

## Judging criteria for the Transylvanian Giant Rabbit breed in purebred rabbit shows

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**Abstract.** The Transylvanian Giant Rabbit is a unique breed valued for its distinct physical and aesthetic characteristics, particularly in purebred rabbit exhibitions. This study presents the established judging criteria for this breed, highlighting essential standards that ensure breed quality and purity in competitive settings. Key evaluation parameters include body shape, weight, coat quality, head and ear structure, Himalayan markings, and overall color. The ideal Transylvanian Giant Rabbit displays a robust, elongated body (45-60 cm in length), with balanced muscle development and strong, well-aligned limbs. Optimal weight ranges between 6.00 and 9.00 kg, with a minimum acceptable weight of 5.00 kg. Coat quality is assessed based on density, uniformity, and length (3-4 cm in adults), while head and ears are evaluated for their proportionality to body size, with ears ideally measuring 16-18 cm. Distinctive markings include a well-defined nose mask, ear base pigmentation, and clearly demarcated limb markings, with color options of black, havana, or blue. The markings should be intense and even, enhancing the rabbit's visual appeal, while the dominant body color remains pure white, with red eyes and horn-colored claws. Evaluation faults are classified as minor (e.g., suboptimal muscle tone, slight asymmetry in markings) and major (e.g., anatomical deformities, significant deviations from weight and ear length standards, missing markings). This framework provides an objective standard for judging the Transylvanian Giant Rabbit, supporting its recognition and conservation as a breed of notable genetic and cultural significance.

**Key Words:** body shape, breed standards, coat quality, ear structure, Himalayan markings, major faults, minor faults, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, purebred rabbit exhibitions, weight range.

**Introduction.** The Transylvanian Giant Rabbit was created and has been described in several papers, two decades ago (Oroian et al 2014; Petrescu-Mag et al 2009, 2011, 2014). This breed standard for judging the Transylvanian Giant Rabbit is the revised version, developed in 2024, and, with its publication, all previous editions of breed standard become void, retaining significance only for the breed's historical record and productive performances.

**Type and Body Shape.** The body is elongated (45-60 cm), cylindrical, with a trunk that is equally broad and tall, supported by a strong bone structure. The body, well-proportioned, has well-developed muscles both in the front and rear, and is equally broad in both sexes. The forelimbs are strong, holding the animal in a medium to high stance (Figure 1). The hind legs are powerful and parallel to the body during movement. The tail is held close to the body.

**Weight.** The minimum weight is 5.00 kg, the normal weight is at least 6.00 kg, and the maximum weight is 9.00 kg. Weight evaluation: 5.00 – 5.50 kg: 8 points; 5.50 kg – 6.00 kg: 9 points; 6.00 kg – 9.00 kg: 10 points.

**Coat.** The coat is of medium length, with dense, uniform undercoat. The ears are well-covered with hair. The hair length in adults is 3-4 cm.



Figure 1. Image of the external body of the Transylvanian Giant Rabbit (original photo by Iosif Câmpan).

**Head and Ears.** The head is strong and well-rounded in males, while females have slightly finer features. The cheeks are broad, strong, and full, with a well-developed bony base. The size of the head is in harmony with the size of the body. The ears are thick, strong, well-anchored to the head, and held upright in a "V" shape. The tips of the ears are rounded. The length of the ears should be proportionate to the body length, with a minimum of 15 cm, an ideal length of 16-18 cm, and a maximum of 19 cm.

**Markings.** The Himalayan markings include the nose mask, ears, forelimbs, hind limbs, and tail. The mask has an hourglass shape, covering the nose and extending to the sides of the jaws. It should not rise above the level of the eyes. The ear markings are well-

defined at the base. The markings on the forelimbs extend to the carpal region, and those on the hind limbs cover the phalanges. The tail is pigmented from the base to the tip.

**Color.** The dominant color is white, without any gray or yellowish tinges. The color of the markings may be black, havana, or blue. The color of the markings should be intense, well-pigmented, and preferably clean, with as few stray hairs of different colors as possible. The eyes are red, and the claws have a horn-like color.

**Health and Care.** Refer to general characteristics (Vlad et al 2017).

**Minor Faults.** Minor faults are poor muscle development, fine build, lack of cylindrical shape, protruding or drooping shoulders, too low a stance, slight flat feet, large dewlap in females, sparse undercoat, soft or overly coarse hair, small head, pointed snout, folded or thin ears, lack of harmony between body length and ear length, poorly defined markings, asymmetrical or uneven mask, oval-shaped mask instead of hourglass, restricted limb markings, markings on the dewlap or eyebrows, faded marking color with white or gray hairs.

**Major Faults.** Major faults are any anatomical deformation or deviation from the general characteristics, weight under 5.0 kg or over 9.0 kg, ear length under 15 cm or over 19 cm, drooping or floppy ears, mask extending too far down below the mouth or above the eyes, complete absence of markings on some extremities, pigmented hair outside the standard markings on dewlap, eyebrows, or other areas, unpigmented claws.

**Conflict of Interest.** Marcel Bălan, Dorel Danciu, Valentin Filip, Iosif Cîmpan, Costin Paru, Zsolt A. Grabán, Alpár Fazakas, Zsigmond Rákossy, Brügger Sándor, Alexandru I. Pop, and I. Valentin Petrescu-Mag are members of the National Federation of Pigeon, Bird, and Small Animal Breeders of Romania.

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