are really taking shape. Curl is good, markings are very good and the color

is really nice. I feel that I can have a very nice presentation in two years.

If you are interested in helping with the Tan Texel program - please let me know and I will try to get animals to you.



TEXEL TAN BABIES ARE SURE CUTE

