

Judging Dwarf Hotots

(Just my two pennies worth)

Reprinted with the permission of the author: Erik A. Bengtson

Dwarf Hotots are a fascinating breed to judge and raise. The rise in popularity of small rabbits combined with the simplicity of only four classes in the entire breed, makes the classes large and the competition fierce. At many shows, you will see classes of ten more and at the Nationals, you may see 50 or more in a class. It has become increasingly important to polish your judging knowledge of Dwarf Hotots as the competition is stepping up. Hopefully this article will have a couple of tips which will make judging Dwarf Hotots a little easier.

Let's start off with the common misconception that Dwarf Hotots are Netherland Dwarfs with Black eyes. It is very important that you consider Dwarf Hotots a separate and distinct breed. Although there are some similarities, i.e.: straight sidelines, and rollback coat. There are some very distinct differences in the body type, specifically the toplines. It is imperative that you read the entire standard for Dwarf Hotots.

Before we dive into the mechanics of judging Dwarf Hotots, I'd like to emphasize two extremely important issues to remember about judging Dwarf Hotots.

Number 1 - Always refer to Dwarf Hotots markings as **EYEBANDS**. Many Dwarf Hotot exhibitors take offense to terms like "eye circles", or "eye rings" and they will not respect a judge that does not take the time to learn the correct term.

Number 2 - Do not get hung up on eyebands when judging Dwarf Hotots. They are only worth 15 points. Equal to the points allotted for head, or for ears. Also, the eyeband points are less than half the points allotted for body!

The first step in the mechanics of judging Dwarf Hotots is checking the rabbit over for disqualifications. There are five DQs specifically listed in the Dwarf Hotot standard. Here are the different DQs listed and how to check for them.

Presence of Dewlap.

The evaluation of a dewlap should be 100% visual. You should not have to feel, grab, pull, or tug on the skin under the chin to evaluate the presence of a dewlap. The skin under the chin is very delicate and can easily be stretched by even the gentlest hands. The DQ for dewlap is considered judgmental in nature and therefore not protestable

Ears over 2 3/4 inches in length.

The ears on Dwarf Hotots are usually well under the 2 3/4 maximum, but you must still be aware that it is a DQ and one that is protestable if you miss it, so bring that ruler and use it when its close.

Judging Dwarf Hotots

(Just my two pennies worth)

Reprinted with the permission of the author: Erik A. Bengtson

Toenails any color other than white or flesh.

Although I have not personally seen a dark nail on a show marked Dwarf Hotot, I have seen dark nails on the non-show marked youngsters (animals with more colored area), so I'd suspect it to be easily possible to happen to a show marked one also. When considering toenail color problems in other breeds colored varieties, 99% of the time those occur on the front feet. With Dwarf Hotots, extra color can happen anywhere, so it is important to check both the front and the back toenails.

Any spot(s) of color areas normally without pigmentation. Spots or marbling in eyes. Eye colors other than called for in the Standard.

Genetic experts generally agree that eye spots are linked to the marking pattern of a Dwarf Hotot, meaning that the incidence of eye spots can be reduced by selective breeding, but not eliminated. Dwarf Hotots commonly have blue spots, flecks, and areas lacking pigmentation in their eyes. Check them closely and be sure to roll the eyes so that you can fully examine their entire area. The eyes also need to be checked for proper color. Eyes are to be dark brown. If the eye color is light brown or blue gray, check the color of the eyebands. Many times Dwarf Hotots with light brown eyes, or blue gray eyes will have blue eyebands. Dwarf Hotots with blue eyebands are to be DQ'd. Also blue gray eyes is a DQ, and if a light brown eye greatly deviates in color from a dark brown eye it can also be DQ'd. Following the examination of the eyes, move on to the examination of the entire rabbit for black areas. Thoroughly check the nostril area for freckles, and the whisker bed for black whiskers. Both are DQ's. Other areas that are common for black spot DQs are the base of the tail (you have to pull out the tail to check), and the area in between the ears (you have to separate the ears to check).

Eyebands incomplete. Eyebands with heavy feathering.

When considering Eyebands, you are looking for two matching markings, which are equal to the thickness of two pennies. The eyebands are to be faulted if they are unbalanced or feathered. Also remember there is a DQ for heavily feathered eyebands. Incomplete eyebands are also a DQ. Look very closely before you DQ a Dwarf Hotot for incomplete eyebands. Many times the eyeband will be very thin and difficult to see. If you are in doubt about the completeness of the eyeband, gently blow into the rabbit's eye, the rabbit will close its eye, and the eyeband can be more easily seen. An important factor of eyebands is the shape. Eyebands are not round; they follow the shape of the eye. Refer to the picture in the Standard for a visual description of a correct eyeband.

Once the initial examination takes place, and all animals, which have been disqualified, are removed from the class, it is now time to get serious. The next step, and potentially the most important step, is to arrange the animals in the class on body type. There are many different theories and opinions on Dwarf Hotot body type. The perfect body type is described in the Standard, so that is easy to establish. The Standard calls for a short, compact animal with straight sidelines and a topline similar to a Florida White or Havana. (Before you assume that I was

Judging Dwarf Hotots

(Just my two pennies worth)

Reprinted with the permission of the author: Erik A. Bengtson

drinking when I wrote this, go to your standard, and compare the Florida White & Havana topline descriptions to that of the Dwarf Hotot) Pretty close aren't they. The difference is that both the Florida White & the Havana toplines call for the highest point to be over the "center of the hips", whereas the Dwarf Hotot topline calls for the high point to be "over the hips". Although the standard does not specifically state the high point should be over the front of the hips, a short, compact body type, lends itself to an earlier high point, and the front of the hips is the earliest high point a Dwarf Hotot can have and still meet the standards "over the hips" requirement.

Here is a table detailing the arrangement of Dwarf Hotot type based on my interpretations.

Arrangement	Length of Body	Topline	Sidelines	Width of Body
1 (Best)	Short	Some Depth	Straight	Good Width
2	Short	Some Depth	Straight	Narrow
3	Short	Some Depth	Slight Taper	Good Width
4	Short	Some Depth	Slight Taper	Narrow
5	Long	Some Depth	Straight	Good Width
6	Short	Some Depth	Heavy Taper	Good Width
7	Long	Some Depth	Straight	Narrow
8	Long	Some Depth	Slight Taper	Good Width
9	Short	Some Depth	Heavy Taper	Narrow
10	Short	Flat	Straight	Good Width
11	Long	Some Depth	Slight Taper	Narrow
12	Long	Some Depth	Heavy Taper	Good Width
13	Short	Flat	Straight	Narrow
14	Short	Flat	Slight Taper	Good Width
15	Long	Some Depth	Heavy Taper	Narrow
16	Short	Flat	Slight Taper	Narrow

Judging Dwarf Hotots

(Just my two pennies worth)

Reprinted with the permission of the author: Erik A. Bengtson

17	Short	Flat	Heavy Taper	Good Width
18	Long	Flat	Straight	Good Width
19	Short	Flat	Heavy Taper	Narrow
20	Long	Flat	Straight	Narrow
21	Long	Flat	Slight Taper	Good Width
22	Long	Flat	Slight Taper	Narrow
23	Long	Flat	Heavy Taper	Good Width
24 (Worst)	Long	Flat	Heavy Taper	Narrow

Once the class has been arranged by body type, refinements should be made based on the Head, Ears, Markings, and Fur & Condition. Each of those four are equal in importance (15 points). Remember that it would take more than two of those categories to equal the 35 points allotted to body type.

Head shape should be round and of good width. Muzzle should be full, and jawline should be round and full.

Ears should have good substance and should be between (1/2 and 2/3s) of the diameter of the head to balance in size. Similar to Netherland Dwarf ears, they do not need to be placed together on the ear base, they can be set apart, and still be considered perfect.

Markings should be crisp, narrow, and again, the width of two pennies. Additionally, let's reiterate the fact that they are referred to as EYEBANDS!

Fur & Condition have been combined for two reasons: first, because that makes all four (Head, Ears, Markings, and Fur & Condition) equal in point value, and secondly, because a good coat of fur is very dependent on the animal being in good condition. Fur should be a dense roll back coat.

Once again before I finish this article up, I'd like to emphasize those two extremely important points to remember about judging Dwarf Hotots, one more time.

Number 1 - Always refer to Dwarf Hotots markings as EYEBANDS. Many Dwarf Hotot exhibitors take offense to terms like "eye circles", or "eye rings" and they will not respect a judge that does not take the time to learn the correct term.

Judging Dwarf Hotots (Just my two pennies worth)

Reprinted with the permission of the author: Erik A. Bengtson

Number 2 - Do not get hung up on eyebands when judging Dwarf Hotots. They are only worth 15 points. Equal to the points allotted for head, or for ears. Also, the eyeband points are less than half the points allotted for body!

And finally, a quote to end the article: This would be a quote that Benjamin Franklin would have made, had he been a rabbit judge. "A penny saved, is a penny earned. And two pennies saved, can be used to determine the correct width of a Dwarf Hotot EYEBAND"