

# The D-locus – Russian blue and Russian blue agouti

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## Origin



Russian blue Blazed Berkshire buck

American Russian blues (from AFRMA) were first bred by Gari Hauser from rats purchased from Karla Barber in 1993 (Royer, 1999). There are many articles in science describing “blue” rat mutations, but it is not certain that they are in fact the same mutation as the Russian blue in fancy rats. Russian blue agoutis are the agouti version of these Russian blues.

## South African History

The Russian blue mutation came from lines imported in 2006 by Liezel Hattingh. Russian blue comes directly from the MS Blue x MS Raven cross. MS Blue was a Russian blue rat himself. These rats came directly from American lines.

## Description

### RUSSIAN BLUE

“An even dark grey colour with darker heathering. Belly colour to match top. Eye colour is black.” – S.A.R.F.C. Standards



Russian blue Self buck



Russian blue Self kitten

Russian blue rats are similar in colour than blue cats and blue mice. They have a distinctive feature in that the colour is not evenly distributed in the hairs giving dark hair tips known as heathering. All varieties that come from Russian blue have this heathering effect. Unlike blue rats, Russian blue does not have health defects associated with the mutation. Russian blue rats are also not related to

blue rats genetically. Russian blue does not vary very much in shade and is an easy colour to breed to show quality. Young Russian blue rats look like the adults. Russian blue is a favourite to use in lines to make other colours like Russian dove and Russian blue point siamese.

### RUSSIAN BLUE AGOUTI

“Hairs a dark blue colour with fawn bands on top. Coat evenly ticked with blue guard hairs. Undercoat a dark blue colour. Belly colour a silver blue. Eye colour is black.” – S.A.R.F.C. Standards



Dumbo Russian blue agouti Self  
doe



Dumbo Russian blue agouti Self  
kitten

Russian blue agoutis like Russian blues show heathering of the coat. This is, however, not so obvious with agouti based colours like the Russian blue agouti. Russian blue agoutis are very distinct from agoutis in that they greyer, whereas agoutis are more brown. Russian blue agoutis compared to blue agoutis look more drab grey, blue agoutis are more silvery grey when compared to Russian blue agoutis. Young Russian blue agoutis are duller than the adults. Russian blue agouti is sometimes called opal. Russian blue agouti adult males are browner in colour than Russian blue agouti females.

### Genetics



Dumbo Russian blue agouti Self  
doe

Russian blue is a homozygous recessive mutation. In America the symbol “d” is used to represent Russian blue and in England “rb”. We use the symbol “d”. Thus a Russian blue is a black based rat with the Russian blue gene: a/a d/d. Russian blue agouti is an agouti based rat with the Russian blue gene: A/- d/d.

### References

1. ROYER, N. 1999. Russian blue rats. AFRMA rat and mouse tales news magazine. Available at: <http://www.afrma.org/russianblue.htm>



Dumbo Russian blue agouti Self doe



Dumbo Russian blue Self buck



Russian blue Variegated doe



Russian blue agouti Berkshire doe