Rabbit breeders have a language of their own. When you attend rabbit club meetings and shows you will hear new terms and wonder what they mean. If you are new to the rabbit business — either for profit or as a hobby — it will be important that you learn these new terms so that you can take part in "Rabbit Talk."

Following are some of the terms, listed in alphabetical order for your convenience in looking up a term you may hear and not understand.

**ABCESS** — A hard swelling or isolated collection of pus occurring in the rabbit’s skin, accompanied by localized fever and heat.

**ADULT** — A rabbit six months of age or older in breeds having two show classes and eight months of age or older in breeds having three show classes.

**AGOUTI** — A term applied to color in rabbits where the hair shaft possesses three or more bands of color with alternating light and dark bands or rings interspersed with black guard hairs. Examples are Chinchilla and Steel or Gray Flemish.

**ANTIBIOTICS** — Organic compounds used to combat disease caused by bacteria.

**A.R.B.A.** — The Initials of an organization (the American Rabbit Breeders Association Inc.) which publishes a book of standards which describes each recognized breed and in general promotes rabbits in the United States.

**BACK** — The entire top portion of the rabbit extending from neck to tail.

**BALANCE** — An orderly and harmonious arrangement of physical characteristics so as to present a pleasing type, shape and/or conformation.

**BALANCED RATION** — A ration that has the proper proportions of individual ingredients to provide for reproduction, growth and production.

**BASE SPOT** — A portion of a rabbit without fur.

**BARREN PERIOD** — The period during which a rabbit does not conceive.

**BELL EARS** — Ears which have large tips with a distinct fail or lop.

**BELLY** — The lower part of body containing the intestines, the abdomen.

**BLAZE** — A white wedge shaped patch of fur on the forehead which tapers to a point between the ears.

**BOW LEGGED** — A deformity in which the legs are farther apart at the middle or hocks than at the feet.

**BREED** — An established group of rabbits, related by breeding, possessing a distinctive shape, the same general weight, and often a variety of color.

**BREEDER** — One who rears a special variety or varieties of rabbits in conformity with high standards for the purpose of improving their value.

**BREEDING CERTIFICATE** — A written certificate by the owner of a buck, showing its pedigree in full, and the date of breeding to a particular doe.

**BROKEN COAT** — Areas where fur is affected by moult exposing the undercoat.

**BUCK** — An unaltered male rabbit.

**BUCK TEETH OR WOLF TEETH** — Protruding or elongated teeth in either upper or lower jaw caused by the improper alignment of the upper and lower front teeth, preventing the normal wearing action.

**BUFF** — A rich golden orange color with a creamy cast.

**BULL DOG HEAD** — A short, broad, bold head of pronounced masculine appearance.

**BUTTERFLY** — The nose markings in Checkered Giants, English Spots and Rhinelanders. The wing portions cover the whisker bed and the body extends up the center of the face.

**CAKED UDDER** — Inflamed and feverish condition of the breast arising from superabundant milk supply in a doe rabbit.

**CANNIBALISM** — When a doe eats her own young.

**CECUM** — The blind gut at the head of the large intestine.

**CHEST** — The front portion of the body between the forelegs and below the neck.

**CHEEK** — The sides of the face beneath the eyes.

**CHOPPY** — A rabbit not having a gracefully arched back and loin. Its back cuts off abruptly, falling vertically to the tail.

**COBBY** — A term used to describe a stout, stocky, short legged and short coupled rabbit.

**COCCIDIOSIS** — A disease caused by protozoan parasites or one-celled animals which injure the lining of the bile ducts of the liver, intestines or cecum.

**COLD** — A respiratory infection in rabbits, characterized by sneezing, a thin watery nasal discharge, and/or slightly matted fur on the inside of the front feet.

**CONDITION** — The physical state of the rabbit in reference to health, cleanliness, texture of fur, fleshing and general alertness.

**CONJUNCTIVITIS** — The inflammation of inner membrane of the eyelid. Also called Weepy Eye.
CONTAGIOUS DISEASES — Diseases that spread from one rabbit to another.
COPROPHAGY — The practice of rabbits consuming some of the droppings direct from the anus.
COW HOCKED — Hocks that turn or bend inward causing the foot portion to turn outward.
CREAMY — Light yellow color resembling the color of rich whole milk.
DEAD HAIRS or DEAD COAT — Hairs that lack life. Usually the result of moulting.
DENSITY — The property or quality of a coat having a high concentration of hairs.
DEWLAP — A pendulous fold of loose skin hanging from the throat.
DISQUALIFY — One or more permanent defects, deformities or blemishes which renders an animal unfit to win an award in competition, from taking part in an exhibition and from being eligible for registration.
DOE — A female rabbit.
DOMINANT — A characteristic of one parent that when transmitted to offspring covers up a subordinate or recessive characteristic.
EAR CANKER — A condition caused by colonies of mites in the ear which cause inflammation, swelling and scaly crusts to form in the inner ear.
ELIMINATION — One or more defects presumed to be temporary and curable. It is cause for elimination from a show; or from registration until cured or corrected.
EMBRYO — The developing rabbit from the time the fertilized egg is implanted in the uterus until the rabbit is kindled. Also called the fetus.
ENTERITIS — “Bloat” or “Scours” in rabbits. Best demonstrated in the live animal by shaking it close to the ear. If it sounds as if it is full of fluid, mucoid enteritis is present.
EYE COLOR — The term used to refer to the iris — the circle surrounding the pupil.
FAKING — Any change in the external appearance of a rabbit on exhibition, with intent to deceive.
FINE COAT — A thin fur lacking body. Guard hairs being too weak and thin in structure, similar to hairs making up the undercoat.
FINISH — The desired condition of flesh and coat for market on show rabbits.
FLABBY — The condition of a rabbit when the flesh or fur hangs loosely on the animal by its own weight.
FLANK — The sides of the rabbit between the ribs and hips.
FLAT COAT — Coat lying flat or close to the body. A coat lacking spring or body as evidenced by touch.
FLYBACK — The prompt and even flowing back of the fur to its original position when it is stroked from the tail towards the head.
FLYING COAT — A loose, fluffy coat of fur, caused by undue length and thinness of under wool and weak guard hairs.
FOREIGN COLOR — Any color of fur, eyes, or nails differing from the prescribed standard for the breed and variety.
FOOT — That part of the leg on which an animal walks or stands. On the foreleg — that portion below the “wrist.” On the rear leg — that portion below the hock joint.
FOREHEAD — The part of the head between the eyes and below the base of the ears.
FOSTERING — The use of a doe other than the dam to nurse and develop young.
FULL FEEDING — Supplying each rabbit with all the feed it will consume each day without waste.
GESTATION — The period of time from the mating of the doe to kindling.
GLOSSY COAT — A smooth, bright, lustrous fur.
GROOMING — Removing foreign material and dead hair from the coat of a rabbit by brushing and/or rubbing its coat with a damp hand or brush.
GROUP — A broader classification within a breed than the “variety” classification. Applied to color groups for Netherland Dwarfs.
GUARD HAIR — The longer, coarser hair of the coat offering protection to the undercoat and furnishing wearing quality to the coat in addition to providing the sheen.
HANDFEEDING — Giving rabbit the required amount of feed each day.
HAIR BALL — The accumulation of hair in the stomach forming a ball and impairing appetite and digestion.
HAUNCH BONE — The protruding joint of the fleshy part of the leg when rabbit is in sitting position. Called the stifle joint in horses and knee in two-legged animals. Often mistakenly referred to as protruding hips by some rabbit judges.
HIND LEG — The portion of the rabbit including the foot, hock, stifle joint, thigh and the hip joint to its attachment to the trunk.
HINDQUARTERS — The portion of the body, composed of loins, hips, hind legs and rump.
HIP — The joint of attachment of the hind legs to the trunk.
HOCK — The joint of the hind leg between the foot and the stifle joint.
HUMP BACK — A high lump on the back which mars the required graceful arch desired in rabbits.
HUTCH — The pen or cage in which an individual rabbit is housed.
IN BREEDING — The mating of closely related animals.
INNER EAR — The concave portion of the ear.
INTERMEDIATE — A rabbit 6 months of age, or over, and under 8 months of age in those breeds maturing at eight pounds or more.
JUNIOR — A rabbit under six months of age.
KINDLE or KINDLING — The process of giving birth to young rabbits.
KNEE — The next joint down the hind leg after the hip joint. Also called the stifle joint or haunch bone.
KNOCK-KNEED — Deformity in which the legs are closer together at the hocks than at the feet and stifle joint. Same as cow hocked.
LINE BREEDING — The mating of successive generations.
LITTER — The young being raised by one doe.
LOIN — That portion of the back on either side of the spine and between the last rear rib and the hip joint.
LOOSE COAT — Fur lacking density coupled with fine guard hairs and a resultant lack of texture and firmness.
LOPPED EAR — An ear that is pendulous, not carried erect or falling to the side or front.
LUSTER — The term used to designate bright and brilliant fur.
MALOCCLUSION — The term used to describe teeth that do not meet properly as in wolf or buck teeth.
MANDOLIN — A body type, having the appearance of the body of a guitar laid face down. The hindquarters are noticeably large in comparison to the rest of the body.
MANGE — The infestation of the skin with tiny mites.
MARKED — The orderly placement of proper markings on the background color — usually white. An example would be Checkered Giants, English Spots, etc.
MASSIVE — A term used to refer to rabbits that are bulky, heavy, ponderous, large, etc.
MASTITIS — An infection of the milk glands.
MATURE — A fully developed rabbit.
MEALY — Fur giving the appearance of being powdered or sprinkled with flour.
MOLT (moult) — The act or process of shedding or changing the fur. The baby or nest fur is shed at two months, and the first natural coat of fur is fully developed at four to six months.
MUZZLE — The projecting portion of the head including the mouth, nose and lower jaw.
NECK — That part of the animal connecting the head and body.
NOSTRILS — The two openings or apertures of the nose.
NICK — A mating which produces offspring that are superior to either parent.
OFF-COLORED — Fur coloring not standard for the animal.
OPEN COAT — A coat of a rabbit that lacks density. Also called a loose coat.
OVERLY FAT — A rabbit that is so fat that it is out of proper proportions in comparison to the true type for the breed.
PAIR — A male and female rabbit.
PALPATE — To feel for developing young in the uterus through the abdominal wall.
PARASITES — Insects for which the rabbit acts as a host. Examples: lice, mites, worms, etc.
PATCHES — A small section of fur foreign to the color standard of the animal.
PAUNCH — The soft prominent portion of the abdomen which carries the stomach and intestines.
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.
PELT — The fur coat or covering of a rabbit after it is removed.
PEPPER and SALT — A flat, unattractive appearance of a black and white ticking of rabbits such as Chinchillas. Caused by lack of contrast and waviness and weakness of color in the tips of guard hairs.
PINCHED HIPS — Hindquarters which taper toward tail giving a "pinched" appearance.
POOR COAT — Fur not in good condition because of moulting, rust or ill health of the animal. Also caused by lack of grooming.
POSING — Placing the rabbit in the most advantageous posture for show.
POT BELLY — A distended condition of the stomach and intestines (paunch) usually found in young rabbits.
PRIME COAT — A mature, glossy coat with good "flyback" and free of loose fur or patches of ingrowing fur. Usually characterized by a slight ridge down the center of the back after running the hand toward the head and checking "flyback."
PUREBRED — A recognized breed kept pure for generations.
RABBITRY — The area or buildings in which a group of hutches and rabbits are kept.
RACY — A slim, trim, alert and active looking rabbit. Slender in body and legs and harelike in appearance.
RECESSIVE — A characteristic of one parent that when transmitted to offspring is subordinate to the dominant characteristic of the other parent.
REGISTRATION — The official recording of a rabbit and its pedigree that has been approved by a licensed registrar.
RESTRAINED MATING — A term used to describe the situation when a doe is held for mating.
RIBS — The curved portions of the sides immediately back of the shoulders and in front of the loin and belly.
RINGWORM — A fungus infection of the skin usually in a circular form.
ROLL BACK — A gradual return of coat to normal position when stroked from hindquarters toward shoulders as compared to "flyback" or "fall-back" which is a faster return to normal position.
RUMP — The upper rear part of the hindquarters.
RUST — A reddish-brown coloration of fur, usually appearing on the sides, flanks or feet of rabbits, having the appearance of iron rust and being foreign to the standard color. Rust usually appears in American Blues, Blacks, Havanas and Lilacs, and may be caused by fading through over-exposure to the sunlight, dirty hutches, or dead hairs about to moult.
SADDLE — The portion of the back from ribs through loin and hindquarters. The term is also sometimes used to describe the white color marking over the shoulders of the Dutch and the spine markings of English Spot, Checkered Giant and Rhinelander.
SELF or SELF-COLORED — Animals having the same colored fur over the entire body. Also called Solid Color.
SENIOR — A rabbit 6 months of age and over in those breeds having two show classes and a rabbit 8 months of age and older in those breeds having three classes.
SEXING — The process of determining the sex of a rabbit.
SCREW TAIL — A tail which makes a complete turn to one side or the other.
SHARED — Gradual transition of color from a lighter to a darker shade. Usually having dark color on head, ears, tail and feet blending a lighter color as described in the breed standard. Commonly associated with Sable or Siamese Sable coloration.
SHADOW BARS — A weakness of self-colored fur appearing as white or lighter colored bars.
SHEEN — The reflected luster and brightness of naturally healthy fur in rabbits which is improved by grooming.

SHOULDER — The uppermost joint of the foreleg, connecting it with the body.

SHOW CLASSES — The divisions of rabbits by age and size in a show. Examples: Senior, Intermediate or (6–8) and Junior.

SLIPPING COAT — A coat that is shedding or moulting all hairs on good sized portions of the body.

SLOBBERS — Excessive salivation creating wet, or extremely moist, and unsightly fur around the mouth and lower jaw and forelegs.

SMUT — A dark, sooty appearing area affecting the surface color of the fur.

SNIPEY — A narrow and elongated head that gives the appearance of undue leanness.

SNUFFLES — A virulent contagious bacterial infection of the nasal passages and respiratory organs, usually terminating in chronic illness and death. Indicated by sneezing, a thick creamy nasal discharge, watery eyes, head shaking and/or loss of weight.

SORE HOCKS — An ulcerated condition of the foot, pads or soles of either fore or hind feet of the rabbit.

SPECIALTY CLUB — A rabbit club that specializes in matters pertaining to one breed.

SPORT — An individual rabbit in a litter that is not true to its breed characteristics.

SPRADDLED — Front feet that bow outwardly when viewed from the front or hind feet that turned outwardly from the hock-joint.

STANDARD OF PERFECTION — The book stating the characteristics for each recognized breed of rabbits as approved by a registering organization.

STATION — Ideal manner of standing or carriage in conformity with the standard position or pose for the particular breed.

STERILE — A barren or infertile rabbit.

STIFLE — The hind joint between the hock and hip joint, corresponding to knee in bipeds. Also called the Haunch Bone.

STOCKY — A compact, stout and/or cobby rabbit.

STRAIN — A selection of rabbits in any standard breed having the quality of reproducing uniform characteristics with marked regularity.

STRINGY — The quality of having rosy or sinewy flesh. Most noticeable in the larger breeds of rabbits not properly fattened for market.

SWAY-BACK — A rabbit having a distinct fall or scoop in that portion of the back between the shoulders and hindquarters.

SYMMETRY — The quality of possessing a harmonious proportion of head, ears, legs and body structure which conforms to the standard type of the breed represented.

TAIL-CARRIAGE — The way in which a rabbit holds its tail.

TATTOO — The making of a permanent identification mark in the ear of a rabbit by perforating the skin and rubbing or otherwise placing India ink into the perforations.

TESTMATING — The returning of the doe to the buck after breeding.

TEXTURE — The character of fur as determined by feel, or touch.

THERMOSTAT — The instrument used for automatically controlling the turning off and on of cooling or heating equipment.

TICKING — A distribution of longer guard hair throughout the fur of a color distinct from the undercoat of body fur.

TIZZERS DISEASE — A disease which results in high mortality. The rabbit lives about 24 hours after outside symptoms appear. Post mortem reveals a very bloody appearing cecum and large intestine.

TOP COLOR — Surface color of fur lying in its normal position.

TUCKED-UP — The trim appearance of a Belgian Hare, with long rounded body and breast and belly gathered in closely to form an arch when the animal is in a sitting position.

TYPE — A term used to denote the overall body conformation of a rabbit as compared to the ideal or to the shape of a particular part of the animal such as the head in comparison to the standard for the animal.

TYPICAL — Serving as an ideal representative of any given breed or variety as applied to type, color, or fur quality.

UNDER COLOR — The base of the fur hair. The color of the hair shaft next to the skin, not the belly fur of a rabbit.

UNDEROUT HIPS — Hips which tuck under at the lower hindquarter.

VARIETY — A breed subdivision distinguished either by color of fur or pattern or color and pattern.

VENT DISEASE — A venereal disease in rabbits of both sexes indicated by scabby, reddened male or female organs, usually exuding pus.

WALL EYES — Rabbits having a milky film over the cornea. Colored eyes having an extremely light iris giving a flared appearance. Also called moon eyes.

WEANING — The removing of the young from the doe's hutch for developing or marketing.

WOOL — The fur of Angora rabbits — the guard hairs and under-fur being from 2½ to 5 inches in length and resembling very fine hair in texture.

WRY-TAIL — An abnormally bent tail, curled or twisted permanently to one side.

YELLOW FAT — Body fat of a carcass which is yellow in color instead of the normal white fat. Not harmful, but undesirable from a sales standpoint. Hereditary in nature.

Note: A fun learning experience can be developed by using "Rabbit Talk" for a rabbit term spell down. Have the whole group or two teams stand. Read the description of the term and if the person can give the correct term from the description he or she remains standing. If missed, the person must sit down and the next person is asked to give the term. Continue until one team wins or only one person is left standing.

Source or Information: Standard of Perfection published by American Rabbit Breeders Association 1925 South Main Street Box 426 Bloomington, Illinois 61701