

CHINCHILLA GIGANTA – Nikki White (Reguli Cavy and Rabbit Stud)

The Chinchilla Giganta as a Fur rabbit. It is not very common these days even in Britain and is on the endangered list in this country. Some were imported, when it was possible to import rabbits from Britain in the 1990s, but they seem to have disappeared with only the odd meat breeder in remote places with any substantial herds. So it has been necessary to recreate them, using Chinchilla coloured Flemish Giants and also British Giants (usually Brown/Greys). A breeder in Victoria a few years back was making very good progress with them under the guidance of a senior judge.

The name is derived from the South American chinchilla (*lanigera*), a rodent whose fur is the most expensive around. Like the rodent, the rabbit looks grey with a black ticked coat, basically an Agouti with the yellow pigment replaced with pearl. The mix of silver and blue tipping with the black guard hairs gives it its distinctive “mackerel” look.

History

In 1920 Christopher Wren (yes, a descendant of the man who built St Paul’s Cathedral in London) wanted to create a large graceful rabbit suitable for both fur and the table. Its fur is darker than a standard Chinchilla rabbit and not as silky. He crossed Flemish Giants with standard Chinchillas, apparently. There was a trend to have them “mandolin” shaped but that is not useful for a meat breed and recently there seems to be a return to the flatter shape of Grace Wren’s Double Ch. Show Girl

Standard The coat must be uniformly dense and silky but with resilience and at least 3.175 cms but density is to count more than length. The colour is similar though the blue slate undercolour should extend half the length of the fur excluding the guard hairs. This is followed by a clear band of pearl not exceeding a quarter of the length of the hair. The pearl band is to be followed by a black line finishing with alternating blue/grey and silver/white tipping heavily intermixed with longer black-tipped guard hairs. The top colour should be darker than the standard Chinchilla and the colour should be carried well down the sides of the belly which should be white except for the blue/grey groin streaks. Feet, head and ears should be the same uniform shade of colour as the body. Eyes to be blue, grey or brown. Feet to be as free from barring as possible, white toenails not to be penalised, ears to have black lacing. The body should be long and graceful, finely boned with head, ears and limbs all in due proportion to the size of the body. Adult bucks to be heavier boned with bold head.

The minimum weight of an adult doe should be 4.07 kg and an adult buck 3.855 kg; the maximum weight of an adult of either sex is 5.44 kg. They take an “L” ring.

Faults to be penalised include bagginess, moulted coat, bad condition, partially lopped ears, short body, large triangle at neck, wide pearling, short coat on shoulders, rusty or excessively wide black line, flyback or woolly coat. Disqualifications include being outside the standard weights, completely lopped ears, white feet, ill health.

Is the ChinGi the bunny for you?

This is a big bunny, though not as large as a British Giant. They do eat more than the medium or small rabbits so need a big bowl, a big water bottle and a big cage (at least 150 x 60 x 60) . They can be trained to walk on a leash, though it is like walking a cat – you go where the animal goes, it does not walk to heel. They are placid and good natured They can be stubborn and determined and some are escape artists but mostly they are easy going and patient with children who want to drag them around or pummel them with affection.

