

Beige/Champagne vs. Fawn/Amber Rats, a.k.a. Black Colors vs. Agouti Colors

Q What color would you consider this boy? We can't figure it out. His eyes are dark ruby. He came out of my Black-eyed Hairless and my Pink-eyed White. A few thought he was Amber but I wasn't 100% sure, so I wanted to ask. *Artemi Story, Facebook*



Q This is my newest little girl Sage. She is not true white, sort of a creamy Ivory color with a muted topaz to amber color just at the highest point of her back. She has black eyes, not ruby or pink. When I got her, they claimed her brothers were "much prettier" and they would have just given her to the snake to avoid having to set up a cage for her. Her brothers (she was the only girl in the litter) were all Amber and Fawn Hoodeds. Her mother was silver grey with black eyes, as far as I know a Pearl. I sadly did not meet her father. I had considered Beige but as mentioned her eyes are black not ruby. Her belly is the same as the rest of her body not white. Can anyone tell me what color she is? One person called it "Cinnamon." *Jay Norrington, Facebook*



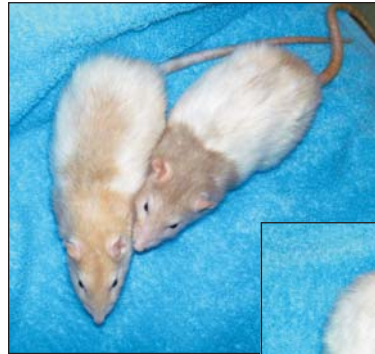
Q I've been telling everyone Faith's color is Champagne, but I thought I should probably verify. The first picture was taken with no flash, and the room was lit with a daylight bulb, so it shows her eye color pretty well. Just needed to catch her munching on yummy molasses mix to almost hold still long enough. Face is a little blurry but you can see her true eye color.

The second one was taken with a flash and shows her fur color pretty well, though she has a bit of porphyrin staining on her fur (she always does except right after a bath, I think because she and her sisters were on pine shavings for the year before they came to me). *Sariah Lily Jones, Facebook*



Taken with flash.

Q Can someone help me identify the colors of these two? I'm a little overwhelmed by the differences between Fawn, Champagne, Amber, and Beige. The rat on the



left has eyes that appear more red, while the one on the right has much darker eyes (perhaps ruby), yet "sways" considerably more than the rat with lighter eyes. The second



image shows their eyes better, and I did have the flash on. Any help is very much appreciated! *Jessica Daniel, Facebook*

A The rat in the first question looks like a Beige. Same with the rat in the second question as I'm seeing a red tint in her eyes on the monitor here. Some dark ruby eyes look black until you look at them in a strong light and the eyes can vary in color with some rats having lighter ruby eyes (more reddish). The rats in the fourth question both look like Beige in the second photo (one looks like a dark Beige). The rat in the third question does look like Champagne. Champagne is a pink-eyed Black *aa pp*, where the Black is diluted to a light tan from the pink-eye gene; can also be a pink-eyed Chocolate *aa bb pp* but will be a lighter tan with red eyes (like the eye color of an albino rat).

Beige is tan in color, where Fawn is orange. Both colors have dark ruby eyes. Amber is a light Silver Fawn so looks "orangish" with white hairs throughout the coat like a Silver Fawn and has red/pink eyes. Cinnamon is an agouti color but of a lighter shade. Agouti colors have more than one color in the coat, i.e red/black for Agouti, russet brown/dark brown for Cinnamon where black colors are all one color in the coat.

Fawn, Amber, and Silver Fawn are agouti based and will have the naturally lighter/grayer belly color with demarcation lines from being an Agouti-based color. Fawn is genetically a ruby-eyed Agouti *A- rr* and looks solid in color where Silver Fawn/Amber are a pink-eyed Agouti *A- pp* and look orange with white hairs throughout the coat.

Beige is a Black-based color and genetically is a ruby-eyed Black *aa rr* (the red/ruby-eye gene dilutes the color and eye color like the pink-eye gene but not as much) and has the same belly color as the top without a separation like an agouti color. In the second photo on question four, I don't see what looks like a lighter agouti-type belly color.

For photos of various colors see the Self Standards page for photos of Beige and Champagne www.afirma.org/ratselves.htm and the AOC Standards page for photos of Fawn colors www.afirma.org/rataoc.htm. Also, don't forget to check out AFRMA's "Rat Varieties & Colors Posters" www.afirma.org/sales/posterratcolors.htm which also shows the colors.

The following photos shows one of baby rats comparing the difference in belly color between Agouti and Black, and three photos showing the bellies of adult Self vs. Agouti colors.



A comparison of Agouti (Rex male)(L) vs. Black (lg. El sister)(R) 5-day-old rats. Agoutis have pink bellies (look like a Tan mouse with very definite demarcation line between top color and belly) where Blacks have pigment and you can see white markings; it's not until Agoutis get fur that you can see white markings on the belly. Rats owned and bred by Karen Robbins. Photo ©2011 Karen Robbins.

You can read more on pink-eyed Fawn colors in the article "Apricot, Amber, Silver Fawn Rats" www.afirma.org/c-c_aprambsilfawnrats.htm. Also, the "Fancy Rat Genes, Alphabetical Names" page www.afirma.org/geneticnamesrat.htm, the Standards pages www.afirma.org/fancym.htm, or the other various articles on the Info page www.afirma.org/rmindex.htm#breedcolor are more places to check out.

So, one way to remember is tan for Black colors and orange for Agouti colors and Agouti colors will have lighter bellies.

Send in your general rat and mouse breeding questions, comments, articles, etc., related to colors, markings, or coats. Send to the Editor or e-mail editor@afirma.org.



This Russian Blue shows the belly color that is very close in color to the top color. This is how a black-based Self belly color looks. Rat owned and bred by Karen Robbins. Photo ©2013 Karen Robbins.

... and this Agouti shows the lighter/grayier belly color typical with agouti-based colors that has a line of demarcation between top and bottom colors. Rat owned and bred by Karen Robbins. Photo ©2013 Karen Robbins.



A Fawn rat showing her lighter/grayish belly color and line of demarcation between the grayish belly and orange back color. She is also a mismarked rat and you can see the white patches on her chest and stomach. Rat owned and bred by Lisa Jarosek. Photo ©2013 Karen Robbins.