

1989 should be a good showing year for all Angora breeders, the weather so far has been exceptional, so everyone should have plenty of babies in their sheds.

I'm going to try and take you through the grooming until they are adults. I personally start grooming my babies about six weeks old where I take them out and sort out the knots behind their necks. Then at eight to nine weeks I take them out regularly which is normally every other day, and I check behind their ears and at the back of their tails, this should normally only take you 10 minutes.

I wean my babies at 10 weeks and place them on their own, in their own cage with a wire floor. At twelve weeks I start bringing them indoors, they are sat on a chair which already has a towel placed upon it. I then introduce the hoover and start blowing the coat, but if you prefer you could start with a cold hair dryer, you will also need a comb and a Massey Pearson brush which is made of nylon, and don't forget the powder. It is very important at this stage not to over groom because if you do it now, the damage will be done permanently.

Start by blowing the top of the coat and paying particular attention to the sides near the front legs and behind the tail. Then turn the baby onto its back, it is important that if you are wearing trousers or jeans to use a towel so that the baby feels secure. Then switch the hoover on and blow the underneath paying attention to the neck and between the front legs. Then check the back feet and finally the tail, I then cover the front and back feet and around the tail with powder, then I turn it back up and quickly blow the top again and place it back in its cage.

When I personally use the comb it is for the feet only. I tweeze the rest of the knots apart with my fingers to save pulling out too much coat.

If you are going to show, try and get hold of some chalk powder as this has no smell whereas if you use powder judges often comment that "They smell like powder puffs". If the Angora is dirty or stained when you get it out of the cage, don't panic! I know it's easy for me to say, but the Angoras pick this emotion up. The easy way of cleaning it up is to blow it and put plenty of chalk powder upon it. The art of a good groomer is to do all your preparation at home and only quickly blow it when you get to the show. Remember all you beginners try not to show your babies too early, they don't look their very best until they are at least four months old, give them time to mature.

When they are adults remember to blow the coat every day to keep it in good condition. The Angoras tend to look their best between April and October. So let's get them back out on the table and back on their winning form, if they look good you feel good. Best of luck in 1989.