

## **AMERICAN STANDARD CHINCHILLA by Sherman F. Healey**

**I got my first Chins in 1941. A doe came from Stahls Outdoor Enterprise. Then I got two does and a buck from Oliver Miliken. Miliken was a great teacher and really knew his Chins. They were called heavy weight Chins, and I raised them until they put the weight up to 9 to 12 pounds. I didn't like the larger rabbit, so I got some Standard Chins. I got two bucks. I used the does I had because I didn't want to lose my color. These bucks just didn't have the color I liked.**

**Now let's talk about color. We have 5 bands in the fur. Why do we have 5 bands when the first 3 bands are what makes your color? That's all that show through when you layer that fur. Then why the slate and pearl? We have the slate and pearl to give us length of fur. This is when balance comes in. We must have a real black band mid-way; the fur not too wide or too narrow. Then we have the silver-gray band. It will be a little wider than the black band. Then we have the black tipped guard hair. They must vary in length. The uneven guard hair laying on top of the silver-gray band is what makes your color and ticking. Something very important is that the bands must not fade into each other. It's a bad fault if they fade. Another fault was getting Silver Martins and Black rabbits in the litter. I got a litter out of a Chin doe that had 8, and 7 were Black Silver Martins. I test mated everything I got rid of that carried the Martin gene.**

**Now the fur, this will be hard for me to explain. Did you ever look at a hair through a microscope? A hair has 3 layers. The outside layer is called the cuticle. It's composed of flat transparent cells that overlap like shingles on a roof. These little shingles must lay up tight against each other; if not and then bend out, it weakens the hair shaft. You won't have that roll back we like on the fur. This is something I learned in barber school. I liked to trap as a young man and learned from the man that bought my furs too. Here are a few don'ts. Don't blow in the fur when you are culling. Hold the fur up from the body with your thumb and forefinger so they are even in length, you will have a salt and pepper appearance. Don't try to improve one thing at a time; I tried that and it didn't work except for when I bred out the Angoras from the Heavy Weight Chin and Martins from the Standard Chins. Also don't forget balance in the rings and balance in type. That's the way to breed a good line of winners.**

**On a buck I have you can see the color and ticking and how it goes clear to the feet. Now the type I like, you can see on a picture of a Fibber McGehee's Florida White. Notice the arch starts right behind the head. So many Chins have a flat spot there. No protruding hip bones; that was another fault. I just about forgot another man that helped me a lot; Carlton Gaddis, the judge. He liked Standard Chins. He told me to get them as small as I could. I forgot something. Why is it the favorite? That's so easy to answer. It is really a beautiful rabbit. I never get tired of looking at the Chin coat I had made for my wife. What I don't understand is why more people don't breed them. After breeding them for 58 years, I sure miss them.**