

Getting your Ferret
Ready for showing -
A Pictorial Review

Nails:

This is an example of nails that are too long for showing your ferret – the second picture shows a more acceptable length of nail – but it is important to note that the nails, once cut, should be filed to blunt the sharp ends. Judges have been known to deduct points for sharp nails. In order to prevent this, I recommend trimming the nails three-four days prior to the show date.



Teeth:

I am tolerant of a little bit of tartar on the teeth – especially the rear molars. I don't like to see tartar buildup to the point of gingivitis or redness along the gum lines. An example of some not-so-dirty teeth – there is only a bit of tartar along the gum line, but the gums are normal.



Dirty teeth: This is a picture of a ferret being prepared for a professional cleaning by a vet. Notice the inflamed gumline. (courtesy of the Ferret Health List):



Ears: Ear flap should be clean and free of debris. Any noticeable ear wax will result in a deduction – but please remember to not go too deeply into the ear canal !



Conformation: This is where it can get tricky. This is strongly considered in championship classes like breedable adult, alter and kit. Proportions are important – size of the head in relation to body, Size of the ears/eyes in relation to the head, length of tail, size/shape of the chest and ribcage, length of neck or feet, etc. One of the more obvious flaws in conformation is the shape of the head.

The following head is of a ferret with an obvious twist in her snout. Definitely not preferred in championship classes.



Notice on the malformed head and snout on the other ferret. She has difficulty opening her mouth and eating – and is also deaf – indicative of Waardenburg syndrome and a definite fault – she should not be bred (she is altered).

Some better and more proportional heads from the side and from above on two different jills.



Notice how the distance between the ears/eyes and eyes/nose are equal. Both of these jills have an excellent shaped head. You can draw an imaginary line down the center of the skull and each side of the face is equal to each other. Also drawing a line from the nostril to the ear the line stays centered through the eye and ear.

Coat:

The Coat should be full with no bare patches and free of debris and dandruff. Summer coats are not docked points against thicker, fuller winter coats. These pictures are of a full, luxurious winter coat on an altered male.



Finally – Temperament. Ferrets attending a show should be well mannered – biting can cause your ferret to be disqualified from a ring. Nervous, excessively squirmy (this doesn't apply as much to kits) or unhappy ferrets even though gorgeous will not do well – showing your ferret should be fun, not stressful on you and your pet! Temperament is especially important in the alter (AFA also has a championship companion ring for early altered ferrets) rings – these are truly the championship rings for pets.

Things to take with you to the show:

1. Grooming accessories, like brushes and coat conditioners.
2. Extra bedding for accidents and spills
3. Food bowls and water bottles – bring water from home as well, or use bottled water. Bring food from home as well.
4. Litter pan with litter and a scoop for cleaning the box.
5. Travel cage set up for going to/from the show hall or for traveling to the show. Set up should include a hammock, litter pan, bedding and food/water bowls or bottles.
6. Paper towels and extra plastic bags (great for travel trash cans).
7. Hand disinfectant like Purell.
8. Leash or harness for exercising your ferret.
9. Veterinary records - original copy only – proof of distemper and rabies vaccination, including the serial number and date of vaccination, or a letter from your vet for not vaccinating (allergic reactions).
10. Show packet (confirmation letter, hotel/hall directions, ferret ring entry information)
11. Camera and finally – money for shopping the vendors!