

Developing a "Line"

Breeders often talk about having their own "line". It can be traced on pedigrees by looking at the prefixes in front of the rabbit's name. It takes a while to get a line developed; it's not something that just happens overnight. Here are some ideas on how to get a line started:

1. Start with good stock. Especially the herd buck. A nice herd buck with terrible does though won't go anywhere. Try getting at least a trio from the same breeder, because they will be able to put a group of rabbits together that will go well with each other, because they know their own lines.
2. Cull cull cull! Look often at what is being produced! Keep the offspring that are better typed, then sell the parents. And then, cull some more!
3. Are the rabbit's bad traits showing up often and good traits hardly showing up at all? If so, then the crosses need to be planned differently, or perhaps those rabbits are not worth having in your breeding program. There needs to be compatibility between your rabbits. If it's not there, then you won't get far.
4. A good line produces quality animals consistently
5. Line breed. This is a form of breeding where two rabbits are bred together, then the offspring back to the parents. From the offspring's litters breed two together. Just keep working down the line, after a few generations down, cull and keep the best. Below is a line breeding chart to show how this is done, the first two should be unrelated! The chart shows also the amount of original genetics are in the offspring (that's the fractions). The number in the circles represents what generation it is. The lines represent the crosses. After 4-5 generations, there should definitely be a mostly unrelated rabbit brought in or the lines will get too close. It only works for so long, and then troubles can start to show up.

