

# **Australian National Cavy Council**

## **Standards Review Panel**

### **Report 2004**

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## Standards Review Panel Report 2004

This has been a difficult year for the Standards Review Panel (SRP). One issue in particular has consumed most of our time, the review of the Sheba Mini Yak. It has indeed been a demanding year and I would like to thank my colleagues for the professional and amicable way they have approached their duties. Collectively the panel members have well over 100 years experience in the fancy and I think we have had to draw on all of that experience over the past year. I'm sure that this has helped us to reach a number of difficult decisions. The SRP puts to you the following recommendations.

### **Item 1. Sheba Mini Yak**

The review of the Sheba Mini Yak Standard has been comprehensive and has indeed consumed most of the panel's time this year. The Standards Review Panel noted that there have been numerous changes to the Sheba Mini Yak standard over the years as well as several unsuccessful attempts to change the standard. Indeed the problems of this breed have been ongoing for almost 30 years.

The panel has identified three key areas of concern with the breed, with regard to it's present standard.

**1. Foundation genotype:** Sheba Mini Yaks were established as a hybrid between what we would now consider poor quality Abyssinians and very poor quality Shelties. These genotypes do not exist in the Australian cavy genome that we have today. The result of the cross between those breeds was a distinct phenotype. A standard was then developed to match the phenotype of those early results. Prior to the first wave of imports from NZ (circa 1976), Australia's borders had been closed to cavies for nearly 70 years. Those imports occurred nearly thirty years ago (between 40-60 generations). Those and the numerous imports since have had a complete influence over the fancy in Australia.

**2. Floor Length Coat:** The problem of coat length began to emerge as Sheba Mini Yak to Sheba Mini Yak matings took place. The hybrids between the Abyssinians and Shelties would be of the genotype Ll, with an intermediate length coat. When the genotype was ll the coat would have been longer, but we need to remember that this all occurred in the early 1970's, prior to the importation of stock from New Zealand. The longhairs of that era did not have the modifiers that we now have as a result of imported genetics.

Over the years as Sheba Mini Yaks have been bred together the coats have got longer as ll and its modifiers established homozygous pairs. This has led to a regular practice of going back to Abyssinians to compensate for hair length and it seems also that for whatever reason more "modern" longhairs have also been infused into breeding programs, further exacerbating the problem. Over the years breeders seem to have been continually trying to compensate for a coat length that is not sustainable in a long term "pure" breeding program. Using contemporary genotypes to do this has hastened the purging of the original genes and led to the problems being experienced with coat length. The panel view the problem of coat length as serious. The practice of breeding to Abyssinians does not seem to be effective and we consider that that practice would have an adverse impact on breeding to the standard.

**3. Coat Density and Erect Habit:** These two traits are strongly negatively correlated in the presence of ll. The more dense the coat becomes through selective breeding the flatter the coat lays. This is simply a function of gravity and physics.

**Conclusion:** The panel believe that it is these genetic issues that are fundamental to the problems of the breed. We strongly feel tinkering with words in the standard is not going to solve them. Indeed this has been done on several occasions over the years and the breed still has the same basic issues. We believe that by tinkering with words in the standard will simply be rehashing previous failures.

Everyone concerned acknowledges the problems with the breed. Indeed that is the very reason the SRP was asked to conduct this review. The SRP believes that these problems are serious to the point where the cavy described by the present Sheba Mini Yak standard no longer exists in Australia. We believe that if the Sheba Mini Yak is to have a future in the fancy it must evolve as a new breed that does not have the fundamental problems of the present breed and breeds true to type. However, it is not the role of the panel to develop new breeds. That is the role of interested fanciers! To facilitate that objective and as an acknowledgment to the strong interest in the breed we recommend that the breed be given a Working Title. This will enable fanciers that are interested in the breed to immediately set to the task of resolving the issues with the breed. In doing that we would strongly recommend that those fanciers consider the problems we have identified and set about to resolve them. We believe that interested fanciers and the SRP working together is the only way that these issues can be permanently resolved. However, the fate of the breed largely rests with the breeders themselves.

#### **Add to the report**

We recommend that the current standard continues to be used as an interim measure. A place will be created on the ANCC website for discussion and development of a new working standard, which should be submitted to the Standards Review Panel by March 31, 2005. The SRP will then consider the submitted guidelines and comment and suggest amendments if required. We will then discuss them with a panel of interested fanciers to further refine the guidelines. To facilitate the process we recommend that interested fanciers appoint a small group of representatives to coordinate the submission and liase with the Standards Review Panel. The SRP will then put the guidelines to the 2005 Annual Delegates Meeting recommending that they be adopted.

## **Item 2. Ridgeback:**

The Standards Review Panel has considered an application for a Working Title for the Ridgeback. During the year the Ridgeback has been given a Guide Standard in the UK. The SRP have considered this in their deliberations. The application for the Working Title in Australia is for a type that is somewhat different to the UK version. The Standards Review Panel believes that the UK version is more sustainable than the proposed Australian version. Work on the UK version has been progressing for a number of years. The Standards Review Panel recommends that the Ridgeback be given a Working Title with guidelines as set out in the UK guide Standard with one modification. The SRP believe that having rosettes should be a disqualification as this produces a different phenotype. In the UK a coat without rosettes is considered highly desirable, implying a penalty rather than a disqualification.

### **The Ridgeback Working Title; guidelines for exhibitors and judges.**

**General Description:** The Ridgeback is a smooth coated cavy with a pronounced unbroken ridge of hair standing erect along the centre of its back.

**Head Eye and Ears:** Head to be short and broad with good width to the muzzle. Eyes to be large and bold, well spaced and may be of any colour. Ears to be large rose petal shaped, drooping and set with good width between.

**Body:** To be cobby and compact.

**Coat:** The coat should be smooth and short.

**Ridge:** The ridge should be pronounced, unbroken, erect and straight, running down the centre of the back from between the ears to the hips. The ridge should be up to 2.5 cm (one inch) in height and be most pronounced at the shoulder and tapering towards the rear end.

**Presentation:** The cavy should be in good condition, with plenty of firm flesh, being clean and tidily groomed. It should be of a good size and appropriate to age, but whilst size is preferable it should not be at the expense of quality.

Disqualifications: Rosettes on the cavy.

### **Item 3. Glossary**

The Standards Review Panel recommends that the following definitions be added to the glossary in the standards book.

Cobby - (Type) - Broad across the shoulders continuing through to the rump with the same body width throughout. When looking down on the cavy it should be rectangular in shape with rounded corners.

Rosette – Abyssinian/Peruvian / Alpaca - Hair that radiates from pinpoint centre outwards, that evenly.

Crest – Cresteds/ also applies to Coronet & English Merino – A symmetrical rosette on the forehead between the eyes and ears. Radiates evenly from a pinpoint centre.

### **Item 4. Dalmation**

It has come to the Standard Review Panels attention that the breed Dalmation is often spelt Dalmatian. The panel's view is that the correct spelling is Dalmation as per the spelling used by the Dalmation and Roan Cavy Club in the UK. We recommend that for consistency this should become standard practice for all clubs affiliated to the ANCC.

### **Item 5. Dutch**

The Standards Review Panel were to conduct a survey of interested fanciers regarding changes to the Dutch Standard that occurred in the UK in 2003. Due to a series of computer problems at a critical time of the year there was insufficient time to satisfactorily attend to this matter before our deadline. We regret this but in order to attend to the matter appropriately we feel that we needed to carry it over to next year.

## Item 6. New Full Standards

The British Cavy Council has listed new full standards for the Alpaca and the Merino in the March issue of Cavies. The Standards Review Panel has appraised these standards and recommends that the Alpaca and Merino standards be adopted as Australian standards.

### The Alpaca Standard.

Coat-texture and density	25
Coat-chops, shoulders, sides and sweep	25
Frontal	15
Head, Eye and Ears	10
Body	10
Presentation	10
Belly	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

**Coat- texture and density:** The coat should be soft and springy to handle, clearly showing rexoid characteristics, be free flowing, shown clean and unmatted. The coat should be full and dense, especially near the body where the undercoat is more evident.

**Coat-chops, shoulder, sides and sweep:** The chops should be even, dense and well furnished, and of a length in keeping with the age of the cavy and the length of the shoulders. The shoulders should be broad with hair of appropriate length continuing evenly around the sides. The sweep should fall over the hind quarters of the cavy and be full and of even length, being generally a little longer than the sides. When viewed from above, no gaps, thin areas or uneven length should be evident. Allowance should be made for the fact that the coat will appear thinner at the ends in older exhibits, because the undercoat will not be as long.

**Frontal:** The hair constituting the frontal should originate from the shoulders and be brushed so as to evenly cover the face, with no gaps. At the side of the head, this hair should meet hair from the 'chops' of the cavy and fall in a manner producing a 'curtain effect' at the front of the cavy. The frontal should be even and of a length in keeping with the age of the cavy and the length of the shoulders and chops.

**Head, Eye and Ears:** Head to be short and broad with good width to the muzzle. Eyes to be large and bold, well spaced and may be of any colour. Ears to be large rose petal shaped, drooping and set with good width between.

**Body:** to be firm, fit and of good size appropriate to age.

**Presentation:** The cavy should be in good condition, with plenty of firm flesh, being clean and tidily groomed. . It should be presented on an appropriately sized board and must be shown with a central parting.

**Belly:** The belly should be curly, woolly and dense.

**Remarks:** The Alpaca is genetically bred from the Peruvian, as such two rump rosettes are essential to the breed to have the coat growing forward, from these rump rosettes, towards the head. The placement of these rosettes is also important in producing density in the sweep. If the rosettes are high, more hair is pushed into the sweep and it has sufficient density to support its extra length. With low rosettes, the sweep can lack density and as it grows, cause it to hang to show a 'split' in the sweep. Given good placement of the rosettes, there should be no problem with the development of the sweep.

**Note:** Alpacas may be shown in any colour, or mixture of colours.

## The Merino Standard

Coat-texture and density	25
Coat-chops, shoulders, sides and sweep	25
Coronet	15
Head, Eye and Ears	10
Body	10
Presentation	10
Belly	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

**Coat- texture and density:** The coat should be soft and springy to handle, clearly showing rexoid characteristics, be free flowing, shown clean and unmatted. The coat should be full and dense, especially near the body where the undercoat is more evident.

**Coat-chops, shoulder, sides and sweep:** The chops should be even, dense and well furnished, and of a length in keeping with the age of the cavy and the length of the shoulders. The shoulders should be broad with hair of appropriate length continuing evenly around the sides. The sweep should fall over the hind quarters of the cavy and be full and of even length, being generally a little longer than the sides. When viewed from above, no gaps, thin areas or uneven length should be evident. Allowance should be made for the fact that the coat will appear thinner at the ends in older exhibits, because the undercoat will not be as long.

**Coronet:** The coronet is on the front of the head, being a rosette that should radiate from a small pinpoint centre. It is to be well formed and symmetrical; and should be in keeping with the head, eyes and ears of the cavy to give an overall balanced appearance.

**Head, Eye and Ears:** Head to be short and broad with good width to the muzzle. Eyes to be large and bold, well spaced and may be of any colour. Ears to be large rose petal shaped, drooping and set with good width between.

**Body:** to be firm, fit and of good size appropriate to age.

**Presentation:** The cavy should be in good condition, with plenty of firm flesh, being clean and tidily groomed. It should be presented on an appropriately sized board and must be shown with a central parting.

**Belly:** The belly should be curly, woolly and dense.

**Note:** Merinos may be shown in any colour, or mixture of colours.

To eliminate confusion in the fancy the Standards Review Panel recommends that the word English should be dropped from the breed name in Australia.