

2026 NSFRC Candidate Guide



Leslie "Rebah" Heino **Candidate for Director (2026–2028)**

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Candidate Statement

My name is Leslie “Rebah” Heino, and I am running for an open Director position with the National Silver Fox Rabbit Club (NSFRC). As a 4th-generation family farmer, agriculture is a part of who I am, and I bring a lifetime of dedication to our livestock community. I bring:

- 20+ Years of Livestock Experience: Extensive hands-on knowledge raising dairy goats, dual-purpose sheep, and rabbits.
- Proven Breeding Excellence: Bred and exhibited multiple champion goats and successfully bred and selected multiple champion market rabbit pens.
- 18 Years of 4-H Leadership: Served 2 years as a 4-H County Ambassador, 4-H camp teen staff leadership team for 4 years, 12 years as a club leader and volunteer, and 4 years specifically as a rabbit project leader.
- Teach Clinics and Classes: Mentor and educate the next generation of farmers and homesteaders on a local level about the importance of starting with good stock, disease management, vet relationships, and first aid at home.
- Future Veterinarian: Currently returning to school to become a veterinarian specializing in rural and large animal medicine, with an emphasis on small ruminants and exotics, to directly solve the severe vet crisis in my local area.

My journey with the Silver Fox began in the spring of 2023, when my son and I officially joined the NSFRC during the ARBA Convention. While Fox is a more recent passion, my history with rabbits stretches back 15 years, starting in 4-H and continuing into adulthood. Now, I am raising my own 4-H kids who share this deep

passion for our industry. Over the years, I have owned and raised 10 different rabbit breeds, but the Silver Fox is my absolute favorite large breed.

To me, the Standard of Perfection (SOP) is vital; regardless of color, the structure of the rabbit must remain consistent. I feel the same way about our club. The NSFRC is the backbone of our breed—it provides the structural framework and strength that allows the rest of us to grow.

The breeders—you, me, and our children—are the heart of this organization. We keep it moving, growing, and flourishing. From traditionalists raising blacks and chocolates to innovators experimenting with new varieties, every single one of us serves a crucial purpose in moving our breed forward. Whether you are on the East Coast or the West Coast, promoting this breed and supporting its recovery is paramount.

As a Director, I am eager to focus on the following initiatives:

- **Mentoring Youth:** I want to encourage more youth to choose the Silver Fox. This means getting more rabbits on the show tables and proactively placing more Foxes into commercial market pens.
- **Promoting the Homestead Market:** As a breeder, I see the immense potential the Silver Fox holds for the modern homesteading movement. I want to ensure that even rabbits raised primarily for homestead production align strictly with the SOP.
- **Fostering Fair Competition:** Our youth should feel empowered to breed their own projects and confidently take them to local fairs. We all know the Silver Fox is just as commercially viable as a New Zealand or a Californian—in fact, it is superior.
- **Bridging Regional Gaps:** I want to work with my fellow directors to connect East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast breeders. Promoting our rabbits nationwide will help diversify our gene pools and introduce excellent traits that might not be prominent in our local areas.

Sustainable and regenerative agriculture is my biggest passion. The building blocks we lay down today will shape the industry for years to come. The future of our breed and our organization will ultimately be handed down to the next generation. My dream is to bring our youth together every year to celebrate their achievements at a dedicated youth banquet. Having the honor to serve as an NSFRC Director will help bring that dream, and a stronger future for our breed, one step closer to reality.

I appreciate your support and humbly ask for your vote!