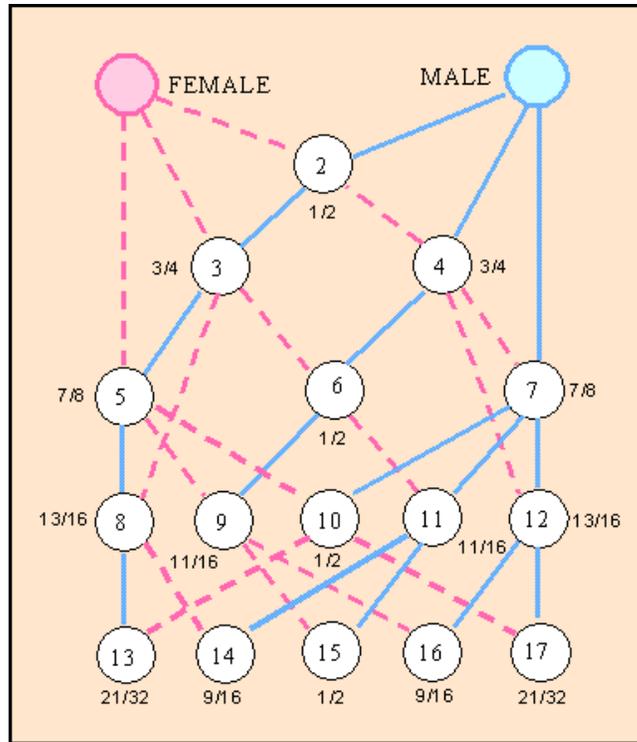


Things to Think About – Before Breeding!

- Are you prepared for the fact that some or even all the babies might die?
 - Do you have ideas for what you will do with the babies when they are old enough to need their own cages and/or sell?
 - While it rarely happens, the does do sometimes die during birth
 - Timing: will you be around when they are due? (31 days after being breed, the span being 28-35 days from date breed)
1. Know your lines. By this I mean, the families that the buck and doe came from. This can be seen on the pedigree, and is the first part (prefix) to the rabbit's name (ex: Naragon's Nike would be Todd Naragon's lines). Some lines are not "compatible". This can take some research and just general knowledge.
 2. Have a nestbox built, bought, or to be built/bought soon! The nestbox needs to be given to the doe filled with fresh straw or hay 26 days after being breed.
 3. Have some goals in mind. Breeding "just to see what happens" is NOT a goal, and is what often leads to problems. At least have some ideas on what you want to learn and accomplish. If it's just to raise your own rabbit, then that's fine, but have some pre-set goal and know what you are going to do with the babies you aren't keeping. Random breeding is what causes overpopulation problems.
 4. Breeding Theories:
 - In-Breeding: Generally not a good idea. This is the breeding of closely related relatives. It often causes genetic problems within a few generations.
 - Cross-breeding: Breeding between two different breeds/species. This gives the mixed breeds and is not a good idea.
 - Out Crossing: This is breeding between totally unrelated rabbits (same breed) It is not good or bad. It can ruin years of work or it can help it. Really, it depends on the rabbits. I have had success with it, and also have failed with it. It's a more "trial and error" way to get good quality rabbits.
 - Line Breeding: This is the "safest" way to breed. Line breeding is a form of in-breeding that follows a specific pattern. Breed two unrelated rabbits, from the litter breed a male back to the mother, and female back to the father. From those litters breed a buck and doe together. Continue working down the line. Here's an illustration (on next page) to make it clearer:



5. Keep good records! Get a 3-ring binder or folder. I find it easiest to use page protectors and slide the pedigrees in. Records you need to keep are: Pedigrees, breeding records, expense records, and a list of contacts for people interested in buying the babies later on. If you show, keep the show records.