

Showing Off - Dos & Don'ts

By Kathryn McKay (Willowmist Cavies) © 2013



Correctly set up animal. Showing good shoulders and a nice cobby appearance. Nose is tucked in giving a reasonable profile. Coat is smoothed over showing no indications of any hair faults. Its crest is well presented and overall this is a picture of a quality cavy.



This animal appears to have good shoulders, but is very long in body. It doesn't have the same nice cobby shape as the first animal. The coat appears to be running in a couple of different directions. It still has a nice profile but its crest appears more open than the first one.



This cavy does not seem to have the same quality of the first two. It appears to have a coarser profile with a more bulbous nose. It is lacking in shoulder and is very bum heavy and there seems to be fanning behind the front shoulders near the belly.



There is no shoulder on this particular cavy, although it is cobby. It does not have a nice profile and almost has a pointy, ratty face. There is something odd going on with the hair around the belly and it generally seems to be lacking show condition.

Now for the surprise - these four photos are of the same cavy taken at the same time on the same day. She is a Dark Eyed White English Crested sow and she is a Grand Champion at COBS. These photos demonstrate the difference proper setting up can make to the look of your show cavy.

In photo number she looks like a winner. She is alert, with a good shoulder and not a hair out of place. This is how you should aim to have your pigs stacked on the show boards. It is possible to train them to stay still on the boards. It is a case of finding what works for you and your cavy.

In photo two she is still passable and her shoulder is still showing, but she is not as comfortable and relaxed. I have stretched her out along the length of the board (it's under the fabric). It gives the illusion of being too long in the body with not enough cobbiness which is not what you are after in a show cavy.

In the third photo she looks miserable and she is miserable. Because she is trained to sit on the board correctly I had a lot of difficulty getting this shot. However this is a common position I see cavies placed on boards. They are "plonked" on the board with the end result being their end appears really big and they seem to have no shoulder. She also started fluffing her coat up in protest which adds to the rather displeasing look.

The fourth photo is another example of where an exhibitor can do a disservice to an otherwise nice animal. She has been put on the board with no attention to her shoulder or head placement. She appears to be very flat across the top and have a narrow rat face in profile. She also appears to have hair faults because no attention has been paid to her coat after she has been placed on the table.

In summery having a good cavy is not enough to win. It is all about presentation as well. If you watch and see who the consistent winners are, you will see they spend the time to present their animals to their best advantage, turning a good animal into a Best in Show stunner.