

Some thoughts on continuing the development of the Argente Brun Rabbit

Having first appeared by chance, in a litter of Argente Champagne in 2005, the Argente Brun after a great deal of careful breeding, has now been established as a distinct breed but is still in its formative stage in North America. Starting with just one Buck, then a subsequent litter from the original Champagne pair produced two more, one of each sex. These, together with another litter that was developed by pairing the original Buck with its mother, produced the foundation stock from which all Bruns have been produced.

In order to reduce the size to conform to the new breed standard and to improve and enhance the coat colour, an oversized (6lb) but excellent type Chocolate Mini Rex was introduced. By pairing it to a first generation junior Argente Brun Doe in 2006 considerable improvement on both points was gained. Since that time no other "Off Breed" introductions have been made within the Lindale herd. Working with inbred animals requires diligent culling, selecting for type, colour, fur quality and reproductive capability. Any questionable progeny have been eliminated but luckily these have been few.

With available breeding stock in very short supply and as the interest grows, there is reason to believe that some breeders may be tempted to increase their stock numbers by various means including the introduction of other breeds. However they would be well advised to keep a few facts in mind.

1. A good working knowledge of basic genetics is helpful and keeping written records is a must.
2. There is a carefully thought out ARBA working standard available which should be closely adhered to, a copy of which is available with a membership in the National Argent Brun Rabbit Club.
3. The Argente Brun is a "Distinct Breed" not a variety of any other.
4. The Argente Brun was originally developed in the late 1800's in Europe where it still exists in its original form, so it most definitely NOT a new breed.
5. Being a "Self" coloured breed, temptations to mix in Agouti based coloured breeds such as the New Zealand, Californian or Argente Crème should avoided at all costs. Crossing with Argente Champagne will not improve type, colour or size, in fact it would most probably be detrimental, especially the fur colour.
6. Random pairings with other breeds could and probably will cause the breed's rapid disappearance