

ARBA Recognizes 49th Rabbit Breed: The Argente Brun

At its recent annual convention, judges for the American Rabbit Breeders Association accepted the Argente Brun as its latest recognized rabbit breed.

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Posted: November 13, 2015, 7:30 p.m. EST

Courtesy of Charmaine Wardrop

The frosted appearance to the Argente Brun is one of the characteristics of the breed.

The wait is over! After several years of dedication and hard work, the Argente Brun rabbit breed was officially accepted as the 49th breed recognized by the American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA). The breed received the honor at the 92nd annual American Rabbit Breeders Association convention held in Portland, Oregon, October 31st to November 4th, 2015.

The Argente Brun, which is closely related to the Champagne d'Argent breed, was introduced to North America by Ed White of Canada, where the breed is recognized by the Dominion Rabbit & Cavy Breeders Association. A large rabbit weighing from 8 to 10½ pounds at maturity, the Argente Brun is chocolate in color, but possesses a silver or frosted appearance that affects the overall coat color. Charmaine Wardrop of Washington — a breeder of Creme d'Argent and Champagne d'Argent rabbits — was looking for a new breed to work with in 2008 and 2009, "and I stumbled across a website that listed Argente Brun," she said.

Wardrop and her late husband purchased some Argente Brun breeding stock from White and began to further develop the breed with an eye on getting them accepted by the ARBA. "I am very experienced with the type, bone and fur of [the Creme d'Argent and the Champagne d'Argent]," she said. In the intervening years, she has worked to develop Argente Bruns of "high quality with beautiful coloring." "I [feel] like I have been able to have does produce kits that are uniform in color and type," she said. "Kits to grow into their potential 9-10 pounds within 8 months."

Courtesy of Charmaine Wardrop

The Argente Brun is the largest rabbit breed to be recognized by the American Rabbit Breeders Association in the past 10 years.

On November 9, 2009, Wardrop and her husband were issued an ARBA Certificate of Development (COD) for the Argente Brun.

"[The] ARBA was very rigid in their acceptance of this breed as a foreign breed due to their similarities with the Champagne d'Argents," Wardrop said. "Between the breeder, myself and my late husband, we worded and reworded several drafts of [the Standard of Perfection] that would eventually meet ARBA's strict rules." Compared to the acceptance of the Lionhead rabbit breed at the 2013 convention after a years-long process, the Argente Brun moved through the approval process much more quickly, although it was a process that required a great deal of dedication. The Certificate of Development was issued to Wardrop in 2009, and to receive approval, the Argente Brun had to pass its presentation at three ABRA conventions.

This brings us up to the 2015 ARBA Convention, where the Argente Brun successfully passed for the third year in a row and was officially accepted by the ARBA. "I just prayed that they would pass again and that the people could see the worthiness," Wardrop said.

On February 1, 2016, the breed will be officially recognized with the ARBA. "An Argente Brun specialty club is in the works," Wardrop said, noting that there are currently breeders of Argente Bruns in New Hampshire, Indiana, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, Alabama, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, California, Oregon and Washington. The Facebook page Welcoming Argente Bruns focuses on the breed.

In size, the Argente Brun is the largest new rabbit breed recognized by the ARBA in nearly 30 years. The only breeds recognized by the ARBA in the past 10 years have been the Lionhead, Mini Satin and Thrianta — all of which weigh less than 6 pounds and illustrate the overall shift to smaller rabbit breeds for rabbit enthusiasts. But the beauty and qualities of the Argente Brun just may inspire people to explore this delightful larger breed.