

Rabbits 101  
By Tonna Thomas

Here is a subject that I have touched on in past articles, and one that I will tread lightly on, professionalism and ethics. Through the years we have all incurred or seen actions that are un-professional like in nature. Webster's Dictionary defines Professional as – engaged in, or worthy of the high standards of, a profession. ....engaged in a specified occupation for pay or as a means of livelihood....etc. Ethics is defined as – the study of standards of conduct and moral judgment; moral philosophy; the system or code of morals of a particular person, religion, group or profession. Our rabbit hobby for some is a profession and should also include a code of ethics.

The ARBA consists of members from all walks of life; doctors, nurses, lawyers, businessmen and woman, farmers, ranchers, politicians and on and on. Our Judges and Registrars go through a lengthy process to obtain their license. A judge's conference is required every 5 years to maintain their license with the ARBA. We are professionals. You as members of the ARBA are "professionals" whether it is in your personal life or "rabbit" life.

Judges and registrars: If you are a judge or registrar, you represent the ARBA. You hold a "license" to do perform a job. Be at the show on time. Dress and act like a professional. Judges - while judging make comments appropriate to the surroundings. We all have breeds that we like and feel comfortable judging. We also have those breeds we don't feel comfortable judging, but we hold an All-Breed license and as such are expected to judge all rabbits to the best of our ability and treat them and the exhibitor with respect. Registrars, you also hold a license, the same applies to you. Be prepared when you attend a show. Have your equipment ready and in proper condition. Make sure to have plenty of registration blanks. As an employer, would you hire someone that is late for an interview or dresses like a homeless person? Be professional!

Exhibitors you also must act in a professional manner. If there is a deadline for entries to be turned in by (or mailed), be on time. Help those new exhibitors. Often a new exhibitor

or breeder has no idea about how to show rabbits. They depend on experience exhibitors to help and answer their questions. Be a mentor, you were once new to this hobby. Help out at the secretary table or behind the judging tables. While showing your rabbits, be pleasant at the judging tables. Remember don't identify your rabbits to the judge. Remove your rabbit from the table graciously. Shake the judge's hand and tell him/her thank you for judging. There can only be one winner! Be professional!

Show personnel, you may not hold a license, but you also have an image to uphold. Often times the public will drop by to see what a rabbit show is all about. If treated courteously and professionally they may be our next new exhibitor. This is especially true at fair shows. The public will stop by the judging table and watch as the rabbits are being judged. They are in awe of the judging procedure and will ask questions. Be pleasant and courteous, be professional!

Show Secretary, the show paperwork is also a part of the "professional" image. Your catalog is the first place to start. Create a catalog that flows easily. In this day and age of GPS, include the physical address of the show for easy access. List the judges, time and place it starts, hotels, sanctioned breeds, a basic concession menu (will breakfast be available)? A list of sanctioned breeds and the location of the next ARBA Convention is required to be in the catalog. ARBA rules state a registrar must be in attendance. Confirm he/she has plenty of registration forms. If you are flying in judges, be in contact with them a minimum of 3 weeks prior. Remember flights booked less than 21 days in advance are more expensive. Hotel accommodations should be made in advance and sent to each judge. And last but not least, send a catalog to your judges! This is an ARBA show rule now.

After the show the professionalism should not stop. Be courteous to those questions regarding the finalized paperwork. Exhibitors, be courteous asking about the results of your paperwork. Most reports must be mailed within 30 days of the show. Mail them out in a timely manner. Be professional!

In the course of showing, selling and judging throughout the U.S. we see people who are not acting in a professional or ethical manner. Our hobby is one of the least expensive hobbies to be involved in. That doesn't mean we cannot be "professional" in the way we conduct business, act at meetings and show our rabbits.

I hear complaints of perspective buyers changing their minds on purchasing rabbits while the seller has held onto the particular animal/pair for them. Likewise, a buyer purchases a rabbit and are told it is a show animal only to have it disqualified. If something unexpected happens and you cannot purchase the rabbit/s, let the seller know with as much notice as possible. We all have life issues that come up that change our plans. Seller, do not sell a rabbit as showable with a disqualification. Be a person of your word, be professional and ethical!

As ARBA members, we all hold a collective responsibility in representing the ARBA and our hobby as a whole. We should expect to see nothing less but professionalism and ethical treatment from all ARBA members, judges and registrars. If you have volunteered for position follow it through. Do it to the best of your ability. We all have an idea of the way a job should be done. Do not be too quick to criticize they way someone is performing their duties. More than likely they have volunteered to take on the task and it is not a paid position.

As "professionals" we must act like one. A first impression of a person will never change. Treat others as you would like to be treated. Be a person of your word! Be ethical and act professionally!