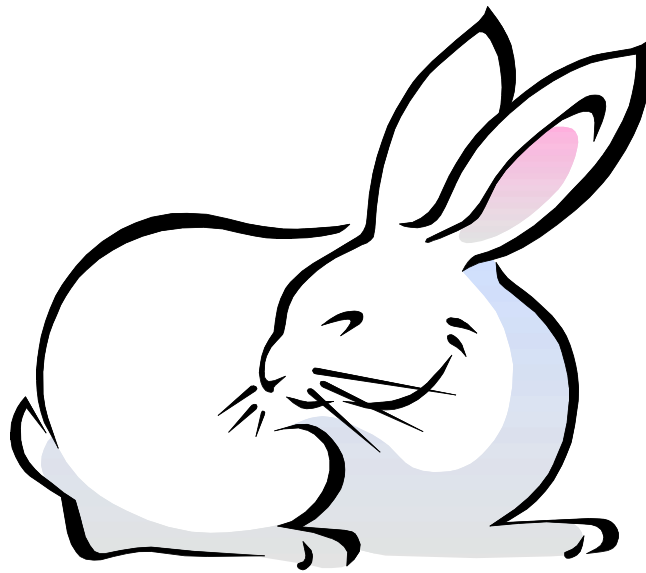


# Rabbit Dictionary

Terminology of the Rabbit Industry



Edited by:  
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February 14, 2003



Strategic Mapping & Data Services

**Feed Back:**

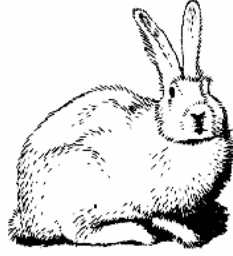
This document was edited by Dr. Michael Stachiw, and is provided to Boy Scouts, Future Farmers, Feed Dealerships, Agricultural Consultants, Rabbit Owners, and Rabbit Enthusiasts. Dr. Stachiw appreciates your comments and questions. With reader input, further revisions of this document will be greatly improved, please address your feedback to:

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## **Introduction**

The first time a person encounters the language of the rabbit industry, they either become confused or they smile inwardly at the crystal clear meaning of the vocabulary. Like most specialized fields of agriculture, the vocabulary and terminology has developed to assist in the precise transfer of information between rabbit breeders, processors, enthusiast, veterinarians and rabbit show officials. Incorrect usage and/or lack of understanding rabbit terminology can cause miscommunication to easily occur.

The terms listed in this dictionary have been compiled from a variety of sources including 4-H documents from the Cooperative Extension Service at Michigan State University, technical documents, trade journals, and those terms generally recognized and understood in the rabbit industry.





**Abcess**

a lumpy swelling or pocket of pus occurring in the rabbit's skin.

**Abortion**

premature expulsion of the fetus or unborn animal

**Adult**

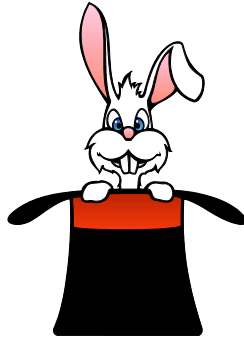
see Senior

**Amino acids**

building blocks of the protein molecule

**Anterior presentation**

normal birth. The front feet and head presented first.



**Back**

the entire top, or dorsal, portion of the rabbit, extending from the neck to tail.

**Barren**

sterile, infertile, non-breeder, incapable of producing offspring. Also open or not pregnant

**Barren period**

the period of time during which a doe does not conceive

**Belly**

lower portion of the body containing the intestines. For the purpose of specifying a color area, it is the underbody, or ventral, portion of the rabbit from the forelegs to the crotch.

**BIS**

Best in Show

**Blaze**

a white area on the head and nose running up between the eyes on rabbits with multi-colored fur.

**Blood plasma**

the liquid portion of blood in which the corpuscles of blood cells are suspended

**BOB**

Best of Breed

**Boil**

see Abscess

**BOV**

Best of Variety

**Breech presentation**

abnormal birth. The hind feet and rump presented first

**Breed**

a race or special class of domestic rabbits that reproduce distinctive characteristics of fur markings, fur texture, shape, size, and growth. A breed may be subdivided into varieties.

**Breeding Certificate**

a written certificate by the owner of a stud buck, showing the pedigree and the date of breeding to a particular doe. Proof of ancestry of the young.

**Broken Ear**

a distinct break in the cartilage which prevents erect ear carriage.

**Buck**

male rabbit

**Buck teeth**

see Wolf teeth

**Buff**

a golden orange color with a creamy cast

**Butcher run**

ungraded and unsorted rabbits purchased for slaughter

**Caked udders**

a condition sometimes suffered by lactating does which leads to blocked and irritated udders

**Cannibalism**

when a doe eats her own young

**Carbohydrate**

an organic compound containing carbon, hydrogen and oxygen only; includes sugars, starches, and cellulose; necessary in the diet of rabbits for energy

**Carcass weight**

weight of the rabbit after it has been processed

**Carriage**

the way a rabbit carries itself; the style or characteristic pose of a rabbit

**Cecotropes**

the soft feces consumed directly from the anus. See Night feces

**Cecum**

a pouch forming the beginning of the large intestine; fermentation process of digestion occurs here

**CF**

see crude fiber

**Cheek**

the sides of the face beneath the eyes

**Chest**

the front portion of the body between the forelegs and neck

**Cobby**

a term meaning stout and stocky; short legged

**Conception**

becoming pregnant; in rabbits occurs when a doe's egg(s) are fertilized by sperm from a buck

**Coprophagy**

The practice of rabbit eating droppings. Usually in rabbits this is the consumption of the soft night feces directly from the anus. See cecotrophy

**CP**

see crude protein

**Creamy**

light colored. The color of cream

**Crude Fiber(CF)**

that portion of feedstuffs composed of cellulose, hemicellulose, lignin and other polysaccharides which serve as structural and protective parts of plants (high in forages and low in grains). Not soluble in acid or alkali detergents

**Crude Protein(CP)**

total protein in a feed. To calculate the protein percentage, a feed is first chemically analyzed for nitrogen content. because proteins average about 16 percent (100 x 6.25) nitrogen, the percentage of nitrogen in the analysis is multiplied by 6.25 to give the CP percentage

**Culling**

removing a rabbit from production/reproduction herd



**Density**

the property or quality of a thick coat.

**Dewlap**

fold of loose skin that hangs from the throat

**Digest**

to transform food into a form that can be absorbed by the body

**Digestible protein(DP)**

the amount of protein of feed absorbed by the digestive tract; it may be computed using the formula:  
Percent DP = percent crude protein of feed x digestion coefficient for protein in the feed.

**Doe**

female rabbit

**Dressing**

see Processing



**Embryo**

a kit in the early stages of fetal development inside the doe

**Estrous cycle**

recurring 14 to 16 day cycle when a doe is will conceive

**Eye Circle**

even marking of color around both eyes

**Eye Color**

the color of the iris.

**False pregnancy**

see Pseudopregnancy

**Fats**

organic compounds found in vegetable oils and animal oils and necessary in the diet of rabbits

**Faults**

imperfections. Conditions or characteristics that are unacceptable and will result in lower show placing but not disqualification.

**Feed conversion**

the amount of feed used compared to the amount of weight gained (ratio of feed to weight gain)

**Fermentation**

a chemical reaction that splits complex organic compounds into simple structures; necessary for proper digestion in rabbits

**Fetus**

the developing young, or kit, still within the doe's uterus

**Fiber**

a slender, elongated, thick walled cell that gives strength and support to plants; necessary in the diet of rabbits

**Field performance trial**

tests on the effectiveness and efficiency of feeds under real-life conditions, outside the research center

**Flabby**

the condition of a rabbit when the flesh or fur hangs loosely. Not trim and shapely

**Flank**

the sides of a rabbit between the ribs and hips and above the belly

**Fly back**

prompt and even flowing back of the fur that has been stroked from the tail towards the head of the rabbit

**Forehead**

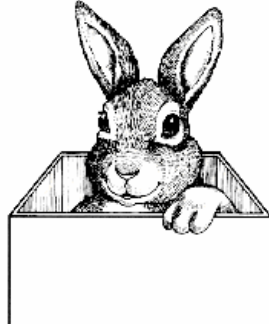
the front part of the head between the eyes and the base of the ears

**Foster out**

moving a newborn bunny from a litter too large for the mother to feed to a mother with fewer than eight bunnies

**Fryer**

young meat rabbit under five pounds

**Genotype**

the genetically dictated characteristics of the rabbit

**Gestation**

the period of carrying the developing young; in rabbits about 31 days

**Glossy**

the reflection of luster or brightness from naturally healthy fur.

**Heat period**

see Estrous cycle

**Hindquarters**

the after-portion or posterior section of the body, made up of loins, hips, hind legs, and rump

**Hip**

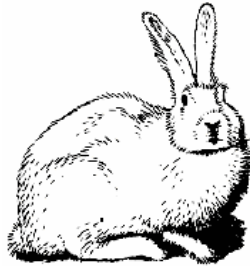
the thigh joint and large muscular first joint of the hind leg

**Hock**

the middle joint or section of the hind leg between the foot and hip

**Hump Back**

the condition of having a hump or protrusion on the back, marring an otherwise gracefully arched outline

**Inbreeding**

a breeding program involving the mating of closely related rabbit stock, such as brother and sister.

**Infertility**

the inability to become pregnant or to produce offspring

**Inherited**

the degree to which a trait or characteristic is passed on from a parent to offspring.

**Inner Ear**

the concave (curved inward) portion of the ear.

**Intermediate**

a show class term referring to rabbits that are at least six months old and no older than eight months and that fulfill the weight requirements of the breed.

**Intestinal flora**

the microorganisms present in the intestine; some are required for digestion

**Iris**

the circle of color in an eye surrounding the pupil.

**Kindling**

the birth process in rabbits

**Kit**

baby rabbit

**Knee**

the second joint on the leg. In animals, more properly called the "hock". The second joint of the foreleg is called the elbow

**Lactation**

production of milk

**Lapin**

the French word for rabbit.

**Linebreeding**

a breeding program involving the mating of rabbits that are both descended from the same animal but are related several generations back. For example: mating first cousins, uncle to niece, or aunt to nephew.

**Litter**

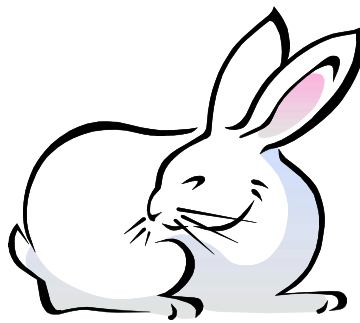
young rabbits of a doe born at the same time.

**Litter**

young rabbits of a doe born at the same time.

**Loose Coat**

the condition of fur lacking density in the undercoat, coupled usually with fine guard hairs and resulting in lack of texture. Does not indicate a slipping coat.

**Malocclusion**

an inherited defect where the upper and lower jaws do not let the teeth meet, resulting in long, uneven teeth extending out of the rabbit's mouth.

**Mandolin**

the body of the rabbit is pear shaped, having the appearance of a mandolin laid face down. Back and saddle arch toward loins to make noticeably large, broad hindquarters.

**Marked**

a rabbit's fur, usually white, which is broken up by an orderly placement of another color. Also refers to rabbits that carry the pattern of the Tan variety.

**Metabolize**

to undergo change in a complex physical or chemical manner; necessary for the maintenance of life

**Mineral**

a substance neither animal or vegetable, but inorganic, such as iron and other elements; many minerals are necessary in the diet of rabbits

**Miss**

see Pass

**Molt**

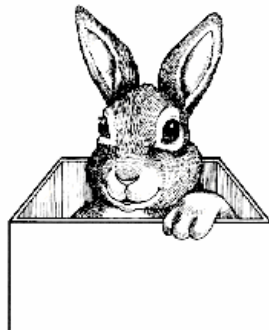
the process of shedding or changing the fur twice each year. The baby or nest fur is molted at two months.

**Mortalities**

deaths

**Muzzle**

the projecting portion of the head surrounding the mouth, nose, and lower jaw.

**Neck**

that part of the rabbit connecting the head and body.

**Nest Box**

a kindling box inside the hutch or cage hole where the kits are born and live for the first 18 to 21 days.

**Nick**

mating that produces offspring superior to either parent.

**Night feces**

soft feces produced at night, higher in vitamins with a gel like consistency

**Nutrition**

the steps by which a living organism takes in food and uses it for growth and tissue replacement



**Off-Colored**

applied to several hairs or patches of fur foreign to the standard color of the rabbit.

**Open Coat**

see Loose Coat.

**Outbreeding**

a breeding program involving the mating of unrelated rabbits of the same breed.



**Pair**

a male and a female rabbit.

**Palatable**

acceptable to the taste; agreeable in flavor

**Palpitation**

technique of feeling for the developing young to determine successful mating

**Parturition**

act of giving birth. See Kindling

**Pass**

failure to conceive

**Pathogen**

any microorganism that produces disease (bacteria, viruses, yeasts, molds, and parasites)

**Pedigree**

a written chart of the male and female ancestors of a rabbit, showing the date of birth and the parents, grandparents, and great grandparents of the rabbit.

**Pelt**

rabbit skin and fur

**pH**

a measure of acidity on a scale of 1 to 7; 1 is high acid, 7 is neutral

**Phenotype**

the appearance of the individual rabbit. A combination of the rabbit genotype and the environment the

rabbit was raised.

**Ppm**

Parts Per Million

**Processing**

the process of killing and preparing a rabbit for market.

**Protein**

any group of complex organic compounds that contain amino acids; necessary for the growth and repair of animal tissue

**Pseudopregnancy**

17 day period during which a doe does not conceive. The doe exhibits symptoms in hormonal balance simulating pregnancy

**Pus**

a liquid product of inflammation consisting of leukocytes, lymph, bacteria, dead tissue cells, and fluid from their decomposition

**Rabbit**

a domesticated rodent of the genus *Oryctolagus Cuniculus*.

**Rabbitry**

place where domestic rabbits are kept.

**Rabbit Dietary Fiber**

the types of fiber found by Purina to be most beneficial to the digestive system of rabbits

**Rabbitry**

a rabbit-raising enterprise or a place where domestic rabbits are kept.

**Registration**

the process of certifying that a rabbit meets the qualifications established by the A.R.B.A. for that breed and has a three-generation pedigree (see above). Requires examination by a licensed registrar.

**Ribs**

the curved portions of the sides immediately back of the shoulders and above the belly.

**Roughage**

course indigestible parts of food containing cellulose; stimulates the digestive system's muscular contractions necessary for the movement of food through the intestines

**Rump**

the hind portion of the back and bones

**Saddle**

the rounded, intermediate portion of the back between the shoulder and loin

**Scours**

a persistent diarrhea in animals

**Servicing**

mating a buck to a doe

**Shoulder**

the uppermost joint of the foreleg, connecting it with the body.

**Slipping Coat**

a coat that is shedding or molting a profusion of hairs.

**Sterile**

unable to produce offspring

**Strain**

a race or stock of rabbits in any standard breed of the same family blood, having the quality of reproducing marked radical characteristics.

**Tattoo**

a code punched in the ear as a permanent method of identification.

**Texture**

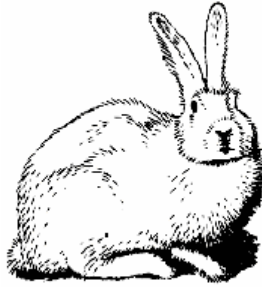
the character of fur as determined by feel or touch, such as "fine" or "coarse" texture.

**Type**

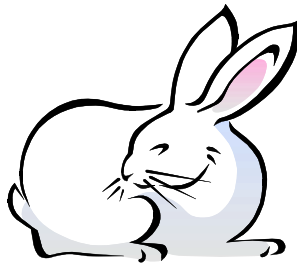
a term used to denote body conformation of a rabbit or shape of a particular part of a rabbit, as in “head type”. The general description of the physical makeup of the rabbit.

**Typical**

a term describing an ideal representative of any given breed or variety as applied to type, color, or fur quality.

**Uterus**

organ in the doe in which developing kits, or fetuses, are contained and nourished before birth.

**Variety**

a subdivision of any recognized standard breed, distinct in color of fur from other subdivisions

**Vitamins**

complex organic substances found in plant and animal tissue; necessary for control of metabolic processes (see metabolize)



**Warrens**

outside pens where groups, or colonies, of rabbits are raised.

**W.B.C.**

White Blood Cell count

**Weaner**

newly weaned rabbit

**Weaning**

denying the bunny its mother's milk and switching it to solid foods

**Wolf Teeth**

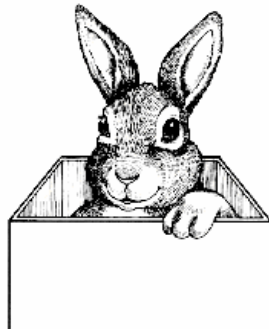
protruding or elongated teeth in the upper and lower jaw caused by improper alignment of the upper and lower front teeth preventing normal eating

**Womb**

see Uterus

**Wry Tail**

abnormally bent, curled or twisted tail.

**Zoonosis**

any disease which can be transmitted to humans