

# *Cavy Showmanship*



Introduction to cavy showmanship and  
basic presentation expectations and skill sets.

# ~ Pose List ~

- Introduction
  - Exhibitor: Name / Age / Club / Etc.
  - Animal: Name / Breed / Variety / Age / Etc.
- Carry To Table
- The Ears
- The Eyes
- The Teeth
- The Nose
- The Front Legs, Feet & Nails
- The Chest & Belly
- The Hind Legs, Feet & Nails
- The Sex & Scent Glands
- The Fur & Skin (Condition & Color)
- 360\* Pose View
  - Side View: Left
  - Front View
  - Side View: Right
  - Rear View
  - Back to Original Pose
- Lift From Table

# Handling

- Proper handling is essential to your cavy's health and wellbeing as well as for safety.
- Never handle your cavy roughly or carelessly.
- Always support your cavy's rump when picking it up and holding. Cavies can become very nervous or excited if they are not properly supported when being handled and may struggle or scratch.
- Do not let your cavy dangle, but perform the motion of picking it up smoothly.



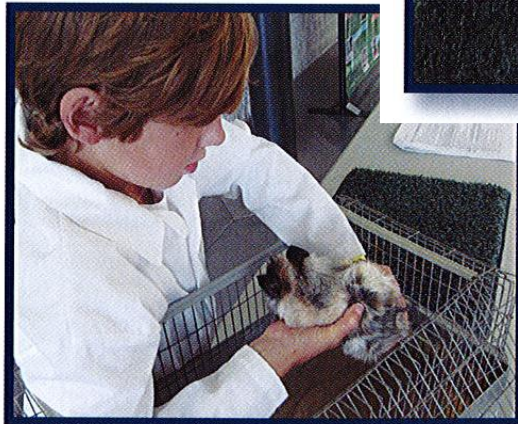
# Handling – Picking Up

- To pick up a cavy, grasp it firmly around the shoulders with one hand, placing your thumb just behind the head and in front of the front legs, and your remaining fingers behind the front legs and around the rib cage.
- Lift the cavy's front legs and slide your other hand under the rear end for support.



## Removing from a cage:

- Lift your cavy from its cage, bringing it toward you headfirst so it does not get caught on the sides of the cage opening.



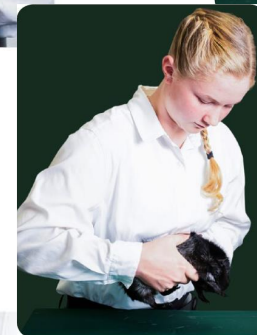
# Carry to the Table

- Remove cavy from cage and carry to the table.
- To properly hold your cavy, its head should be facing your elbow, resting on your forearm.
- Always put in proper carriage when asked to move positions on the table.
- Proper Carriage:
  - Grasp the forepart of the body securely with the right hand.
  - Place the left hand under the rear legs to support the heavy part of the body.
  - Tuck its head underneath your arm while supporting the rear end with your wrist and other hand.



# ~ Posing ~

- Every time you put your cavy on the table you should pose it.
- At the table when your arm(s) are free from handling your cavy they should drop to your side or place both arms behind your back.
- Using carpet will help your cavy have the necessary grip to pose properly.
- When picking up the cavy to turn it, make sure the toenails are not dragging the carpet.
- Move the animal in quarter or half turns.
- Proper Posing:
  - Slowly place the animal on the carpet piece on the table.
  - Set the front legs directly under the shoulders, and the hind legs under the hips, with the feet tucked under. Do this using one hand to set each foot separately. Make sure the cavy is not too stretched out or tucked in.
  - Gently touch the end of the animal's nose to help induce the animal to lower its nose, thus raising the crown and shoulders, and will help pose the cavy in a natural way.



# Handling – Flipping & Pivoting

- Examination

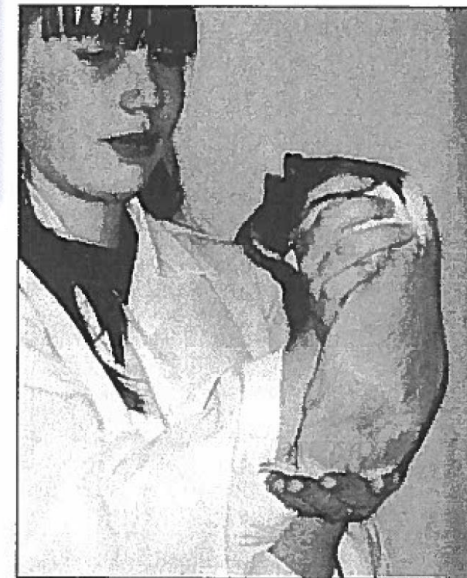
- To begin examination, hold the cavy firmly in both hands after properly picking up the cavy.

- Flipping

- Turn the cavy easily and smoothly onto its back. To do this grasp the cavy's shoulders firmly with one hand, your other hand should support the hindquarters while turning.
- Hold the animal firmly in position against your body, in the crook of your arm.
- Support the cavy in the crack between your arm and your body, or on the table. You can hold and examine a very small cavy in the palm of your hand.

- Pivoting

- Only the hand holding the cavy's chest actually moves. The other hand serves to rest the cavy on.



# ~ The Ears ~

- Position the cavy facing the judge.
- Expose ears using index fingers to lift into view.
- Purpose:
  - Check for ear tag (proper ear & placement, call out number)
  - Check for tears or slits
  - Check for mites – look into the ear to see if there is a crusty, black film
  - Examine the area behind the ears for skin tags
  - Examine the hairs in the crown of the head for any foreign hair colors





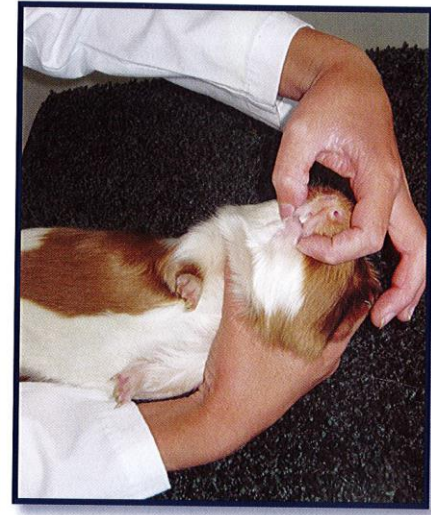
# ~ The Eyes ~

- Position the cavy facing the judge.
- Keep hands behind head to prevent movement of the head.
- Gently “scissor” open eyelids between index and middle fingers.
- Purpose:
  - Check the size of the eyeballs – should be the same size and bold, set in a natural position
  - Check eyes for color – should be true to the variety
  - Check for blindness – look into the eye to see if there is cloudy or milkiness to the cornea
  - Check for white spots, fatty eye, etc.



# ~ The Teeth ~

- Rest the cavy on the table supporting the upper part of the body with one hand and use the other to expose the teeth.
- Lay cavy on back and hold down with one hand, supporting the cavy's rump against your body and holding the cavy's shoulder in your hand. With other hand under the cavy's head, reach around with thumb and fingers (so it cannot bite you) and gently pull its upper lips. Use index finger on the head holding the cavy down to pull down the lower lip.
- Facing the cavy towards the judge, keep hands behind head to prevent movement and expose teeth by lifting lips with index and middle fingers.
- Purpose:
  - Look for broken or crooked teeth; teeth not meeting properly (malocclusion)



# ~ The Nose ~

- Examine the nose area by pointing your index and middle fingers together and lightly wiping up the front of the nose.
- Display your fingers to the judge to show any signs of discharge.
- Look for signs of discharge – the nose should be dry, clean, and free of discharge.
- Purpose:
  - Check nose for discharge and other evidence of colds and illness



# ~ The Front Legs ~

- Gently lift the cavy by placing fingers under the chin and lift until the front feet just come off the table.
- Face cavy forward with one hand underneath to lift cavy's front end off ground slightly. With your other hand, slide your fingers gently down the leg. Avoid pulling on the leg as this causes the cavy to pull away.
- Gently spread out toenails over your finger to check.
- Purpose:
  - Check for straightness of legs, a full set of toes and toenails
  - Check for missing or broken toenails
  - Check toenail colors
  - Verify no extra toes (polydactyl)
  - Check for any residue from nasal discharge on forelimbs



# ~ The Chest & Belly ~

- Check under the throat for lumps or abscesses.
- Check for foreign hair coloring between front legs, belly. Run fingers up and down over the cavy's belly hair.
- Gently press the cavy's abdomen with the fingers on one hand to look for signs of abscesses or lumps.
- Check for pot belly – sows in late pregnancy will have a heavy belly.
- Check both sides of the groin for lumps or abscesses.
- Purpose:
  - Look for lumps or abscesses
  - In sows check for pregnancy
  - Check belly hair color



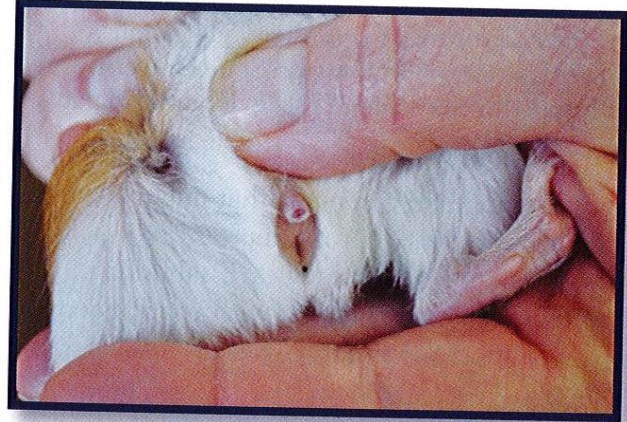
# ~ The Hind Legs ~

- Place the cavy with the rump resting on the table, supporting the upper part of the body with the right hand.
- Hold with one hand and with the other hand bring legs together and push down and back slowly to straighten and extend the legs.
- Gently slide fingers down each leg; do not pull.
- Gently spread out toenails over your finger to check.
- Purpose:
  - Look for straightness of legs and missing or off-colored toenails
  - Verify no extra toes (polydactyl)



# ~ The Sex & Sex Glands ~

- Rest the cavy with its rump on the table supporting the upper part of the body with the right hand. Use the other hand to show the sex.
- If it is a boar, gently pull back around opening to reveal sexual organ. If it is a sow, gently pull back with index finger just above opening to reveal "Y" shape opening. Be prepared to tell the judge the sex of your cavy.
- Purpose:
  - Check the sex.
  - Check for any signs of disease on the sex organs.
  - If a boar – check for impaction.



*Young boar*



*Young sow*

# ~ The Fur & Skin ~

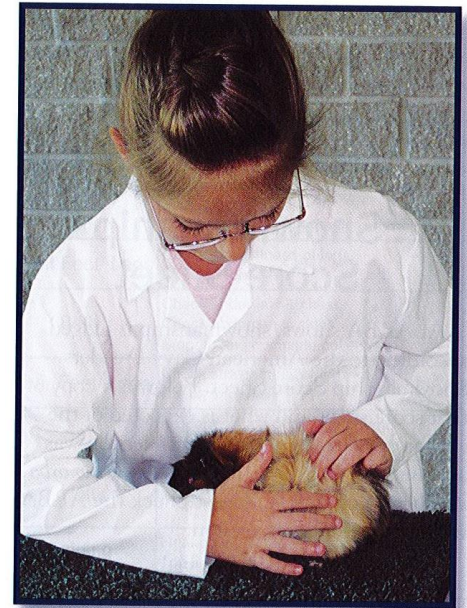
- Checking for Density:
  - On all breeds, except long hairs, blow into its hair.
  - For long hairs, grasp the hair close to the skin and feel how thick it is.
- Checking for Texture:
  - For American or White Crested – Rub hair towards head.
  - For Abyssinian or Teddy – Pat coat.
  - For Peruvians, Silkies, or Coronets – Run hands down hair.
- Checking for Length:
  - Check coat length according to breed standard.
  - Flip the rear of the coat to see the length.





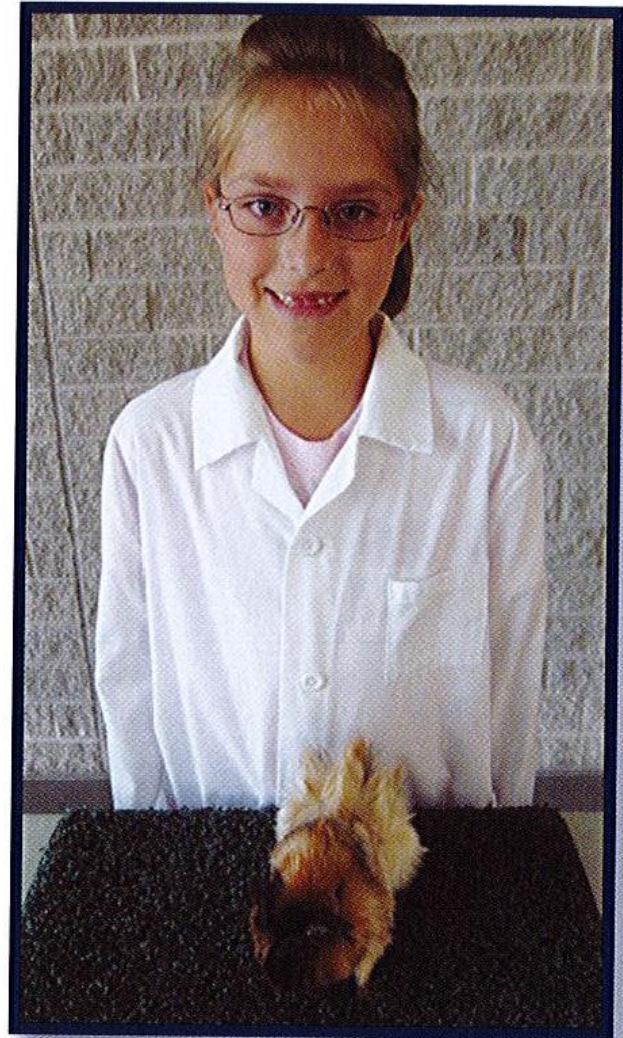
# ~ The Fur & Skin ~

- Checking for Color:
  - Check the color at the flank and table level for undercolor.
- Checking for Lice and Mites:
  - Spread hair apart and examine the hair shafts, especially around rump/tail bone area.
  - On dark colored cavies, parasites will look like grains of salt and on light cavies, parasites will appear as dark specks.
  - Do not get in judge's view (camera).



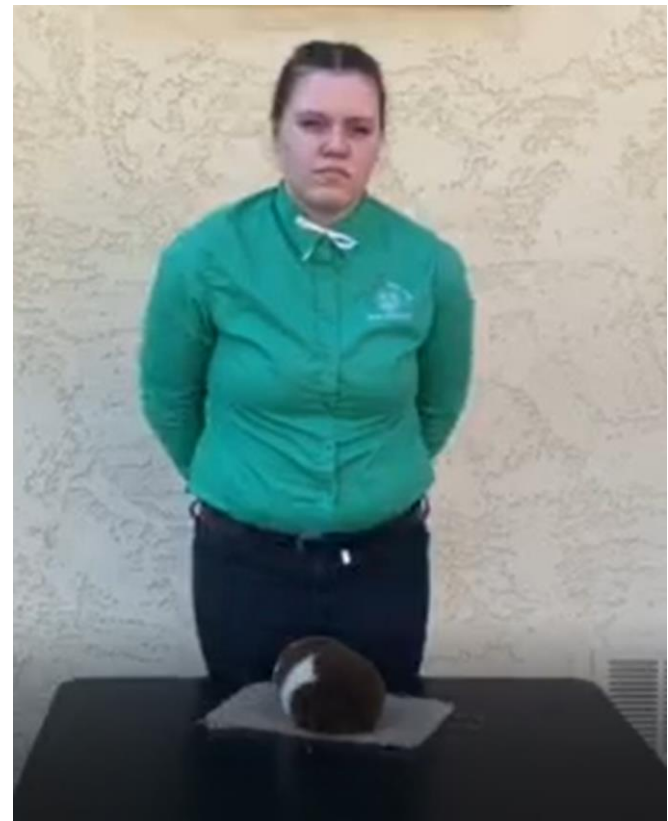
# ~ The Front View ~

- Face cavy toward judge in the posed position.
- Cavy should be posed in a comfortable balanced position.
- Position and take hands away; handling the cavy only to reposition if it moves.
- Purpose:
  - Check the head for overall balance and appropriate proportions.



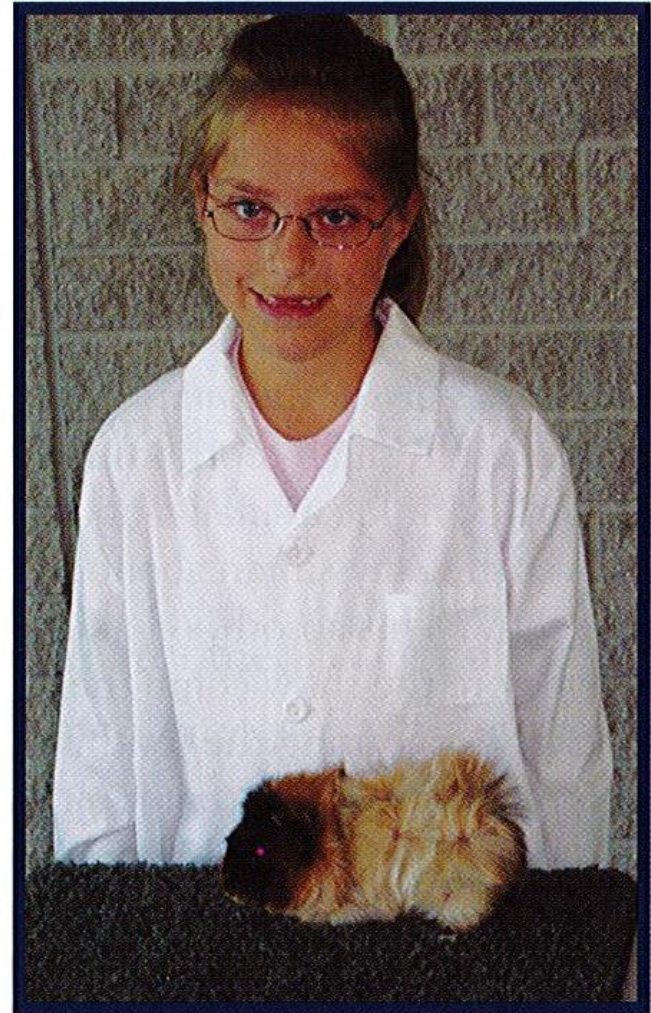
# ~ The Rear View ~

- Pose the cavy with rear facing the judge.
- Position and take hands away; handling the cavy only to reposition if it moves.
- Purpose:
  - Check for width and proportion.



# ~ The Side View ~

- Pose the cavy facing the direction requested by the judge (left or right).
- Cavy's feet should be tucked underneath and it should sit quietly.
- Do not let the cavy look mandolin-shaped or swaybacked.
- Position and take hands away; handling the cavy only to reposition if it moves.
- Purpose:
  - Look for overall balance and proportion.
  - Check for breed characteristics (Ex: Abyssinians – Rosettes)
  - Check the width by putting your hand on both sides. The cavy should be the same width at the shoulder as at the hip.



Above all remember to  
HAVE FUN!!!



Are there any ???s

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