

Breed judging standard for the Cluj rabbit in purebred rabbit exhibitions

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Abstract. The Cluj Rabbit, a breed developed and first described by engineer Miklos Botha, PhD, and his team, now has an updated breed standard as of 2024, replacing all previous editions. This revised standard outlines specific criteria for body type, weight, fur texture, head and ear structure, coat color, and health, aimed at standardizing judging practices for this breed in purebred rabbit exhibitions. The Cluj Rabbit should exhibit a compact, muscular build with short, strong limbs, a cylindrical trunk, and a minimal dewlap in females. Ideal weight ranges between 4.25 and 5.0 kg, with a scoring system to assess weight precision. The fur should be dense and medium-length, with a light gray color accented by bluish tones, black-tipped guard hairs, and bluish-gray eyes. The ears are defined by their short, rounded, V-shaped form. Detailed color specifications for the outer, intermediate, and base coat layers are essential, with uniformity and proper pigmentation highly valued. The standard also identifies minor and severe defects, including deviations in body structure, ear and head shape, coat length and density, and specific color faults. These guidelines ensure consistent judging and recognition of the breed's unique characteristics, while preserving its historical essence.

Key Words: body type, Cluj Rabbit, coat color, fur texture, head structure, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, weight criteria, Entente Européenne.

Introduction. The Cluj Rabbit was created and first described by the team led by engineer Miklos Botha, PhD (Botha et al 2011, 2013). This breed standard for judging the Cluj Rabbit is the revised version, developed in 2024, and, with its publication, all previous editions become void, retaining significance only for the breed's historical record.

Body Type and Shape. The body is slightly compact, cylindrical, massive, and well-muscled. The limbs are short, strong, with fine bone structure. The ideal position of the trunk is low, but slightly elevated off the ground. The neck is short and muscular, not visible. The backline and rump are well defined, with the tail held tightly against the body and carried upwards (Figure 1). A small, well-formed dewlap is accepted in females.

Weight. Weight evaluation: 3.75 – 4.00 kg: 8 points; 4.00 kg – 4.25 kg: 9 points; 4.25 kg – 5.00 kg: 10 points.

Fur. The fur is of medium length (approx. 3 cm), with dense and even undercoat, well-developed guard hairs, not coarse, but strong, evenly distributed across the body. Together, the undercoat and guard hairs provide a dense, full structure. The ears are well covered with hair.

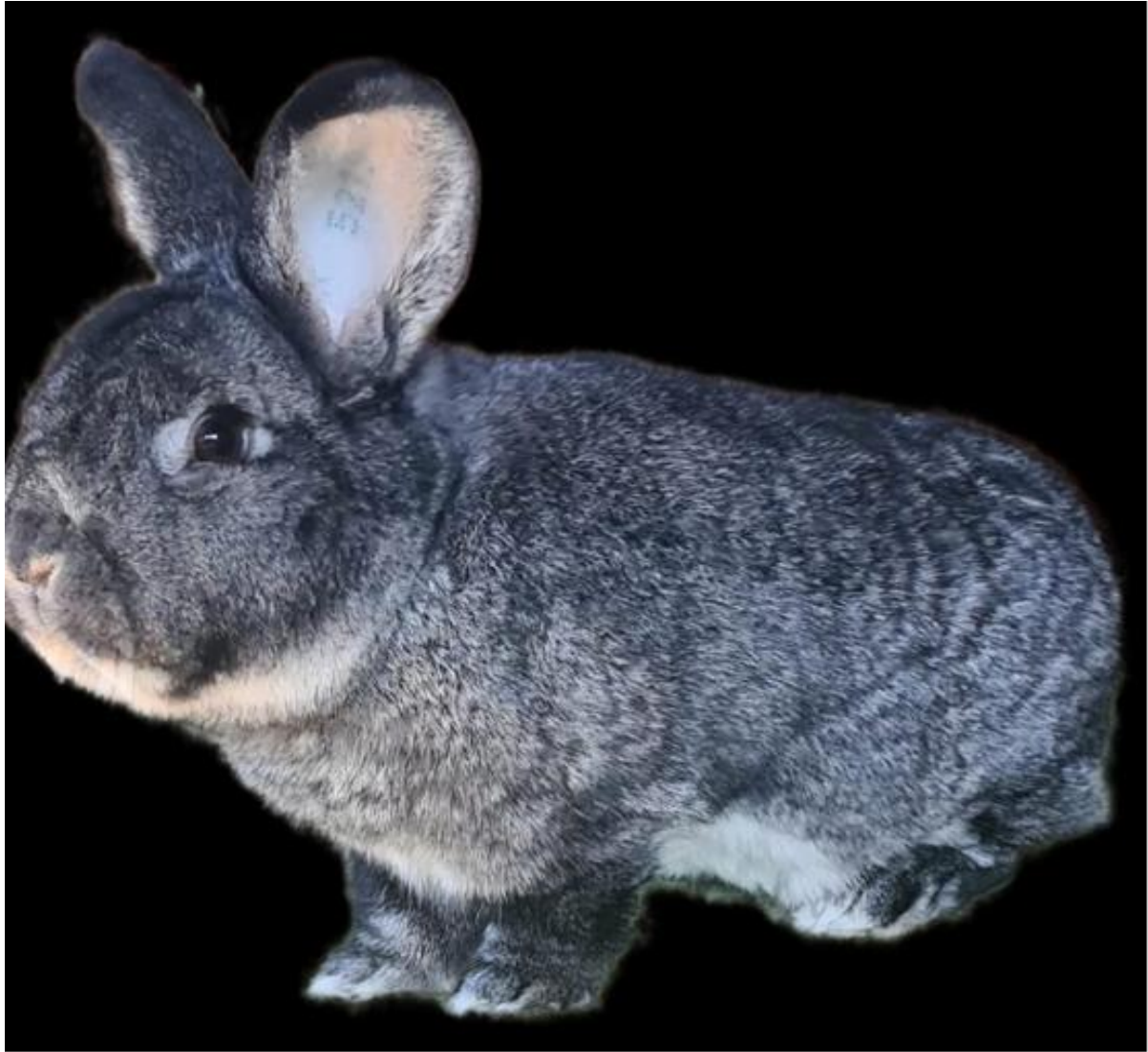


Figure 1. Image of the external body of the Cluj rabbit (photo: Ionuț Lasc).

Head and Ears. The characteristic phenotype of the breed is represented by a strong, rounded head in males, with a broad forehead, wide muzzle, and well-developed cheeks. Females have slightly finer features. The ears are short, measuring between 9 and 12.5 cm (ideal 10-12 cm), fleshy, rounded, and carried in a V-shape.

Coat Color and Shading. The outer color is light gray, with bluish tones and black shading (giving an overall light gray appearance), formed by black-tipped hairs with a width of 3-4 mm. The coat color must be uniform in tone and shading, including the chest and legs. The ears are edged in black, and the nape patch (max 6 cm) is composed of lighter hairs (light gray-white). The upper side of the tail is black, sprinkled with light gray-white hairs. The underside of the tail, belly, lower limbs, jawline, and eye rings should be a light gray-white. The eyes should be bluish-gray. The claws are horn-colored.

Base and Intermediate Colors. The intermediate color is light gray-white, ideally white, approximately 5 mm wide and clearly defined. The base color is blue, found throughout the body, including the belly, and represents about two-thirds of the hair length.

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

Minor Defects. A slim body, poorly developed musculature, narrow chest, protruding shoulders, sloped rump, narrow pelvis, arched backline, too low body position, sagging belly, hind legs not parallel to the body, slightly flat feet, very thin limbs, playful tail, fine head, folded ears that are not in harmony with the body, slightly hanging testicles, large dewlap in females. In the coat, minor defects include coarse or too soft hair, sparse undercoat, overly long guard hairs, hair loss, poorly covered ears. Minor defects in the coat color include too dark or too light shading, uneven shading, nape patch over 2 cm extending onto the ears, light gray intermediate color, too light base color, poorly defined ear edging, upper tail with sparse white hairs, brownish eyes, poorly pigmented claws.

Severe Defects. Any anatomical deformation or clear deviation from the type, weight below 3.75 kg or above 5.0 kg, hair too long (>3.5 cm), very fine head shape, pointed muzzle, ears under 9 cm or over 12.5 cm, drooping or floppy ears, absence of intermediate color or presence of yellow-brown tones in the intermediate color, white base color, non-pigmented claws.

Conflict of Interest. Valentin Filip, Costin Paru, Marcel Balan, Dorel Danciu, Zsolt A. Grabán, Alexandru I. Pop, Zsigmond Rákossy, Alpár Fazakas, and I. Valentin Petrescu-Mag are members of the National Federation of Pigeon, Bird, and Small Animal Breeders of Romania (Entente Européenne d'Aviculture et de Cuniculture).

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