

Harley

BY ANNALIE PRINSLOO (APRIL 2015)

Origin

In September 2002, Debbi Needham of Odd Fellows Rattery in the USA found a strange looking rat in a pet shop in Tacoma. The rat was named "Harley" which also became the name of the mutation she represented (Paper Heart Rattery, 2007 & Needham, 2003).



Dumbo harley seal point himalayan and
-siamese does

South African History

The South African Harley rats are direct descendants of the original Harley. MS Odin x MS Orla from the 2006 import carried the Harley gene and Harley already appeared in their litter. South Africa was one of the first countries outside of the USA which obtained Harley.

Description

Harley was not included in the S.A.R.F.C. Standards due to its health problems. AFRMA describe the Harley as: "Has a sparse, fine, wispy coat with no undercoat that fall out easily (AFRMA Rat Standards – Not-recognized).



Dumbo harley seal point himalayan doe



Dumbo harley seal point siamese buck

Harley rats indeed have a very sparse coat, which falls out easily. Young Harley rats sometimes go through bald phases as they mould into their adult coats. The Harley coat is longer than in standard coated rats but very thin.

Very few breeders work with Harley, thus there is not much information available on how to breed them. One thing is sure, and that is not to breed from Harleys which show health problems in the line. Work only with stock which has no history of skin problems associated with this variety.



Dumbo harley seal point himalayan kitten

Genetics

Harley is a recessive gene which has not been scientifically described yet. It is written as l/l. Rats which carry Harley (L/l) can show phenotypic effects by having a slightly finer, longer coat and being prone to skin problems like scabs.

Health problems

Some Harley rats go through life without problems but many Harley rats have skin problems. This can range from baldness, itchy skin resulting in scabs and in some cases even mastitis in lactating females.



A doe showing baldness and scabs. She carries the harley gene (L/l)

References

1. AFRMA Rat Standards – Not Recognized. Available at: <http://www.afrma.org/ratunstdnonrec.htm>
2. Needham, D.J. 2003. Harley Coated 'Long Haired' Domesticated Fancy Rats . Odd Fellows Rattery. Available at: <http://www.skyclide.com/HarleyII.html>
3. Paper Heart Rattery, 2007. Harley rat information. Available at: <http://www.paperheartrats.com/harley.html>