

A Guide to Chinchilla Shows

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SHOW ETIQUETTE

1. Do plan on being on time and allowing enough time to groom and cage your animals by entry deadline. If you are a new rancher needing help at your first couple shows - COME EARLY. Help others get their cages, etc. and they will help you also. Be sure to take advantage of local meetings when they have programs on learning to groom. There are tapes available for purchase.
2. When entering your animals - ALWAYS enter your cage numbers in ascending order (1 - 2 - 3 etc.). When you jumble the cage numbers on your entry form it makes added work for the awards table locating your entries.
3. After grooming, clean up all your loose fur. At an overnight show - clean up feed, hay, etc. into trash container (NOT ON THE FLOOR). Pack some newspapers with your show equipment and put down under your animals as you groom or work with them to make clean up easier. If we all clean up our own areas - there won't be as much to clean up later.
4. Don't blow into or handle other ranchers cages or hang over them with cigarettes, drinks, etc.
5. When picking up cages - do not hold over the top of other animals as they could wet on each other. Always carry one animal per hand. Carrying two cages in one hand allows animals can pull fur from each other or the fur may be caught between cages as you carry them.
6. Stay away from all animals once they have been entered in the show.
7. Animal handlers only should be behind the show table while the judges are working.
8. When the judges are speaking it's common courtesy to keep quiet and listen! If you don't want to hear the comments or have a conversation that must be carried on, PLEASE leave the show room completely so that those who wish to hear can hear.
9. Break down cages after the show and do your part to clean the show room. Don't leave it to the few loyal workers who ALWAYS have to stay and clean up because YOU are in a hurry or must leave. They might be in a hurry too!
10. NO SMOKING in the show room. This is for the benefit of the animals and the other exhibitors. Also, in a small area with several smokers you will see a haze in the air. It accumulates under the show lights and distorts the view of the judges - not to mention burning their eyes.
11. Be willing to help out! ALL shows need workers - look around and volunteer to help at a job you would like to learn more about. Remember, the best way to learn is by helping out at a show. Be an active part- it's more fun.

MOST OF THE ABOVE TIPS ARE ALSO PROPER WHEN
ENTERING AND ATTENDING A SHOW.

EMPRESS CHINCHILLA QUALITY STANDARD EVALUATION PROGRAM

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Three terms can be used to describe either the live animal or the pelt:

- * COLOR It is accepted that a specific fur should be of a certain color, whether it be fox, mink, or chinchilla. Each has a particular color that is indigenous to it and ideally, that color should be distinct and clear - - - void of dullness, muddiness, or off-color. In the case of chinchilla where the desired color is bluefish grey, it should not have a dull, muddy appearance nor any yellow or reddish off-color.

- * QUALITY the sum total of all of the characteristics of the fur, *exclusive* of color and size. Therefore, the individual characteristics entitled, strength, density, texture, distribution of veiling, etc., all contribute to the over all appearance that is termed "quality."

- * SIZE Is it small, large, or somewhere in between? On a pelt, "the area covered."

These terms are not unique to chinchilla. They have been used to totally describe most other furs for centuries. The expansion of these terms into a more detailed analysis, and specifically for chinchilla, would make use of the following terminology:

1. CLARITY OF COLOR - of an animal is judged by the clearness of its color, plus the presence or absence of a distinct impression of blue. While the two factors often are closely-connected, an animal can be clear with-out being blue. Whether an animal is Light, Medium, or Dark, is of no consequence when attempting to determine the clearness or the clarity of that color.

2. THE STRENGTH OF FUR - is judged by the snap with which it regains its original position after disarrangement. The ability of the hair to exert resistance to an outside force and retain its original, upright position. It is the vitality or the resilience of the hair.

3. DENSITY - is the volume of fur, quantity, or the number of hair fibers per given area. Strength and density, together, produce what is known as "cushion."
4. TEXTURE - is, theoretically, the fineness or coarseness of the individual fur fiber. In practice, texture becomes the over all look of softness or silkiness. Self explanatory terms such as, "silky"- "woolly"="coarse"- "singled," can properly be used to define the texture of a chinchilla.
5. VEILING COVERAGE - has to do with the quantity and the distribution of the veiling tip - the extent to which the veiling tip is carried throughout the body.
6. FUR PATTERN - is the composition or arrangement of the hair resulting in the appearance of the surface of the pelt. A result of the total composition or arrangement of the hair. Good pattern is a smooth, unbroken flow of the surface of the fur suggesting absolute evenness. Any irregularity in fur continuity such as, swirls - choppiness – a mottled appearance - any brokenness or unevenness - is objectionable.
7. SIZE - quantity of. If it is an animal, it could be Extra-large and range down to Small. If it is a pelt, physical area covered.
8. CONFORMATION - a wide head with a comparatively wide and square nose, a heavy "bull neck," massive shoulders, and a compact body, constitute a most desirable conformation.

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GLOSSARY of TERMS

It was found at some of the classes for training Judges in the Empress Evaluation Program, that judges in different parts of the country used different explanatory terms. Or, some of them used the same terms, but with a different meaning. It was also found that one of the things a new judge had to learn, was those same terms. After the first few animals, the judge ran out of words. He kept saying the same things about every animal, over and over. From definitions in the dictionary; a study of articles in past issues of the magazine; conversations with experienced breeders and judges; and discussions at the above mentioned classes, the following Glossary of Terms should be used by judges with the approved definitions.

This is one of the first steps toward more uniform judging. I hope before the next judging season to have a group of slides illustrating most of these terms.

The following are descriptive terms that may be used by a judge or grader . . .

compiled by Howard Clements

OVERALL COLOR

Blue - The standard says that excellent color of veiling shall be a clear blue or black. When a furrier calls a fur blue, he means clear; a sharp distinct shade of the desired color. There is no blue pigment in standard chinchilla fur. What is wanted in the standard chinchilla is black pigment with no red or yellow pigment. This, under certain light, will give an illusion of blue. Veiling that is blue-black will tend to cause the bar to be gray or blue-gray where it blends into the edge of the bar. This will not cause the bar to appear off-color as is the case where black veiling that has a little red pigment (brownish tint) blends into the top edge of the bar.

Black - Sharp, clear black veiling, but without the bluish cast referred to above. Perhaps just a hint of red or yellow pigment in the fur to give a slight drop in clarity, but not the appearance of off-color.

Bright - Lustrous, sharp color reflecting light.

Clear - The desired color with no off color of any type.

Shaded - Just a little dull; not quite as sharp or brilliant as desired.

Muddy - Dull, cloudy, fur without luster or sheen.

Dull - Lacks luster; old fur; past prime; no sheen.

Washed Out - Lack of good veiling and/or a muddy bar kills the luster and the beauty of the fur.

Mousy - Again, a dull flat gray fur with no sheen or luster.

No Character - Similar to mousy and dull; not beautiful.

Cast or Casty - Very slightly offcolor; the next step below shaded; muddy or dull.

Off-Color - The fur has some degree of red or yellow pigment either in the bar or veiling or both. Showing up as a brown or yellow tinge. Usually expressed as slightly off-color or badly off-color.

DENSITY



Density: dense

The density of fur refers to the thickness of fur. Both the spacing of the fur follicles and the number of strands of fur per follicle. The number of fur follicles per unit area of skin is fixed at birth and cannot be changed by diet or environment. The number of strands of fur per follicle can be changed by diet, temperature, light or other environmental factors as well as the genetic inheritance of the animal. Density of the fur may be checked by LIGHTLY blowing into the fur. A light puff of air on the shoulder or hip of the animal should be enough to determine the density. If the animal is thinly furred on the neck, it will also be thin on the shoulder. Most of them are more heavily furred on the rump so it is not necessary to check there. To repeat, it is neither necessary nor desirable to blow hard or to blow all over the animal; this will only create a significant pattern disturbance. Simply blow just enough to separate the fur in order to determine whether it is thick or not. It IS necessary to blow on some of the animals, however. I know, some people say that it is not necessary to blow into the fur to determine density. I also know some judges have made a fool of themselves by saying an animal was thinly furred, or vice-versa, when the opposite was true. So, it is not fair to the animal or the owner to fail to blow lightly into the fur WHEN NECESSARY.

Very Dense - Close spacing of the follicles and many strands of fur in each follicle, making it difficult to see the skin on any part of the animal

Dense - A good volume of fur with good resilience. In grading, we teach that the patch of skin you see when lightly puffing into the fur should be no larger than a grain of wheat or rice. Density should be checked in the area where the fur is the thinnest, usually on the neck, shoulder, hip or sides.

Plushy - Indicating a great volume of fur, this would be a combination of density, fur length and resilience.

Fur Strength - Really a separate item but a judge may comment on it in relation to density.

Snap - Same as above, pertains more to resilience but may be a comment on density.

Open - Very thin fur that lies open. Often used as "open hips."

Compact - Usually used to describe a short-furred, dense animal.

Thin Fur - Few strands of fur per follicle. The opposite of dense. Lack of sufficient fur to make a satisfactory pelt.

FUR PATTERN



Fur Pattern: split grotzen

Fur Pattern - The flow of fur over the animal or pelt.

Silky - The dictionary says "lustrous smooth;" where it is used describing pattern, it should mean a soft, smooth, even flow of fur.

Smooth - An even flow of fur with no disturbance.

Velvety - An even flow of fur that has the appearance of velvet. Uniform, even fur length.

Even - The fur appears to all be of the same length, prime, smooth, no disturbance.

Break In Pattern - Slight break in the smooth flow of fur; small spot of fur missing; anything that disturbs the smooth, even flow of fur.

Rippled - Slight ruffling of the surface; small waves on the fur.

Choppy - Larger, uneven ripples or short, uneven small waves.

Wavy - The fur usually waves from side to side rather than up and down.

Swirly - Badly waved, almost curled.

Cowlick - A swirl or twist in the fur making a complete circle.

Marcelled - Regular, small, continuous waves.

Curly - Small, tight swirls.

Rough - Fur badly disturbed in any manner.

New Fur - An unprime condition with new fur coming in but not fully grown out.

Singed - The fine tips of the fur having the appearance of having been lightly burned with a hot iron. Usually seen on old fur, but can be caused by a coarse, sharp dust bath or friction on a surface.

Priming Line - A point or line on the fur where new fur, coming in, is just reaching the surface. Causing a slight wave or break in the smooth surface of the fur.

Split Grotzen - The grotzen is the darker streak of veiling down the back of the chinchilla. Most animals with hair or fur on their back have this darker streak. A split grotzen is a parting of the fur that runs down the back of the animal.

Chewed or Fur Chewed - A spot or area where the veiling and bar is chewed off so the underfur is visible. Woolly-Matted fur, usually slightly curled, resembling wool.

Cottony - Similar to woolly, matted without a definite flow pattern.

Matted - Fur forms a tangled mass. Often caused because the old dead fur has not shed out and is tangled with the new fur when it grows in.

Fur Balls - Small matted areas, often only an eighth inch or less in size.

Mottled - Spotted or blotched in color because of fur disturbance. The bar showing through the veiling in spots.

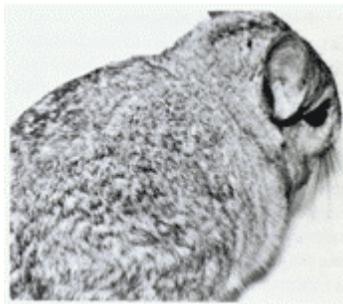
Plymouth Rock - A mottled appearance in stripes across the back. As the appearance of the coloring on the feathers of a Plymouth Rock chicken.

Salt and Pepper - A mottled appearance with very small spots.

Out of Prime - The chinchilla is in process of growing a new coat of fur. The new fur coming in causes rough spots on the surface of the fur and detracts from the appearance of the animal.

Not In Show Condition - To be in show condition, a chinchilla should be as nearly prime and smooth as possible. Any of the descriptive terms used under the descriptions of fur pattern would cause the animal to be not in show condition.

TEXTURE



Texture: coarse

In theory texture means the fineness or coarseness of the fur. In practice it means the overall appearance of softness or fineness of the fur. Many of the same terms are used as in the description of pattern. Some confusion exists as for many years the term texture originally meant what we now mean by both texture and pattern. Now texture is used to mean only the appearance of softness and pattern, the arrangement of the fur.

Silky - Very fine closely set hairs; smooth, soft appearance.

Fine - Very thin strands of fur. Not quite as soft appearing as silky.

Coarse - Opposite of fine, the fur strands appear to be larger in diameter.

Past Prime - The fur has lost its luster. It appears dull and lacks the silk appearance of fine fur.

Singed, Woolly, Cottony - Mean the same as applied to fur pattern.

VEILING COVERAGE



Veiling: Uniform

The veiling of a chinchilla is the darker tips on each strand of fur. The pattern of color formed by the distribution of the density of the veiling tips and the amount of this darker color is termed the veiling coverage or veiling pattern.

Dense - Heavily veiled or thickly covered with veiling.

Uniform - Evenly covered with veiling.

Even Flow - Same meaning. Uniform coverage.

Washed Out - Lack of veiling; insufficient veiling coverage.

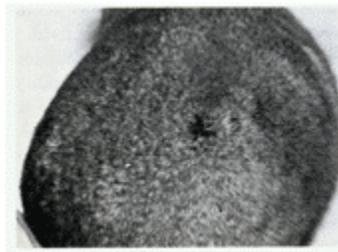
Open Hips - Lack of veiling over the hips.

Weak on Neck - Lack of veiling over the neck. Usually accompanied by lack of veiling on the shoulders.

Wrap Around - The way the veiling pattern extends down the sides of the animal.

Grotzen - The darker stripe down the back of the animal.

FUR STRENGTH



Fur Strength: strong

Snap - To make a quick return to the former position after the fur has been disturbed.

Resilience - The ability to return to the former position; rebound.

Plushy - Fur with good density and volume that has resilience.

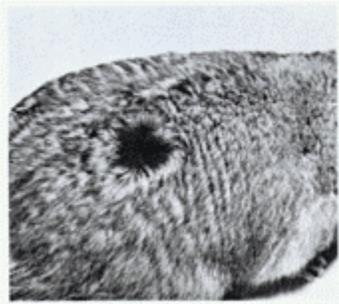
Flat - Lies flat on the body.

Weak - Usually too fine fur that lacks strength and resiliency.

Crew Cut - Fur that stands up on the animal as opposed to fur that lies down.

Strong - Not extremely fine fur, but fur with good resiliency and snap.

BAR UNIFORMITY



Bar Uniformity: blended

No Bar - Bar is very gray and/or very narrow to the point where it is not readily apparent.

Narrow Bar - Bar that is narrower than that specified in the standard.

Wide Bar - Bar that is wider than the standard, usually on the hips.

Muddy - Bar that is gray, dull, not distinct.

Gray - Bar with enough black or gray pigment that it is not bright and distinct.

Blended - Not sharply defined. Most young animals have a bar that is gray or blended as the first three coats of fur are not all of exactly the same length so the edges of the bar tend to blend with the veiling and underfur.

Mingled with Top Fur - Badly blended so as to be almost invisible.

FUR LENGTH AND VOLUME



Fur length and Volume: too long

Fur Length - The standard says "the fur should be approximately the same length over the neck, back, rump, hips and sides. It should be between 3/4 and 1 1/4 inches long." Short Fur - Would be fur definitely shorter than specified by the standard.

Crew Cut - Fur that grows perpendicularly to the skin.

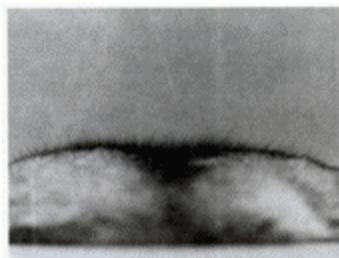
Uneven Length - Could be used to describe unprime fur with priming lines, or fur too short on the neck or back, or too long on hips or rump.

Too Long - Fur longer than the standard, usually on hips or rump. *Lies Open* - Very thin fur with no resilience; usually too long.

***Plushy* - Good volume with good density and resilience.**

Good Quality - Quality to a furrier means everything except color. Good quality would mean good density, volume, resilience, texture, pattern, etc.

KING HAIR



King Hair: glossy

Too Long - The king hair should stand 1/8 to 1/4 inch above the fur; it should not be so long as to make the animal appear shaggy. However, the king hair on the pelt usually does not stand up, it lies down, so what appears to be long king hair on the live animal may not detract from the pelt.

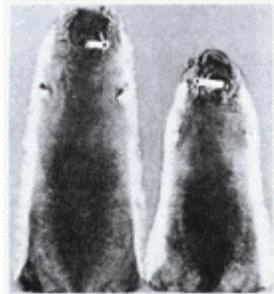
Not Enough - There should be enough king hair to be readily apparent all over the animal.

Too Much - I have heard judges comment on too much king hair, but I question if there could be too much. I think they probably meant too long.

Coarse - The king hair normally is much coarser than the fur. I don't know what the diameter of the hair is supposed to be or how you would determine if it were too coarse.

Glossy - Lustrous, shiny.

SIZE



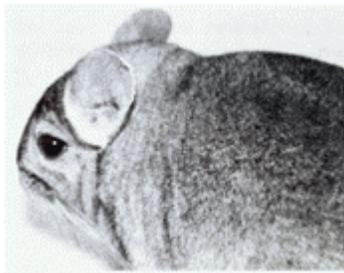
The size of area of the pelt is very important, as a large pelt will bring much more than a small pelt. In judging the animal the estimated of the pelt should be kept in mind. A fat animal will not always have a larger pelt than one that is not fat.

The average adult chinchilla will weigh approximately 16-20 ounces and produce a pelt approximately 3-1/2 - 4-1/2 inches wide and 12-15 inches long. The terms extra large, large, medium, average and small are self-explanatory.

Long Body - A Lanigera or large Costina type animal.

Baby - Not full grown, an explanation of size.

CONFORMATION



Conformation: blocky

Costina - A small chinchilla supposedly originally from lower altitudes of Chile with a longer body, narrow shoulders, a dip in the neck and short fur.

Lanigera - A larger animal, average size, said to come from higher altitudes of Chile and Peru.

Brevicaudata - (Spanish for short tail) A large blocky chinchilla with longer fur and very small ears.

Almost all of our present chinchillas are crosses of these various types. The type usually preferred by the judges is a large Lanigera type with *Brevicaudata* conformation.

Round Body - Animal that appears almost round when viewed from above.

Oval - A little longer body; oval when viewed from above.

Long - Body longer and narrower than the oval body.

Narrow - A long narrow body, wider on the hips than through the shoulders.

Compact Body - Round or oval, short and blocky.

Blocky - A short, round body-wide through the neck and shoulders.

NECK



Neck: Dip in the neck

The neck is important as that is the weakest point on most of our pelts. Usually the fur is thinner, may be shorter and lacks veiling on the neck.

Full Neck - A chinchilla with a full neck, when viewed from the side would appear to have almost a straight line along the top of the fur from the head over the neck to the back.

Roached - The fur extending higher on the neck than on the head and shoulders.

Medium Full - The fur in the neck area dipping very slightly.

Dip in the Neck - The fur shorter in the neck area than on the body so there appears to be a pronounced dip in that area when viewed from the side.

Bull Neck - A large full-furred neck with a roach so the fur extends above the head and body of the animal.

Short Neck - Self-explanatory; a short, round blocky animal.

empress chinchilla--July, 1973

JUDGING PHRASES and TERMINOLOGY

Bright	the degree to which the color reflects the light; very bright refers to truly lustrous blue coat
Clear	having precisely the desired color, it's very sharp in appearance. Sometimes, a judge may say off-color, when referring to clearness but this is not a preferred comment as it doesn't tell you exactly how far from the ideal it is
One Step Down In Color	again this reference to color doesn't mean it is a medium as opposed to a light medium but refers to the clearness of that particular shade. "One step down" tells you precisely that there is something better by one degree.
Dull	if the judge used this term, he is pointing out that the fur lacks luster and that is probably the result of being over prime. There is no sheen to the coat.
Not as Sharp as We'd Like to See	this piece of terminology is almost self-explanatory. The judge is telling you it could be better and the sharpness again refers to the brightness that the animal projects.
Casty	the fur is off-color (not a clear blue-grey). It is sometimes caused by a muddy bar.
Blended Bar or Muddy Bar	the animal lacks a sharp, sparkling white bar.
Muddy	the idea behind the term is easy to understand if you think of water-crystal clear water as opposed to murky water. Muddy is an expression sometimes used and the judge is commenting on the state of the bar. The bar is the white section between the underfur and the tip. If it is muddy, it is not perfectly white and makes the fur appear dull.
Straight Shaft	each individual strand of fur is without any kinks or waves.
Stand Up Type Fur	this is a strong fur with good resilience and has the ability to bounce back if touched. It is perpendicular to the skin and does not lie down.
Density	thickness of fur. It is controlled by the number of fur follicles on the animal. There are 80-120 hairs per follicle

	on an average. The thickness of these individual hairs also determines density.
Uneven Density	the judge is telling you that parts of the body are not as thickly furred as the others. The less dense areas are commonly found in the neck, shoulders, hips or sides. It's usually the thickest over the back and rump.
Loft	density plus fur strength
Close Knit	a large volume of fur with many fibers per square unit. It looks nice and plushy.
Texture	refers to the fineness or coarseness of the individual fur fibers.
Plushy Fur	a good loft plus a silky fur combination of fur length and loft.
Compact	usually used when referring to a dense animal that has basically shorter fur than the preferred 1-1/8" to 1-3/16"
Crew Cut	the fur is silky and strong but doesn't have enough loft. The guard hairs are too short.
Soft Fur	lacks fur strength. It may be due to a lack of guard hairs.
Woolly Hips	along with the fur being soft, it is also shaggy. This is caused by a hair that is not straight (it has a hook on the end of it).
Saddle Backs	fur on the back is shorter than on the rest of the animal. Check for a dip in the back of the animal. This is a very dominant characteristic.
Cottony Fur	kinky fur (hairs are too fine), may also have a tendency to form an uneven flow or pattern - it also lacks fur strength.
Bull Neck or Roach Neck	animal has a ruff of fur behind the ears. Usually found in big, blocky animals.
Grotzen	the dark pattern down the center of the pelt.
Pattern Break	it is caused by saddle backs, lack of density or lack of veiling in the neck particularly.
Fur Pattern	the appearance of the surface of the fur. Good fur pattern is

	an unbroken, smooth flow over the surface of the fur.
Costina Type	wedge-shaped animal with silky fur
Wedge-Shaped	the animal is pointed at the nose, narrow at the neck and wide at the hips.
Guard Hairs	the long, courser hairs coming up above the basic coat of fur. Each guard hair has their own hair follicle. If he says "spiky", it means they are coming up more than 1/4" above the rest of the fur. They should only be 1/16" longer.
Lacking Guard Hairs	the guard hairs are either too short or there is not enough of them.
Halo	light ring around the back of the neck
High on Sides	the demarcation line between the darker fur and the white belly is higher than it should be either on the sides or the legs.
Veiling Tips	the dark tip of the fur. If veiling is very shallow, the animal will look off-color. To get more veiling tips, breed to lighter animal.
Lacks Finish	lacks eye appeal, it is not a sharp blue, maybe lacks prime.
Large	the animal has achieved the desired size regardless of se or age, namely, more than 18 oz. if weighed.
Good Size	a favorable comment implying satisfactory growth.
Small Animal	a comment made about an adult who has not achieved the optimum size for its age.
Small for its age	self explicit - a downfall in the animal, should be larger
Blocky	round body, wide through the neck and shoulders.
Lack of Conformation	refers to the narrowness in the neck and shoulders area as opposed to the hips.
Lack of Conformation in the Shoulders	refers to the height of the animal from the floor to the top of the shoulder when you look at it from the side.

PREPARING FOR A SHOW

One topic most chinchilla rancher's agree on is the importance of participating in the shows and field days. The recognition it brings is rewarding, but the education is the real prize. All of us, new ranchers and established ranchers, need the outside opinions provided during the shows. Some of us have a tendency to rely on our animals' pedigrees and can become "barn blind". This blindness can be costly but it can be cured quickly, (although it is sometimes painful) with a good dose of show participation.

Sometimes the show is viewed as a beauty contest, but learning why the animals are placed as 1st, 2nd, etc. should be an important influence to a rancher's breeding program. However, a judge is only able to see what is in front of him" the animal's genetic background, air quality, and housekeeping can be contributing factors to it's show appearance.

Everyone has their own way of selecting animals for a show. The following is what I have found to work for my ranch:

6 to 8 weeks before the show:

- Comb each animal that you are considering as a show candidate
- Put fresh dust in each candidate's duster
- Comb every week. (This helps remove the dead fur and allows the dust to get deeper) - Tatoo their ears several weeks before the show. (this is done in case of blood and it also gives the ears time to look good) The ranch brand in the left ear, year letter and number in the right

2 to 3 weeks before the show:

- Select the animals you will use as your show string, plus a couple of alternates. - Dust every day.

2 to 3 days before the show:

- Do not dust two days (darks and blacks 3 days) before the show. Dust left in the animals' fur will give them a dull look
- Trim the end of the hair on the tail since it usually has a tan or dirty rip. This gives a neater appearance, as well as removing any tan cast it may reflect day of show:
- Comb each animal then sit back and enjoy the show!

Show participants do not always agree with the Judges, but please bite your tongue and think about their comments. They may point out something you were barn blind on.

Empress Breeder - Nov 1993