

Thoughts on being a Promoter

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Several times during the National Show held in Tronto, Elizabeth Forstinger asked me if I were a promoter of the Dwarf Hotot. My response was “Of course, I raise them and adore them.”

However, tired but enthused from the long weekend, I started thinking during the long drive home on Sunday evening. I started questioning whether indeed I was a promoter, or was I a mere breeder? There developed, in my mind, a vast difference between the two terms. Many of us, unfortunately, probably fall into the category of breeder and few into the promoter category.

Being a breeder is easy. All we have to do is buy some stock, breed them as soon as possible, repeat the breedings, and keep our best for show — after all, we must win on the table if our stock is going to be worth the big dollars. This helps us be able to get rid of the stock we don’t want to keep. Maybe she has very poor type, a small spot in the eye, wide and ragged rings, or will certainly go overweight — but at least we’ll be able to sell her because we have a winning reputation at the show table. And, once the sale is made we can wash our hands of the animal.

That’s about all it takes to be a breeder and any of us can do it. But, to be a promoter requires so much more and this is what our “Eye of the Fancy” needs if it is to become really successful without a great deal of anguish and pain.

A “promoter” must, first, commit him or herself to perfecting the breed. To do this, the Standards have to kept in mind and we must breed to them. Records must be kept so we know where a problem may have started, if one shows up. This is an absolute must if we are committed to the breed. It is one method we have to know where our gains are made also.

The “promoter” also would cull very strictly, keeping and/or selling for breeding only animals that show the breed characteristics or at least the promise to pass on the characteristics. The rest — take your pick: put them down, sell them strictly as pets (tattoo them “PET” in both ears if you want), add them to your stew pot — but don’t pawn the off on some beginner as quality stock. Both the breed and the beginning breeder will be better off if the breeder waits for quality stock.

Next, the “promoter” will be willing to spend time talking to the new breeder about the thrills and enchantment of the Dwarf Hotot. He will also honestly talk about the problems and challenges of the breed that can be discouraging to someone not expecting them. I mean like spots in the eyes, eye rings, size, genetic impure litters, etc. I’m not trying to discourage new breeders— just set forth the challenges that exist.

And, finally, the “promoter” is the person who supports the breed in a variety of ways. He or she is the active member of the Speciality Club, contributing information and experience to profit everyone. Every time he or she talks to anyone about Dwarf Hotots he talks about the Specialty Club. (Maybe a real “promoter” would include ADHRC membership as part of the sale? Or at a minimum, he would include an application blank). There are other ways to express support, too: showing and sanctioning our “Eye of the Fancy” giving specials, and you can add to the list.

We need the “Promoter” in the ADHRC, breeders are all around us!