



AGM - 2019 Royal Easter Show Report

The NSW Fancy Rodent Society attended the 2019 Royal Easter Show on Friday 12th April, the fifteenth Show to which our Club has been invited by the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS).

Entered were 149 mice, 97 rats, and 121 pets by over 35 exhibitors from as far afield as the ACT and Lismore in northern NSW.

Kath Dalton took out both major awards with Minion Magnus as Grand Champion Mouse, and Minion Raven being Grand Champion Rat.

Our location was again in Hall 3, but unlike the previous year where it was “walled off” internally, the RAS had opened up the area immediately outside our stand. It was a good wide aisle and featured spectacular bird aviaries filled with a variety of beautiful species. One estimate was that this change attracted at least four times the number of visitors to our rodent exhibit than the previous year when our location was quite easy to overlook.

To aid Show visitors, this year the RAS displayed a tall, four-sided sign near the Hall entry. A terrific feature, it detailed the schedule for animals being shown during the event and also highlighted “Rats & Mice” to indicate it was our day.

Our display area was altered slightly by the RAS, which briefly caught us on the back foot as we prepared to set up for displays and judging. It was sort of ‘L’-shaped in 2018 but this year was completely linear, same width all along. This didn’t prove to be a problem, although it would have been helpful to have a little forewarning when we were planning our layout. The RAS does issue a single, named access pass to enter the Showgrounds and check out our area immediately prior to the Show opening. I’ll have to ensure I get that pass allocated in my name, as I have more spare time than any of the others on the organising team due to being retired.

As in the previous year we displayed two different types of club banner, along with printed brochures available for interested visitors. We added to the A2-sized colour posters with an additional four, to provide information on fancy rats and mice to passers-by. It was suggested at the AGM that for 2020 we should have a poster showing famous rat and mouse owners, for example Clint Eastwood. We should also prepare a feature to celebrate that next year will be the Year of the Rat in the Chinese lunar calendar.

We usually have a Q&A-type session with Farmer Dave in the Hall 3 arena, and this year there was so much interest it went for nearly 45 minutes. The presentation was held at 1 pm when showgoers likely welcome a chance to sit down and be entertained – and Farmer Dave is always entertaining!

There were only two significant problems. One of course is that our exhibition day is now on a Friday and there are Club members who simply cannot attend on Fridays. While we have made the RAS aware of this difficulty, unfortunately the 2020 Royal Easter Show has also been scheduled for NFRS on a Friday.

The other problem is that many of our members arrived at the Showgrounds as the gates opened at 6 am. Only then to discover that Hall 3 was not scheduled to be open to us until 7 am. This is frustrating because our desire is to get the animals from our cars into the Hall *and then get the vehicles off site*. There was quite a crowd of members’ cars around our entrance to Hall 3 while we stood around waiting. Vet checking was due to start at 7 am but a vet arrived around 6:30, also frustrated that he was unable to make a start to his busy day. Fortunately he had the phone number of an RAS staff member who was able to have the Hall opened for us immediately. This needs to be coordinated properly for 2020 to avoid wasting peoples’ time and creating a small traffic jam.

Steve Smith, Head Steward NFRS