



The Difference Between Blues

~How to Determine the Color of Kits in the Box

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October 2011

I had the opportunity to photograph some off color (non-recognized) kits with my latest batch of litters. It gave me the perfect opportunity to highlight the difference between blue, blue gray, and blue steel kits in the box.



These babies are about 3 days old. The blue is a few hours older than the blue gray and blue steel. Still, they are close enough in age and size to make it easy to highlight the differences in color. From the top, they all look the same right now. There is no visible ring color on the blue gray, no ticking in the steel, the only difference will be in the belly color until they are closer to one week old.



When you flip them over you can really see the difference. The blue is on the left, the blue gray in the middle, and the blue steel on the right. You can see the dark blue undercut on the blue, the lack of a true undercut on the blue gray (this will be visible later), and the sort of faded blue undercut on the blue steel.



Here are the blue gray and blue steel babies, side-by-side. Again, you can clearly see the “white” belly on the blue gray and the “faded” belly on the blue steel. Of course, the off colored babies do tend to be nicely marked, and they can be kept for breeding if they are very nice rabbits. I find a little blue steel mixed in the steel background seems to help with more even ticking on the black steels. Whether this may be due to the recessive genes interacting with the steel gene, or perhaps the recessive gene interacting with the modifier genes remains to be seen. It may just be that blue steels carry more even ticking. In any case, blue steels when nicely typed and marked may be used in a careful breeding program.