



# DISCOVER



## 4-H RABBITS CLUBS



# DISCOVER

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## Description

The Discover 4-H Clubs series guides new 4-H volunteer leaders through the process of starting a 4-H club or provides a guideline for seasoned volunteer leaders to try a new project area. Each guide outlines everything needed to organize a club and hold the first six club meetings related to a specific project area.

## Purpose

The purpose is to create an environment for families to come together and participate in learning activities while spending time together as a multi-family club. Members will experiment with new 4-H project areas.

## What is 4-H?

4-H is one of the largest youth development organizations in the United States. 4-H is found in almost every county across the nation and enjoys a partnership between the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the state land-grant universities (e.g., Utah State University), and local county governments.

4-H is about youth and adults working together as partners in designing and implementing club and individual plans for activities and events. Positive youth development is the primary goal of 4-H. The project area serves as the vehicle for members to learn and master project-specific skills while developing basic life skills. All projects support the ultimate goal for the 4-H member to develop positive personal assets needed to live successfully in a diverse and changing world.

Participation in 4-H has shown many positive outcomes for youth. Specifically, 4-H participants have higher participation in civic contribution, higher grades, increased healthy habits, and higher participation in science than other youth (Lerner et al., 2005).

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## Utah 4-H

4-H is the youth development program of Utah State University Extension and has more than 90,000 youth participants and 8,600 adult volunteers. Each county (Daggett is covered by Uintah County) has a Utah State University Extension office that administers the 4-H program.

## The 4-H Motto

"To Make the Best Better!"

## The 4-H Pledge

I pledge: My HEAD to clearer thinking, my HEART to greater loyalty, my HANDS to larger service and my HEALTH to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

## 4-H Clubs

What is a 4-H Club? The club is the basic unit and foundation of 4-H. An organized club meets regularly (once a month, twice a month, weekly, etc.) under the guidance of one or more volunteer leaders, elects its own officers, plans its own program, and participates in a variety of activities. Clubs may choose to meet during the school year, only for the summer, or both.

## Club Enrollment

Enroll your club with your local Extension office. Each member will need to complete a Club Member Enrollment form, Medical History form, and a Code of Conduct/Photo Release form (print these from the [www.utah4h.org](http://www.utah4h.org) website or get them from the county Extension office).

## Elect Club Officers

Elect club officers during one of your first club meetings. Depending on how many youth are in your club, you can decide how many officers you would like. This will typically include a president, vice president, pledge leader, and secretary. Other possible officers or committees are: song leader, activity facilitator, clean-up supervisor, recreation chair, scrapbook coordinator, contact committee (email, phone, etc.), field trip committee, club photographer, etc. Pairing older members with younger members as Sr. and Jr. officers may be an effective strategy to involve a greater number of youth in leadership roles and reinforce the leadership experience for both ages. Your club may decide the duration of officers (6 months, 1 year, etc.).



## A Typical Club Meeting

Follow this outline for each club meeting:

- Call to order—president
- Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge—pledge leader (arranges for club members to give pledges)
- Song—song leader (leads or arranges for club member to lead)
- Roll call—secretary (may use an icebreaker or get acquainted type of roll call to get the meeting started)
- Minutes of the last meeting—secretary
- Business/Announcements—vice president
- Club Activity—arranged by activity facilitator and includes project, lesson, service, etc. These are outlined by project area in the following pages.
- Refreshments—arranged by refreshment coordinator
- Clean Up—led by clean-up supervisor



## Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

The essential elements are about healthy environments. Regardless of the project area, youth need to be in environments where the following elements are present in order to foster youth development.

1. **Belonging:** a positive relationship with a caring adult; an inclusive and safe environment.
2. **Mastery:** engagement in learning, opportunity for mastery.
3. **Independence:** opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future, opportunity to make choices.
4. **Generosity:** opportunity to value and practice service to others.

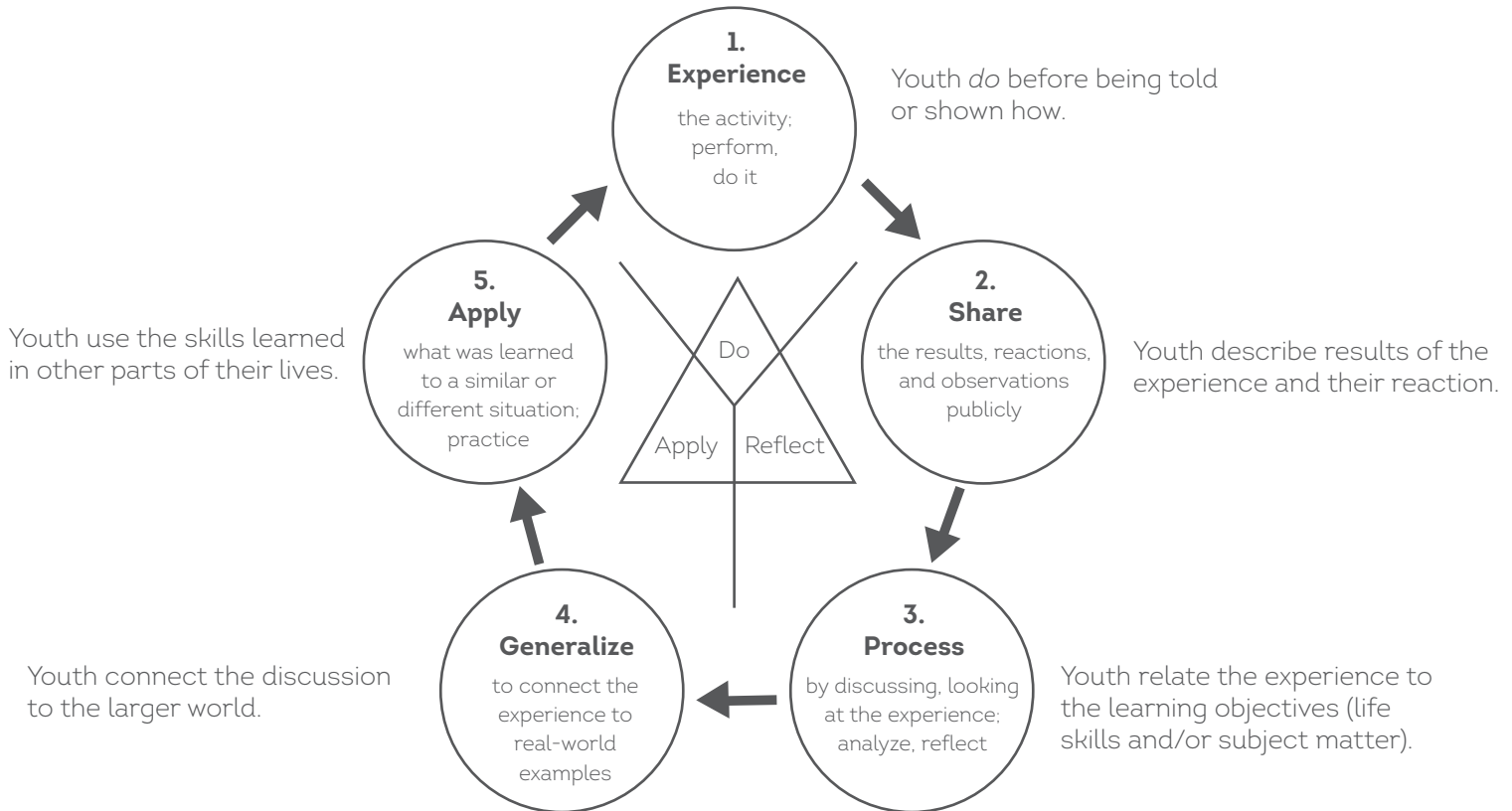
(Information retrieved from: <http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/professional-development-learning/4-h-youth-development/youth-development/essential-elements/>)





## 4-H “Learning by Doing” Learning Approach

The Do, Reflect, Apply learning approach allows youth to experience the learning process with minimal guidance from adults. This allows for discovery by youth that may not take place with exact instructions.



## 4-H Mission Mandates

The mission of 4-H is to provide meaningful opportunities for youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change. This is accomplished within three primary content areas, or mission mandates - citizenship, healthy living, and science. These mandates reiterate the founding purposes of Extension (e.g., community leadership, quality of life, and technology transfer) in the context of 21st century challenges and opportunities. (Information retrieved from: [http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/res/pdfs/Mission\\_Mandates.pdf](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/res/pdfs/Mission_Mandates.pdf))

1. **Citizenship:** connecting youth to their community, community leaders, and their role in civic affairs. This may include: civic engagement, service, civic education, and leadership.
2. **Healthy Living:** promoting healthy living to youth and their families. This includes: nutrition, fitness, social-emotional health, injury prevention, and prevention of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use.
3. **Science:** preparing youth for science, engineering, and technology education. The core areas include: animal science and agriculture, applied mathematics, consumer science, engineering, environmental science and natural resources, life science, and technology.

## Getting Started

1. Recruit one to three other families to form a club with you.
  - a. Send 4-H registration form and medical/photo release form to each family (available at [utah4h.org](http://utah4h.org)).
  - b. Distribute the Discover 4-H Clubs curriculum to each family.
  - c. Decide on a club name.
  - d. Choose how often your club will meet (e.g., monthly, bi-monthly, etc.).
2. Enroll as a 4-H volunteer at the local county Extension office (invite other parents to do the same).
3. Enroll your club at the local county Extension office.
  - a. Sign up to receive the county 4-H newsletter from your county Extension office to stay informed about 4-H related opportunities.
4. Identify which family/adult leader will be in charge of the first club meeting.
  - a. Set a date for your first club meeting and invite the other participants.
5. Hold the first club meeting (if this is a newly formed club).
  - a. See *A Typical Club Meeting* section above for a general outline.
    - i. Your activity for this first club meeting will be to elect club officers and to schedule the six project area club meetings outlined in the remainder of this guide. You may also complete a-d under #1 above.
  - b. At the end of the first club meeting, make a calendar outlining the adult leader in charge (in partnership with the club president) of each club meeting along with the dates, locations, and times of the remaining club meetings.
6. Hold the six project-specific club meetings outlined in this guide.
7. Continue with the same project area with the 4-H curriculum of your choice (can be obtained from the county Extension office) OR try another Discover 4-H Club project area.



## Other Resources

Utah 4-H website: [www.Utah4-h.org](http://www.Utah4-h.org)

National 4-H website: [www.4-h.org](http://www.4-h.org)

4-H volunteer training:

To set up login:

<http://utah4h.org/volunteers/training/>

To start modules: (password = volunteer)

## References

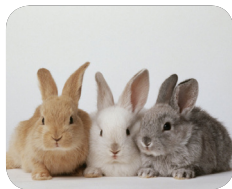
Information was taken from the Utah 4-H website ([utah4h.org](http://utah4h.org)), the National 4-H website ([4h.org](http://4h.org)), the Utah Volunteer Handbook, or as otherwise noted.

Lerner, R., M. et al. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), 17-71.

**We would love feedback or suggestions on this guide; please go to the following link to take a short survey:**

**Go to <https://goo.gl/iTfiJV> or [Click here to give your feedback](#)**

# DISCOVER 4-H RABBITS CLUB *Meetings*



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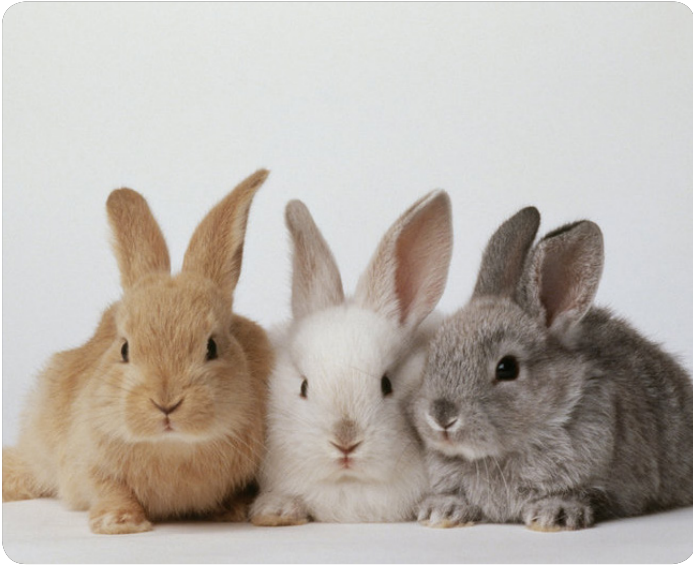


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## Basic Equipment/Care and Rabbit Selection



### Supplies

- Paper
- Pencil or Pens
- Clipboards or hard surface to write on
- ARBA Standard of Perfection (Can be found at <https://arba.net/product/standard-of-perfection-2016-2020/>)
- ARBA Raising Better Rabbits and Cavies (Can be found at <https://arba.net/product/guide-book-to-raising-better-rabbits-cavies/>)

### INTRODUCTION

In this club meeting, members will learn about the supplies needed to take care of a rabbit and how to select a rabbit.

### PRIOR TO MEETING

1. Contact a local rabbit producer and ask for permission to hold a club meeting at their facility. You will need to obtain a location that has the following items:
  - a. Various rabbit cage sizes
  - b. Various breeds of rabbits
  - c. Feeders
  - d. Water Containers
  - e. Resting Boards
  - f. Proper lighting and temperature
2. If you are unable to find a rabbit producer, contact your local county agent or Extension office for ideas.
3. Also, ask the producer to attend the club meeting to answer any questions that club members or parents might have.
4. Inform all members and parents of the location.







# SUPPLIES FOR A RABBIT

TIME: 30 MINUTES

Emphasize to members and parents that all items on the list are REQUIRED and are not only recommendations. Without all the items, members are not prepared to purchase and care for a rabbit. These items are crucial in sustaining the life of their rabbit. Identify the following items that are needed before purchasing a rabbit and discuss them with the club members.

1. Shelter
  - a. What is a hutch? Rabbits are usually kept in hutches. A hutch is a box or cage, typically with a wire mesh front, for keeping rabbits, ferrets, or other small domesticated animals.
  - b. Where do you plan to keep your rabbit? Consider the environment your rabbit will call home. Will it be located in a barn, backyard, or a garage? Will your new rabbit's home be something easy to clean? Will it be cool enough in the summer and out of the direct heat with some shade from the sun? Will the rabbit's home provide protection from the outside elements during the winter? All of these aspects are VERY important to consider when determining where you will house your rabbit. Below are more essential housing aspects a rabbit needs.
2. Ventilation
  - a. Proper ventilation is important to provide fresh air, reduce humidity, control temperature, and kill airborne diseases. By locating hutches in an area with a breeze most of the time, you can use natural ventilation. The ideal temperature is 60-78° F and humidity should be between 30-40%.
  - b. You can spot poor ventilation by condensation and an ammonia smell. The more rabbits in an area, the more ventilation is necessary to keep the ammonia levels safe. Poor ventilation and too high of humidity can predispose a rabbit to many common respiratory diseases such as pneumonia and "snuffles" and other associated conditions.
  - c. Air circulation is also very important, especially in enclosed buildings. A good idea is to have side flaps that can be lowered and raised and a vent slot in the top of the building so that cool air can circulate and warm air can escape. There should be 8-10 complete air changes every hour. You can use natural or forced ventilation.
3. Lighting
  - a. Proper lighting is very important for several reasons. When working with your rabbits, you need to be able to work comfortably. You also need to have good visibility of their living quarters so you are aware of all that is happening. Proper lighting is also a key factor to priming your rabbits' coats and making sure they're more receptive to being bred.
  - b. Rabbits need to be exposed to at least 16 hours of light each day for proper breeding to occur. The light can be artificial, which is helpful in winter months when the days are shorter.
  - c. If you are raising your rabbits for their pelts, also known as fur or wool, you are going to want your rabbits exposed to less light. Days that have less than 8-10 hours of light are ideal for a rabbit that is developing its





fur.

#### 4. Temperature

- a. Hot Weather: Rabbits can die from extreme heat. Make sure the temperature in the hutch stays at 85° F or below. In hot weather, provide shade and breeze for your rabbits. If it is very hot, place frozen water bottles or wet towels in the hutch for your rabbits to cool off. A fan can help circulate air, but be sure not to blow it directly on your rabbits. If you see a rabbit breathing really hard and/or has wet fur around their nose and mouth, you need to get them cooled off quickly.
- b. Wet Weather: Rabbits can withstand very cold weather, but if they get wet, they can get very sick. Protect your rabbits from rain, sleet, and snow by placing their hutch out of the elements. You should also consider placing a nesting box in their cage they can crawl into if bad weather occurs. Do not use metal nesting boxes; wood ones are best.

#### 5. Cages

- a. You can purchase a cage/hutch at your local feed store, or you can build your own.
- b. If you plan to build your own cage, there are certain materials needed like specific wire gauge.
- c. Recommended Wire Gauge to Build Your Own Cage:

To begin, use ½" X 1", 14 gauge galvanized wire for the floor.

Place the ½" side face up and toward the rabbit's feet.

Use 1" X 2", 16-gauge wire for the tops and side.

#### 6. Assembling the Cage

- a. You will need to do further research on how to assemble the cage and the proper tools needed. Below are instructions that explain more about how to build a cage or a hutch.
- b. <https://www.wikihow.pet/Set-up-a-Rabbit-Cage>
- c. To determine what size of cage your rabbit will need, follow the guidelines below:
  - Small Breeds: 18" deep X 24" wide X 12" high cage
  - Medium Breeds: 24" deep X 24"-36" wide X 18" high cage
  - Large Breeds: 24" deep X 36"-48" wide X 18" high cage
- d. In addition, you will need to purchase a dropping pan to collect droppings and waste. A dropping pan or tarp is located below the cage floor, which allows the droppings to fall through. You will want to clean the dropping pan



or tarp at least once a week.

## 7. Feeders

- a. There are a few different types of feed dishes when it comes to rabbits. A practical type of feeder is made of metal and clips onto the outside of the cage, with part of it inserted through a hole in the side of the cage. The feeder on the outside allows food replenishment without opening the cage door.
- b. Another option is to use a ceramic or vinyl crock (dish) inside the cage that the feed can be poured into. Vinyl crocks can be drilled through to allow it to be wired to the side of the cage. This keeps the rabbit from turning



it over.

## 8. Water Containers

- a. You will need to have an adequate and accessible water supply for your rabbit. Again, you can use a ceramic or vinyl crock for water. Vinyl crocks are less likely to break if your rabbit is located outside and the water freezes. A crock allows the rabbit more access to its water compared to the water bottle.
- b. Water bottles allow the rabbit to drink water without wasting or spilling it; however, they do need to be cleaned regularly to keep algae from growing inside them. The crocks will also need to be cleaned from time to time due to algae build up. During the winter, these bottles will freeze, making it harder to change out the water for your rabbit. Regardless of which water system you choose, it is very important to regularly clean out the bottle or crock. A mild bleach and soapy solution can be used to clean your water equipment. Once you clean your water bottle or crock, be sure to rinse it thoroughly.
- c. REMEMBER! Rabbits NEED clean, fresh water at ALL TIMES! Never let stagnant water sit in the bowl or water bottle. If a rabbit does not have enough water, it will eat less food and not be the happy, healthy bunny you want. You should provide your rabbit fresh water a minimum of twice a day

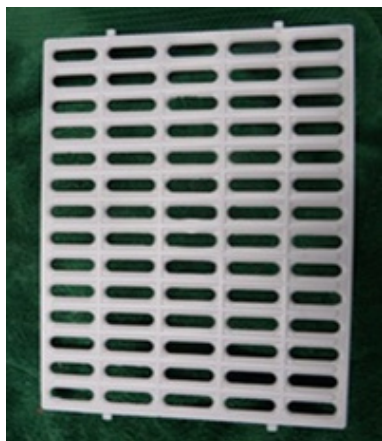




and more so during the summer months.

#### 9. Resting Board

- a. Since your rabbit will spend most of its time on a wire floor, they will need a place to relieve pressure from their feet. A resting board will provide that. Resting boards can be as simple as a smooth, thin piece of wood free of splinters.
- b. Other options include a large tile square, or a plastic floor mat.



- c. Resting boards help prevent sore hocks, which will be discussed in more detail in Club Meeting 3.

#### 10. Chewing Block

- a. A rabbit's front incisors (teeth) continually grow at a rate of about 3 mm per week. It is important that rabbits have something to gnaw or chew on to keep their teeth healthy and in proportion.
- b. Chewing blocks or sticks can be purchased at your local feed store or pet store.
- c. Fruit tree branches are also a great option for a rabbit to chew on. Cut off a small piece of a branch and give it to your rabbit to enjoy.
- d. If you use wood for the resting board, they can chew on that. This way you will not have to worry about a chewing block. The only disadvantage to this is that you will have to replace their resting board more frequently.



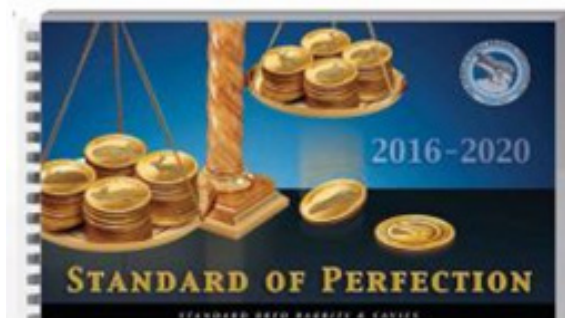


# SELECTING A RABBIT

TIME: 40 MINUTES

In a rabbit project, there are many decisions to consider. Discuss the following questions. What breed of rabbit do you like best? Do you want a buck or a doe? Is the goal of your 4-H project to breed your rabbit? Many decisions need to be made based on what you want to do with your 4-H rabbit project. But overall, you need to be a responsible owner.

1. Reasons to Buy a Rabbit
  - a. Meat Production: Rabbits are raised for meat.
  - b. Wool Production: Rabbits are raised for wool. The wool needs to be durable, clean, and easily processed.
  - c. Fur Production: Rabbits are raised for their pelt. The tanned fur is then turned into craft and novelty products.
  - d. Breeding Stock: Rabbits raised to produce offspring. Maintaining good quality animals is important. At shows, keep records of your animal's strong and weak breed characteristics.
  - e. Laboratory Use: Rabbits are raised to be used for research in laboratories.
  - f. Pets: Rabbits are raised to be companions. Extra rabbits can be sold at pet stores or from your local farm.
2. ARBA (American Rabbit Breeders Association) Standard of Perfection
  - a. This book contains all the standard information of every breed of rabbit and other very useful information. This book is available on the ARBA Website ([www.arba.net](http://www.arba.net)).



3. Helpful Chart
  - a. When deciding what type of rabbit, you want, reference the chart on the next page (Rabbit Breeds and Ideal Weight Groups). It will help you understand the size and weight of each breed.





<b>Rabbit Breeds and Ideal Weight Groups</b>				
<b>Four Class Rabbits</b>			<b>Six Class Rabbits</b>	
<b>Miniature 2-4 lbs</b>	<b>Small 4-6 lbs</b>	<b>Medium 6-9 lbs</b>	<b>Large 9-11 lbs</b>	<b>Giant 11 lbs &amp; over</b>
American Fuzzy Lop	Dutch	American Sable	American	Checkered Giant
Britannia Petite	Florida White	Belgian Hare	American Chinchilla	Flemish Giant
Dwarf Hotot	Havana	English Angora	Argente Brun	French Lop
Himalayan	Mini Lop	English Spot	Beveren	Giant Angora
Holland Lop	Silver	French Angora	Blanc de Hotot	Giant Chinchilla
Jersey Woolly	Tan	Harlequin	Californian Champagne D'Argent	
Lionhead	Thrianta	Lilac	Cinnamon	
Mini Rex		Rex	Crème D'Argent	
Mini Satin		Rhineland	English Lop	
Netherland Dwarf		Satin	New Zealand	
Polish		Satin Angora	Palomino	
		Silver Marten	Silver Fox	
		Standard Chinchilla		

4. Beginning Your 4-H Rabbit Project

- a. To begin your 4-H rabbit project, it is recommend that you buy a rabbit that is a purebred. There are cross-bred rabbits, but to be able to enter in a sanctioned rabbit show, the rabbit must be a purebred. Having a purebred rabbit will also make it easier to learn the standards and the characteristics of your specific breed.

5. How to Know if Rabbits are purebred

- a. On the American Rabbit Breeders Association Website ([www.arba.net](http://www.arba.net)) there are 49 recognized breeds of rabbits. This website is a great way to see and learn about the diversity among the breeds of rabbits. When selecting the breed of rabbit you would like to raise, you need to keep in mind that your local breeders may not raise the breed you are looking for. To help you better decide which breed(s) of rabbit you should go with, you should visit local breeders as well as county leaders and youth involved in the 4-H Rabbit Program. You should also attend a local ARBA show if possible.
- b. Once you have selected a rabbit of your choice and are ready to learn all about that breed, it is a good idea to purchase the ARBA Standard of Perfection Handbook.



# DETERMINING THE SEX OF A RABBIT

**TIME: 30 MINUTES**

It is important to be able to identify your rabbit's gender, so you can know if it is a buck (boy) or a doe (girl). Gender must be determined before weaning or registering your rabbit for a show. Knowing the sex of your rabbit also prevents unwanted mating. You can usually tell the gender of the rabbit at about four weeks old, but it takes a close eye to tell. As the rabbit gets older, it will become easier to identify the sex.

To determine your rabbit's gender:

1. Lay your rabbit on its back. Rabbits don't usually like being on their backs, so try to make your rabbit feel as comfortable as possible. You can do this by cuddling or petting it, or wrapping it in a warm blanket first.
2. Use one hand to grasp the rabbit's nape and use the other hand to scoop under the rabbit's rump.
3. Lay the rabbit on your lap with its head toward your stomach and tail on the edge of your knees. This will give you easy access to the genital area.
4. You may want to wear gloves since you are going to be touching a rabbit's genital regions. It is more hygienic as well as safer. You may unintentionally spread disease to the rabbit or to your other rabbits if you don't.
5. Once you have flipped your rabbit, place it between the arm holding the head and your body and let go of the rump. Your rabbit should be secure in one arm.
6. Examine the rabbit's external genitalia by parting the fur between their legs with the hand not being used to hold the rabbit.





## Reflect

- What items are REQUIRED to properly care for a rabbit?
- What do you want to use your rabbit for?
- What size of cage do you need for your rabbit?
- Are you better off with a purebred or cross-bred rabbit?

## Apply

- When presented with many choices of rabbits, what should you do to make a selection?
- Have you purchased a different kind of pet in the past that you had to take care of?
- What do you take care of now? (bedroom, pet, plants, etc.)
- Are you being responsible with what you take care of now? What can you do better?

## 4-H MISSION MANDATES

### Science

Throughout the course of this project, members will be adding items to their Project Records Worksheet. It is important that they use correct math skills when calculating totals. Once totals have been calculated, they can determine whether or not the project was profitable.

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

#### Belonging

At the first meeting, be sure to create a positive bond with the youth. Help set expectations and boundaries, but get to know the youth as well so that they feel safe.

#### Generosity

At an upcoming activity, consider writing a thank-you note to the producer. It is important to teach members how to appropriately show appreciation.

#### Mastery

Engage the youth as they learn about the equipment needed for their rabbits by having them pick out or help build the hutches.

### References and Other Resources

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2011). Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies. Blooming, IL.

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2016). Standard of Perfection. Bloomington, IL



## Nutrition, Daily Care, and Financial Record Keeping



### Supplies

- Pencils or Pens
- Clipboard or hard surface to write on
- Copies of blank food graph
- Different brands of commercial feed labels
- Copy of 4-H Rabbit Project Worksheet

### INTRODUCTION

In this club meeting, members will discuss how to select the proper food for your rabbit and how to keep financial records.

### PRIOR TO THE MEETING

1. Contact a local feed store for assistance with this activity. If you are unable to find a feed store, contact your local county agent or Extension office for ideas. Make sure you inform all members and parents of store location.
2. Ask the feed store if they will be willing to do a compare and contrast of nutrition between different rabbit feeds. It will be helpful to have different feeds for different breeds of rabbits.
3. Compile a list of different feed possibilities to choose from and state which breed of rabbit the feeds are good for.

## Activity #1

### Feeding Your Rabbit



## FEEDING YOUR RABBIT

TIME: 35 MINTUES

1. What Type of Feed to Give to Your Rabbit
  - a. Proteins are necessary for growth, disease resistance, general health, and reproduction.
  - b. Fiber satisfies the bulk and forage requirements.
  - c. Fat is a good conditioner, adds luster and gloss to the rabbit's fur, but is the least important of the four factors.
  - d. Vitamins and minerals are important for bone development.





## 2. Comparing Brands

- a. There are many options when it comes to selecting commercially prepared feed. To begin, it is always a good idea to read the label.
- b. As a club, you can go to your local feed store and read and compare the different brands of commercial feed labels. This can also be done online by looking up commercial feed brands. Labels will show the varying amounts of nutrition within the feed.
- c. Use the chart below to compare different brands of commercial feed.
- d. When selecting feed, the protein levels should range from 14%-18%. Feed that contains 18% protein does not stay fresh as long and often times has to be special ordered. This is a guide to go by; however, this number also weighs heavily upon the intent of your rabbit project.
- e. Researching on your own will enable you to make the best decision for your rabbit breed and what you want to accomplish in your project. This is also why it is recommended that you talk with other rabbit breeders that raise the same breed of rabbit as you about their feeding program.

<b>Comparing Chart</b>				
<b>Brands and Nutrition Info</b>				
<b>Brand</b>	<b>Protein %</b>	<b>Fiber %</b>	<b>Fat %</b>	<b>Vitamins and Minerals %</b>







### 3. Changing Feed

- a. Occasionally you may find it necessary to change the feed or introduce a different type of feed into your rabbit's diet.
- b. Introduce the new feed slowly by mixing the new feed into the old feed. It is best to start with a  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  ration mixture, then move to  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ , then completely over to the new feed.
- c. Do each ration for about 3-4 days before switching to the next ration. The whole period will be about a 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 2 weeks.
- d. Rabbit digestive tracts are sensitive and will shut down if changes are introduced too rapidly.

### 4. How Much to Feed Your Rabbit

- a. In general, small breeds need 2-3 ounces of pellets per day.
- b. Medium breeds need 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 ounces per day, and large breeds need 4-8 ounces. This is a guide for adult rabbits.
- c. Pregnant or lactating does will need to consume more.
- d. In addition, kits or baby bunnies will need more for their growing bodies.
- e. It is important to use good quality commercial pellets and keep your feed dry and free from insects and rodents.
- f. Do not leave uneaten feed in the feeder day after day.
- g. If the rabbit does not eat it, clean it out. Do not store more feed than can be used in about a month's time. The feed may lose its nutritional value.

### 5. How Often to Feed Your Rabbit

- a. A regular feeding schedule is important. Rabbits are nocturnal animals so it is better to feed them in the evenings.
- b. Try to feed your rabbit the recommended amount of feed at the same time each day. An example of this is at 6:00 p.m. each night.
- c. Remember to check your rabbit(s) at least morning and night.

### 6. Things to Remember When Feeding Your Rabbit

- a. Do not overfeed your rabbit(s).
- b. Keep your feed dry and insect free.





- c. Rabbits that are free fed tend to eat too much and become overweight.
- d. To determine if your rabbit is eating enough, check the flesh condition of the rabbit. This is done by feeling the hindquarters.
- e. The ribs and backbone should not be protruding and should be well rounded. Backbones and hips, which protrude out, indicate the rabbit is too thin.
- f. Adjust feed as needed to increase weight.
- g. You can also weigh your rabbit on a scale to see if it falls within the weight limits of its breed.
- h. Check this in the Standard of Perfection under your specific breed.

## Activity #2



Nutrition and Other Feed

## NUTRITION FACTS AND OTHER FEED

TIME: 10 MINUTES

1. Fiber in feed varies from 12%-22%, but sources say you should not use anything less than 18%.
2. Fat should not exceed 3%.
3. Calcium should be less than 1%.
4. Some other feeds that rabbits can have include grass hay, which is considered roughage, and is a great treat for rabbits to munch on. It helps to reduce blockages and is great for their digestive track. It is recommended to give hay pellets at night and actual hay in the morning, 12 hours later. If you only give hay pellets at night, that will be just fine. NOTE: It is not recommended to feed rabbits alfalfa hay due to it being too high in protein.
5. Rabbits can also be given treats from time to time. It is not something you want to do on a regular basis. Some treat ideas are: apples, oranges, carrots, grass clippings, etc. Do not feed iceberg lettuce and cabbage because they can cause diarrhea.

## Activity #3



Keeping Financial Records

## KEEPING FINANCIAL RECORDS

TIME: 10 MINUTES

1. Good record keeping is important for all 4-H projects. These records help to indicate the financial outcomes of your projects and aid in making future management decisions.
2. Have members fill out the 4-H Rabbit Project Worksheet as they begin to build their rabbit project each year.
3. Teach club members the importance of keeping financial records during their 4-H Rabbit Project.





## Reflect

- How many ounces of feed does your rabbit need?
- How often should you feed your rabbit?
- Why is record keeping important?

## Apply

- Both animals and humans get sick if they eat bad food. What can you do to ensure your food is safe to eat?
- Your rabbit's health and well-being rely on your good care. What are the consequences of not taking care of your responsibilities?
- Your rabbit has the same nutritional needs as you. What are ways you can become healthier?

### 4-H MISSION MANDATES

#### Healthy Living

Discuss that the four nutrients needed by rabbits are also needed by humans. It is important for us to be conscious of eating healthy and exercising.

#### Science

Throughout the course of this project, members will be adding items to their "Project Records" Worksheet. It is important that they use correct math skills when calculating totals. Once totals have been calculated, they can determine whether or not the project was profitable.

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

#### Belonging

Be alert and aware of any dangers that could surface during the meeting at the feed store location. It is important to create a learning environment that provides a positive, safe experience.

#### Independence

Encourage youth to use what they have learned about nutrition to create a feeding plan and schedule.

#### Generosity

At an upcoming activity, consider writing a thank you note to the feed store. It is important to teach members how to appropriately show appreciation.

#### Mastery

As the youth diligently work on their project worksheets they create good habits. This skill will help them throughout their lives.

#### References and Other Resources

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2011). Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies. Blooming, IL.

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2016). Standard of Perfection. Bloomington, IL





## Rabbit Health



### Supplies

- Pencils or Pens
- Clipboard or hard surface to write on
- Copies of Permanent Individual Animal Record Rabbits (found at the end of club meeting)
- Cleaning Equipment
- Copies of Disease Activity

### INTRODUCTION

In this club meeting, you will be discussing different rabbit diseases and how to keep your rabbit healthy.

### PRIOR TO MEETING

1. It will be helpful to have pictures of different diseases so the members and parents can see what a disease could potentially look like. The ARBA Standard of Perfection and the ARBA Raising Better Rabbits and Cavies have great descriptions and pictures of different rabbit diseases.
2. See if you can have a local veterinarian come and talk to members and parents about rabbit diseases and proper rabbit health care.
3. Make sure you inform all members and parents of the meeting location.
4. Allow observation time.
5. As you become acquainted with your new rabbit, you will learn and become familiar with their actions and activities. To begin this meeting, discuss the following questions and continue discussing each topic:

What does your rabbit spend most of its time doing? (Grooming, drinking, eating, sleeping, or running around the cage.)

What are your rabbit's normal behaviors?





# OBSERVING YOUR RABBIT'S HEALTH

Observing Your Rabbit's Health

**Time: 10 MINUTES**

1. As you observe your rabbit, you will be able to recognize a healthy rabbit and will be able to notice any changes that occur if your rabbit is not feeling well. Some key characteristics to observe are:
  - a. Its stance or sitting behavior
  - b. Movement
  - c. Appetite: does it finish all its food?
  - d. Eyes and nose: any discharge?
  - e. Coat (Fur/Wool)
  - f. Droppings or body waste
  - g. Heart rate
  - h. Breathing
2. Each day when you go out to feed and care for your rabbit, take time to watch and interact with them. You know what a healthy rabbits acts like, so what does an unhealthy rabbit act like?
3. Did they finish all the feed in their dish? Are they just sitting in one place and not moving around? Are their waste droppings normal, i.e. moist and round, or small and dry? Changes in your rabbit's behavior could mean your rabbit is not feeling well. Look closely at the health of your rabbit's external organs for signs of change.



# EXTERNAL ORGAN CARE

External Organ Care

**TIME: 20 MINUTES**

Rabbits depend upon you to keep them healthy. Good Sanitation practices are the best way to control diseases and maintain good health for your rabbits.

1. Make sure to check the following places of your rabbit regularly:
  - a. Feet: Check your rabbit's feet often for injuries and accumulation of dirt between the toes.
  - b. Nails: Rabbit's nails grow continuously, so check them often for over growth. If the nails get too long, the rabbit can have difficulty moving or the toes can become malformed. Nails can be clipped with nail clippers similar to cat or dog nail clippers. Be careful not to clip the nails too far back.
  - c. Eyes: Rabbit's eyes should be bright and attentive. Dull eyes could be signs of old age or poor health. A sick rabbit may have discharging eyes. Cold drafts may cause a rabbit's eyes to water. Eye infections or injuries should receive professional treatment.







- d. Ears: A healthy rabbit should have ears that turn in response to new sounds. Inspect the inside of the rabbit's ears often, and clean when necessary by gently wiping with a little olive oil or baby oil on a cotton or wool swab.
  - e. Nose: A healthy rabbit should have a dry nose. A runny nose is a sign of a respiratory infection. Respiratory infections can be caused by cold drafts or dampness. The discharge from a rabbit's nose can spread infection and disease to the rest of the colony or herd through sneezing or coughing. A wheezing or snuffling sound from the chest can be an indication of a lung infection.
2. Discuss each of the above points among the group.

## Activity #3

### Cleaning Your Rabbit's Equipment



# CLEANING YOUR RABBIT'S EQUIPMENT

TIME: 30 MINUTES

Cleaning equipment and cages helps to prevent diseases in your rabbits. You should sanitize your equipment with a chlorine bleach solution about once a month or whenever your rabbit gets sick.

1. To make a chlorine solution, put one cup of chlorine bleach in one gallon of water. Use this to wash the crocks and feeders. Make sure to rinse them well. Remove fur and manure from the cage with a wire brush, and then spray the entire thing with the chlorine solution. Let it dry completely before you put your rabbit back. If the cage has a wooden floor, clean it every day and sanitize it every week. If you use other disinfectants, make sure it will not cause your rabbit any irritations.
2. Clean hutches and cages weekly. Clean feeding and watering equipment daily. Let equipment sun dry, since direct sunlight acts as a disinfectant. Remove loose fur with a vacuum or stiff brush so it does not become a problem. Do not use old cages until they are disinfected with a chlorine solution and direct sunlight.
3. Things to remember to clean include:
  - a. Keep the water bottle/crock free of algae and stagnant water.
  - b. Clean out moldy or old feed that may be stuck in their feed daily.
  - c. Clean cages and hutches every week or so. Disinfect cages and floors at least monthly.
4. Now that you know your rabbit's healthy behaviors you will be able to recognize when your rabbit is not feeling well. Common diseases are listed in the following activity.





# COMMON RABBIT DISEASES AND SYMPTOMS

TIME: 20 MINUTES

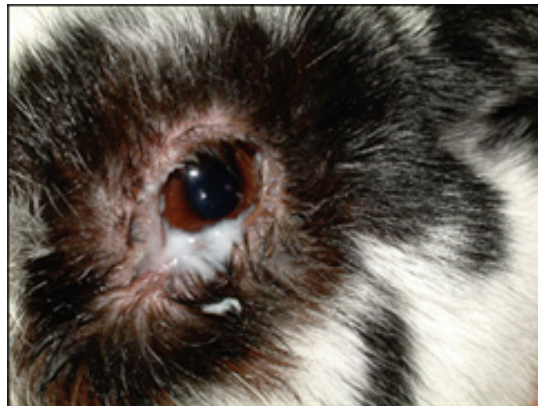
## 1. Ear Canker (ear mites)

Scaly crust in the inner ear, beginning at the base. Rabbit shakes head and flops ears.



## 2. Weepy Eye

Excessive discharge from eye, matted fur under eye, rabbit rubs eye with front feet.



## 3. Snuffles (pasteurellosis)

Nasal discharge, sneezing, watery eyes, coughing, and rubbing nose with front feet.





4. Wry Neck

Rabbit turns its head to one side and has loss of balance.



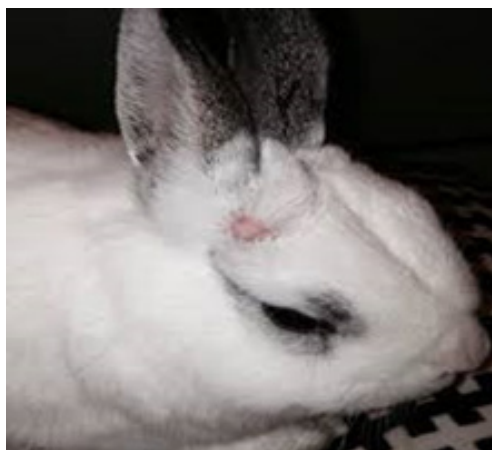
5. Mastitis

Mammary Glands become hot, reddened and swollen and may appear blue.



6. Ringworm

Loss of hair in circumscribed patches, usually on the head, though it may include other parts of the body.





## 7. Sore hocks

Bruised area under the hocks; often becomes infected or abscessed. Sore hocks are not considered a disease but can be common among rabbits. Sore hocks are when a rabbit develops sores on the bottom of their feet, or the hock. Sore hocks can be treated by disinfecting the sore and applying Neosporin. The best thing you can do for sore hocks is to prevent them. This is easily done by placing a resting board in your rabbit's cage. The resting board allows the rabbit's feet relief from the pressure of the wire cage floor.



8. Apply what you have learned. After going over the information in this section, discuss in groups how you will change the examination process of your rabbit(s).
9. At the end of the activity, have each member draw lines on the table below from the disease name to the symptoms that go with the disease.

<b>Diseases</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>
Ear Canker (ear mites)	Mammary Glands become hot, reddened and swollen and may appear blue.
Weepy Eye	Bruised area under the hocks; often becomes infected or abscessed.
Snuffles (pasteurellosis)	Excessive discharge from eye, matted fur under eye, rabbit rubs eye with front feet.
Wry Neck	Loss of hair in circumscribed patches, usually on the head, though it may include other parts of the body
Mastitis	Scaly crust in the inner ear, beginning at the base. Rabbit shakes head and flops ears.
Ringworm	Nasal discharge, sneezing, watery eyes, coughing, and rubbing nose with front feet.
Sore Hocks	Rabbit turns its head to one side and has loss of balance.





## TIPS TO PREVENT DISEASE

TIME: 15 MINUTES

1. Buy rabbits from good breeders, good bloodlines, and that look and act healthy.
2. Make sure to have clean, fresh water at all times.
3. Make sure to use a healthy diet of clean, fresh feed.
4. Use good sanitary practices as recommended and throw away debris.
5. Check your rabbits every day, and do an in-depth examination monthly.
6. Isolate new animals for at least two weeks before introducing them to your herd.
7. Clean yourself and wash your hands before and after being with your rabbits.
8. If you have a lot of rabbits, where disease spreads quickly, limit visitors.



## KEEPING HEALTH RECORDS

TIME: 10 MINUTES

1. It is important to keep track of your rabbit's health and any treatments given to prevent or cure diseases.
2. The Permanent Individual Animal Record (found on the next four pages) is a great way to track your rabbit's health, breeding and production records.
3. Show club members how to fill it out.















## Reflect

- How often should you check your rabbit(s) health?
- How often should you clean your rabbit(s) cage(s)?
- Why is record keeping important?
- Why is it important to get to know your rabbit and their personality? How does it help you to keep them healthy?

## Apply

- Just as rabbits show signs of poor health, humans do too. Discuss how keeping rabbits healthy is similar to keeping yourself healthy.
- Your rabbit's health and well-being rely on your good care. What are the consequences of not taking care of your other responsibilities?

### 4-H MISSION MANDATES

#### Healthy Living

Discuss that disease prevention is important for both rabbits and humans. It is important for us to be cleaning and sanitizing often to help us stay healthy.

#### Science

Develop a rabbit health plan. Identify common ailments and determine how to prevent and treat them. Use a standard health checklist to evaluate your rabbit's health.

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

#### Independence

Encourage youth to use what they have learned about disease prevention to create a health plan and schedule.

#### Generosity

At an upcoming activity, consider writing a thank you note to the local veterinarian. It is important to teach members how to appropriately show appreciation.

#### Mastery

As the youth diligently work on their project worksheets they create good habits. This skill will help them throughout their lives.

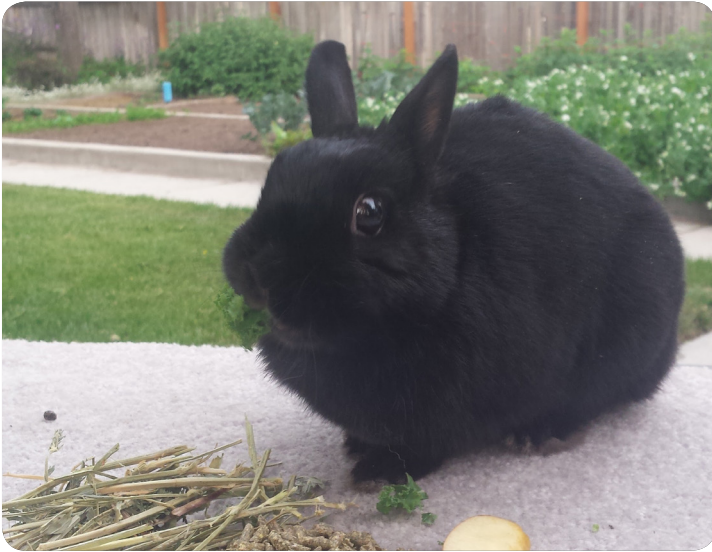
#### References and Other Resources

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2011). Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies. Blooming, IL.

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2016). Standard of Perfection. Bloomington, IL

University of Idaho Extension. (2003). Permanent Individual Animal Record #72101, Moscow, ID.





### Supplies

- Pencils or Pens
- Clipboard or hard surface to write on
- Copy of Lesson Activities
- Rabbits

### INTRODUCTION

In this meeting, we will focus on the basic knowledge of rabbits. Members will learn about the five body types, four fur types, weight classes and parts of the rabbit. It is important to note that each breed will have its own specifics.

### PRIOR TO MEETING

\* This is a longer meeting and may need to be broken into two meetings to allow for enough time for members to complete each activity.

1. During this activity, you will be discussing rabbit body types, posing positions, fur types, weight classes, and parts of a rabbit. It will be helpful to have members bring their rabbits, especially if they are different breeds so they can see the difference in body types, posing positions, and fur types. It will also help members and parents learn where the different body parts are on the rabbit.
2. Make sure you inform all members and parents of the meeting location.
3. Assign members to read pages 28-37 in Discover 4-H Rabbit Curriculum.

## Activity #1

### Rabbit Body Types



## RABBIT BODY TYPES

**Time: 25 MINUTES**

There are 49 different breeds of rabbits and they do not all look alike. Some are big and some are small. Some stand up and others sit in a small compact position. Each breed of rabbit is categorized into 1 of 5 different body type groups. Discuss each of the below rabbit body types with club members.

1. Full Arch

These rabbits do not sit and pose on the table, but run. They have a sleek arched body much like a wild jackrabbit. They do not sit flat on the floor but stand up on all their legs showing a really high arch under







the belly. Breeds with this body type include Belgian Hare, Britannia Petite, Checkered Giant, English Spot, Rhinelander, and Tan.



2. Semi-Arch (Mandolin)

They look similar to the commercial body type but have a slightly arched body. The shoulders sit low and rise to an arched hind end. You may also see a little arch under the belly. Breeds with this body type include American, Beveren, English Lop, Flemish Giant, and Giant Chinchilla.



3. Compact

Compact rabbits are most of the small and medium breeds. The rabbit sits flat on the floor, sometimes, with front legs propped up a little. The rabbit should have a short compact body and not stretched out. Breeds with this body type include American Fuzzy Lop, English Angora, Standard Chinchilla, Dutch, Dwarf Hotot, Florida White, Havana Holland Lop, Jersey Wooly, Lilac, Lionhead, Mini Lop, Mini Rex, Mini Satin, Netherland Dwarf, Polish, Silver, Thrianta.



4. Commercial

Commercial rabbits are most of your large breeds. The rabbit is posed much like a compact breed, flat to the floor, but with a much bigger body. Most of these rabbits are typically used for meat production. Breeds with this body type include Argente Brun, French Angora, Giant Angora, Satin Angora, Bland de Hotot, Champagne





D'Argent, California, American Chinchilla, Cinnamon, Crème D'Argent, French Lop, Harlequin, New Zealand, Palomino, Rex, American Sable, Satin Angora, Silver Fox, and Silver Marten



5. Cylindrical or Snaky

Cylindrical or snaky is a body type that only one breed of rabbit poses. The rabbit sits flat on the floor but with his body stretched out like a hot dog. The legs should still be tucked under the body. Himalayan breed has this body type.



6. In the table on the next page, fill in each breed (49) with the appropriate body type from above.





# RABBIT BODY TYPES

Full Arch (6)

Semi Arch (Mandolin) (5)

Compact (18)

Commercial (19)

Cylindrical (1)

American		Harlequin	
American Fuzzy Lop		Havana	
American Sable		Himalayan	
Angora, English		Holland Lop	
Angora, French		Jersey Woolly	
Angora, Giant		Lilac	
Angora, Satin		Lionhead	
Argente Brun		Lop, English	
Belgian Hare		Lop, French	
Beveren		Lop, Mini	
Blanc de Hotot		Mini Rex	
Britannia Petite		Mini Satin	
Californian		Netherland Dwarf	
Champagne D'Argent		New Zealand	
Checked Giant		Palomino	
Chinchilla, American		Polish	
Chinchilla, Giant		Rex	
Chinchilla, Standard		Rhineland	
Cinnamon		Satin	
Crème D'Argent		Silver	
Dutch		Silver Fox	
Dwarf Hotot		Silver Marten	
English Spot		Tan	
Flemish Giant		Thrianta	
Florida White			





## POSING POSITIONS

TIME: 15 MINUTES

Each body type also corresponds with a posing type. Discuss each of them with the club members.

1. Full arch body type pose standing up on all 4 feet. All breeds should be allowed to move naturally to evaluate type, except the Britannia Petite, which is to be posed.
2. Semi-Arch body types are to be posed with the front feet directly under the eyes and toes of the rear feet aligned with the front of the hips. Some breeds may be allowed to move naturally after initial pose, to better evaluate specific type features.
3. Compact body types are to be posed with the front feet directly under the eyes and toes of the rear feet aligned with the front of the hips. Posing in an excessively, "tucked" position or allowing animals to move about the table is undesirable and strongly discouraged.
4. Commercial body types are to be posed with the front feet directly under the eyes and the toes of the rear feet aligned with the front of the hips. Posing in a tucked up or stretched out position is inappropriate.
5. Cylindrical body types are to be posed with the front feet even with the eyes and the body stretched out with forelegs and hocks flat on the table.

## Activity #3

Fur Types



## FUR TYPES

TIME: 20 MINUTES

There are two main fur categories. Discuss each of them with the club members.

1. Normal Fur

Most rabbits have "normal" fur, which has guard hairs and underfur. Guard hairs are longer, coarser hairs that offer protection to the underfur and add resilience to the coat. Underfur is softer and shorter than the guard hairs. Most normal fur rabbits have flyback fur, which means that as they are stroked from the hindquarters to the shoulder the fur flies back to its normal position. Rollback fur returns to its normal position more gradually.

- a. Flyback
  - b. Rollback
  - c. Standing (Silver Fox is the only breed to have this type.)
2. Mutation Fur
    - a. Rex Fur: Rex Fur is short, plush, dense, and stands upright. The guard hairs are almost as short as the underfur. It is extremely smooth to the touch and should be between 1/2" - 7/8" in length. The ideal length is 5/8". Rex Fur has a spring resistance to it.
    - b. Satin Fur: Satin fur is very soft, dense, fine, and silky. The unique glossy sheen is because of the gloss-like hair-shaft and its ability to reflect light. Satin fur appears more brilliant than normal and Rex Fur because





of its greater transparency. The ideal length for Satin fur is 1". The coat should be well balanced, with uniform length, 1" - 1 1/8" (ideal). Allowable length, 7/8"-1 1/4" for the Satin. The Mini Satin does not have an ideal length.

- c. Wool : Angora breeds produce a high quality wool that is finer than sheep wool. It can be used to make very soft, warm garments. Wool can be harvested 3-4 times a year and one rabbit can produce 1/2 to 1 1/2 pounds of wool in a year. The ideal length depends on the breed.
- d. Fur & Wool: Lionheads have both fur and wool. Their mane is made up of wool while their body is covered in fur.

3. Discuss each fur type from the table below.

Rabbit Fur Types						
Normal Fur			Mutation			
Flyback	Rollback	Standing	Wool	Rex	Satin	Fur & Wool
Argente Brun	American Sable	Silver Fox	American Fuzzy Lop	Mini Rex	Mini Satin	Lionhead
Belgian Hare	Beveren		English Angora	Rex	Satin	
Britannia Petite	Blance de Hotot		French Angora			
California	American Chinchilla		Giant Angora			
Champagne D'Argent	Standard Chinchilla		Satin Angora			
Checkered Giant	Dwarf Hotot		Jersey Wooly			
Giant Chinchilla	Flemish Giant					
Cinnamon	Holland Lop					
Creme D'Argent	Lilac					
Dutch	French Lop					
English Spot	Mini Lop					
Florida White	Netherland Dwarf					
Harlequin	Thrianta					
Havana						
Himalayan						
English Lop						
New Zealand						
Palomino						
Polish						
Rhineland						
Silver						
Silver Marten						
Tan						

NORMAL COMMERCIAL FUR: Used in the manufacture of fur for garments or trim. Types include American, Giant Chinchilla, Harlequin, New Zealand, Silver Marten, Californian, Cinnamon, Champagne, Florida White, and Palomino.





4. Fill in each breed (49) under the appropriate fur type.

Rabbit Fur Types Activity						
Normal Fur			Mutation			
Flyback	Rollback	Standing	Wool	Rex	Satin	Fur & Wool
1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2		2	2	2	
3	3		3			
4	4		4			
5	5		5			
6	6		6			
7	7					
8	8					
9	9					
10	10					
11	11					
12	12					
13	13					
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						

NORMAL COMMERCIAL FUR: Used in the manufacture of fur for garments or trim. Types include American, Giant Chinchilla, Harlequin, New Zealand, Silver Marten, Californian, Cinnamon, Champagne, Florida White, and Palomino.

## Activity #4

Determining Weight Classes

### DETERMINING WEIGHT CLASSES

TIME: 20 MINUTES

1. Rabbits are placed in classes according to their weight. For breeds whose senior ideal weight is under 9 pounds; these breeds are considered "Four Class Rabbits." Discuss this class of rabbits with the club members.
  - a. Senior Buck, 6 months and older
  - b. Senior Doe, 6 months and older





- c. Junior Buck, under 6 months
  - d. Junior Doe, under 6 months
2. For breeds whose senior ideal weight is 9 pounds or over; these breeds are considered "Six Class Rabbits." Discuss this class of rabbits with the club members.
- a. Senior Buck, 8 months and older
  - b. Senior Doe, 8 months and older
  - c. Intermediate Buck, 6-8 months
  - d. Intermediate Doe, 6-8 month
  - e. Junior Buck, under 6 months
  - f. Junior Doe, under 6 months

<b>Rabbit Breeds and Ideal Weight Groups</b>				
<b>Four Class Rabbits</b>			<b>Six Class Rabbits</b>	
<b>Miniature 2-4 lbs</b>	<b>Small 4-6 lbs</b>	<b>Medium 6-9 lbs</b>	<b>Large 9-11 lbs</b>	<b>Giant 11 lbs &amp; over</b>
American Fuzzy Lop	Dutch	American Sable	American	Checkered Giant
Britannia Petite	Florida White	Belgian Hare	American Chinchilla	Flemish Giant
Dwarf Hotot	Havana	English Angora	Argente Brun	French Lop
Himalayan	Mini Lop	English Spot	Beveren	Giant Angora
Holland Lop	Silver	French Angora	Blanc de Hotot	Giant Chinchilla
Jersey Wooly	Tan	Harlequin	Californian	
Lionhead	Thrianta	Lilac	Champagne D'Argent	
Mini Rex		Rex	Cinnamon	
Mini Satin		Rhineland	Crème D'Argent	
Netherland Dwarf		Satin	English Lop	
Polish		Satin Angora	New Zealand	
		Silver Marten	Palomino	
		Standard Chinchilla	Silver Fox	





- In the table below, fill in each breed (49) under the appropriate weight and class.
- At the end of this section, members should be able to identify their own rabbit's body type, posing position, fur type, and weight class.

<b>Rabbit Breeds and Ideal Weight Groups Activity</b>				
<b>Four Class Rabbits</b>			<b>Six Class Rabbits</b>	
<b>Miniature 2-4 lbs</b>	<b>Small 4-6 lbs</b>	<b>Medium 6-9 lbs</b>	<b>Large 9-11 lbs</b>	<b>Giant 11 lbs &amp; over</b>
1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	
7	7	7	7	
8		8	8	
9		9	9	
10		10	10	
11		11	11	
		12	12	
		13	13	





# THE BASIC PARTS OF A RABBIT

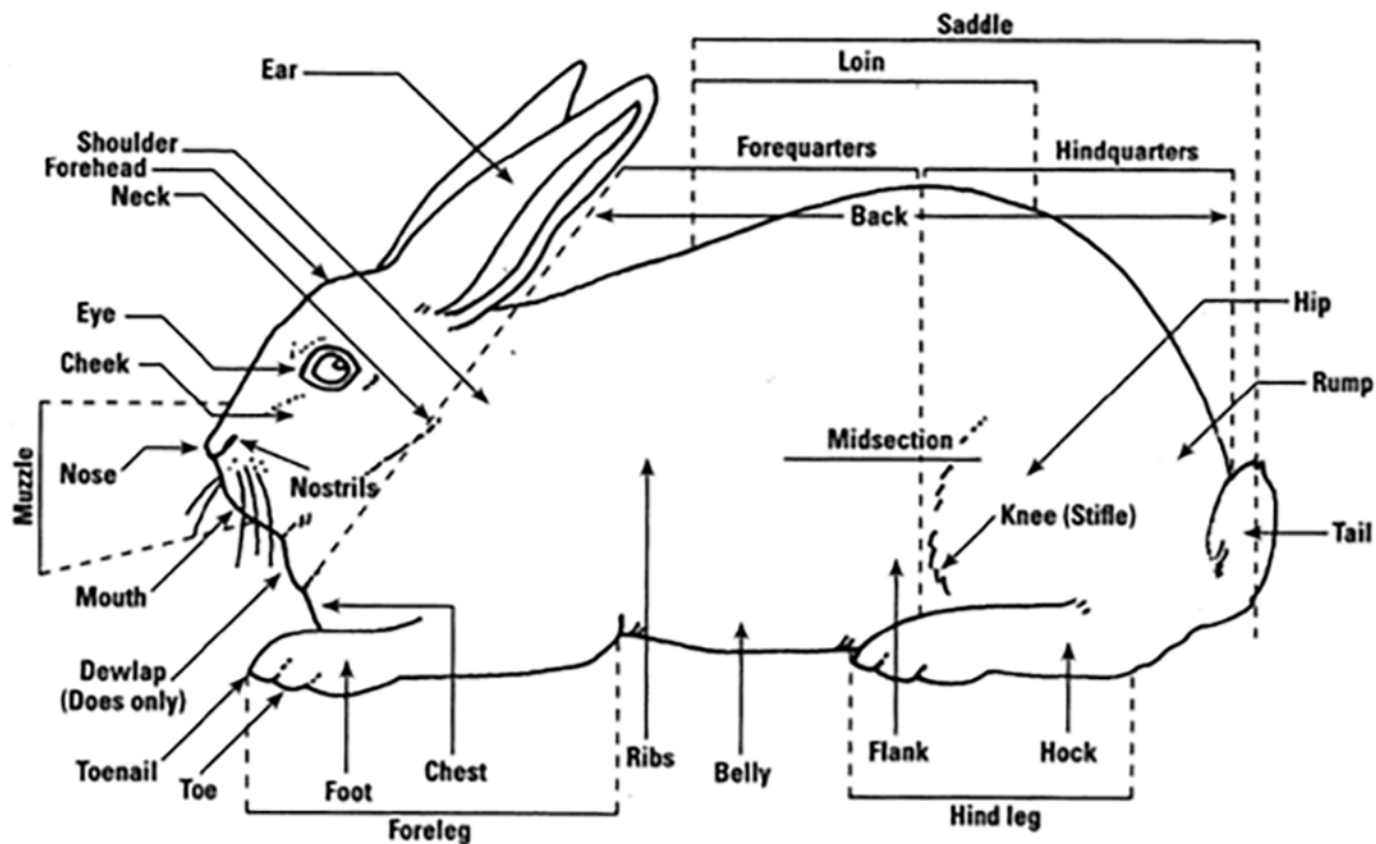
TIME: 20 MINUTES

1. Discuss the different parts of a rabbit using the diagram below.
2. Nostrils: Two openings of the nose that leads to the internal structure of the nose.
3. Forehead: The front part of the head between the eyes and the base of the ears.
4. Cheeks: Below the eyes. The sides of the face.
5. Neck: Connecting the body to the head.
6. Chest: The breast. The front part of the body between the forelegs and neck.
7. Shoulders: Upper joint of the foreleg that connects the leg to the body.
8. Ribs: The curved part of the sides immediately back and under the shoulders and above the belly.
9. Hindquarters: From the last rib back. The rear section of the body including the loin, hips, hind legs, and rump.
10. Belly: The abdomen, or the lower part of the body. It starts at the last rib and goes to the pelvis and houses the intestines.
11. Loin: A portion of the back from the last rib to the hip, on either side of the vertebrae.
12. Rump: The higher, rounded part of the hindquarters.
13. Hind (rear) Leg: The hip joint, stifle (knee), hock and foot.
14. Hip: Joint that joins the hind legs to the body.
15. Knee (Stifle): Joint that connects the thigh to the leg. The second joint in the hind leg.
16. Hock: Joint below the stifle, comparable to the human ankle.
17. Have the club members now fill in the different parts of the rabbit.



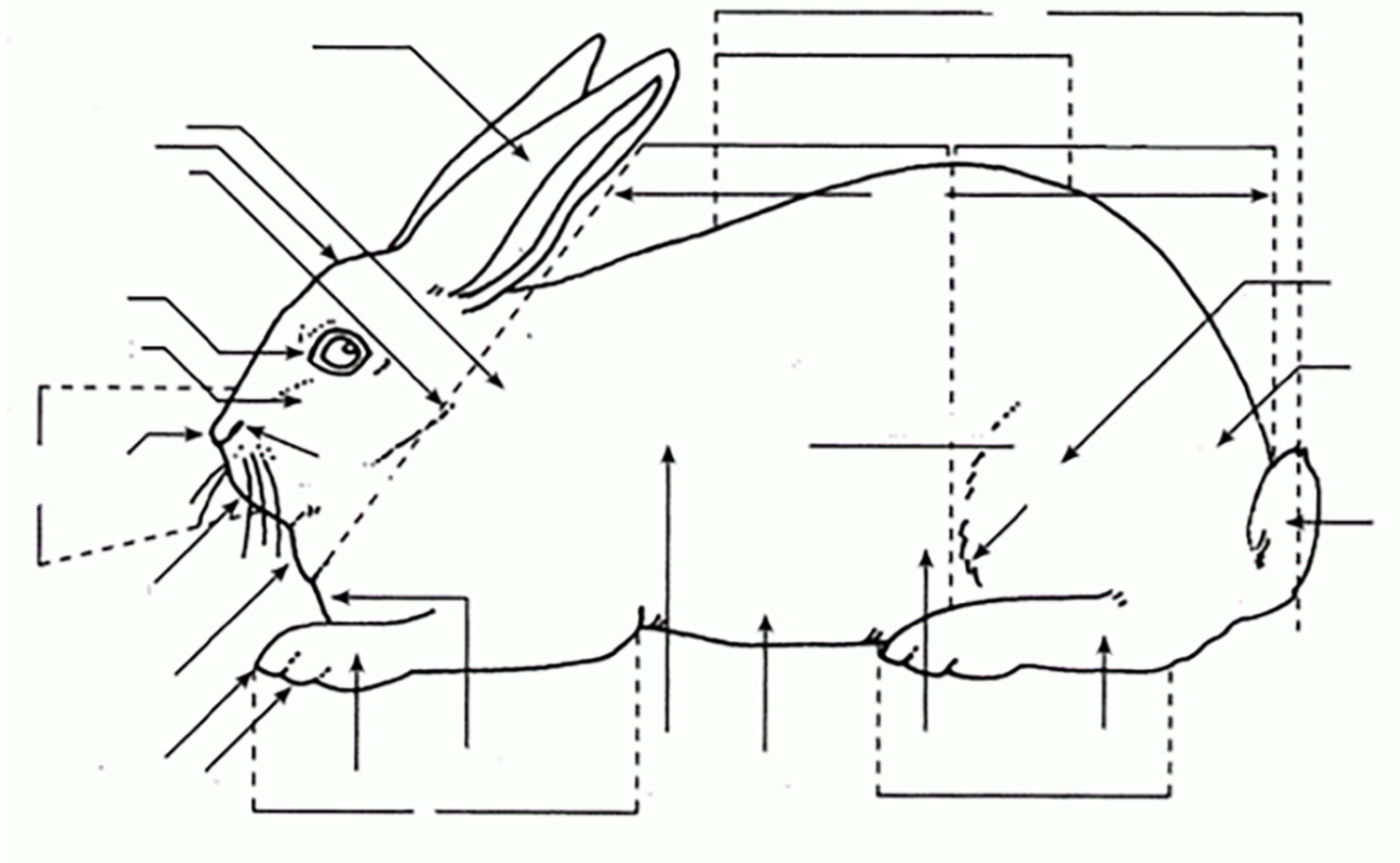


# Parts of a Rabbit





# Parts of a Rabbit Activity





## Reflect

- How can you tell what type of fur your rabbit has?
- How many different body types are there?
- How many fur types are there?
- How should your rabbit be posed?
- Why is it important to know all of the body types, posing positions, fur types, and weight classes?

## Apply

- The more you study the different body types, posing positions, fur types, and weight classes the more comfortable you will become with showing rabbits. What other skills could you improve if you practiced?
- How does learning the basic knowledge of rabbits help you to learn other things in everyday life?

### 4-H MISSION MANDATES

#### Science

Identify the different body types, posing postures, fur types, weight classes, and body parts on the rabbit. It is important to understand the structure of a rabbit when caring for one.

#### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

##### Independence

Encourage youth to use what they have learned about body types, posing postures, fur types, weight classes, and body parts to complete the activities within the lesson.

##### Mastery

As the youth diligently work on their project worksheets, they create good habits. This skill will help them throughout their lives.

#### References and Other Resources

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2011). Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies. Blooming, IL.

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2016). Standard of Perfection. Bloomington, IL







## Proper Rabbit Handling and Showmanship



### Supplies

- Pencils or Pens
- Clipboard or hard surface to write on
- Copy of Lesson, Rabbits
- Carpet Square or mat

### INTRODUCTION

For 4-H members participating in a rabbit project, doing a demonstration with their animals involves appropriate handling and a basic health evaluation. Unlike conformation classes, where the overall build and body type of the rabbit is judged against an ideal standard for its breed, showmanship involves the judging of the person giving the presentation, rather than the animal involved. Rabbit 4-H projects are very balanced in this way, giving the members a chance to focus on themselves and their application of knowledge and rabbit handling techniques.

### PRIOR TO MEETING

1. During this meeting, you will begin to teach your members proper rabbit handling and showmanship techniques. Have members bring their rabbit to practice with. In addition, have them bring a carpet square or mat. Rabbits sit on a carpet square or mat to keep them from slipping on the table while they are being shown or when you are practicing showmanship with them.
2. Make sure you inform all members and parents of the meeting location.
3. Assign members to read pages 42-47 in Discover 4-H Rabbit Curriculum.
4. Tip: It is recommended to do several showmanship meetings and to have practice shows.





# PROPER RABBIT HANDLING

Time: 20 MINUTES

This club meeting should begin by having members practice handling their rabbit and practice flipping their rabbit over. It is very important that club members become comfortable with the proper handling of their rabbit. The way each rabbit is picked up, held, and flipped over varies from breed to breed.

## 1. Picking Up Your Rabbit

- a. As a leader, show each member how to properly pick up their rabbit based on the breed. Then have the member practice picking up their rabbit.
- b. Tip: If you have Cloverbud members you may want them to practice with a stuffed rabbit before they pick up their bunny. This is for the safety of the rabbit and child.

## 2. Removing Your Rabbit From a Cage

- a. When removing a rabbit from a cage, you need to use your right hand to grab the rabbit's ear(s) and nape.
- b. Use your left arm and go around the right side of your rabbit.
- c. Then take your left hand to support your rabbit's rump.
- d. Gently lift your rabbit out of the cage and bring it to your body until you set it down.

## 3. Turning Your Rabbit

- a. When you are showing and examining your rabbit, you will need to show the underside of your rabbit. First, have your rabbit's left side facing you.
- b. With your right hand grab the ear(s) and the nape, which is the fur and skin that is at the back of the neck.
- c. If you have a lop eared rabbit you only grab ONE EAR. For all other breeds, you will grab both ears. If you grab both ears on a lop eared rabbit and they try to get away from you, you can potentially break their crown, which is the area between their ears. This is why it is important to only grab one of their ears and not both.
- d. Take your left arm and put it around the right side of your rabbit. Then use your left hand to support your rabbit's rump.
- e. Slowly pull the rabbit's head up and back with your right hand while simultaneously using your left hand to lift and support the hindquarters of your rabbit. This motion allows you to flip the rabbit onto its back.
- f. Once your rabbit is flipped over, remove your left hand so you can rest your rabbit's hindquarters on the table while you continue to hold on to their ear(s) and nape with your right hand. Now you will be able to examine the under view of your rabbit with your left hand.





# SHOWMANSHIP

TIME: 20 MINUTES

Showmanship is the opportunity to show the judge how well you know your breed of rabbit. Do you know their body type, posing type, fur type, ideal weight, proper handling, and so much more? You will be asked a series of questions pertaining to rabbits as a whole. You may also be asked to handle another person's rabbit and then asked a series of questions pertaining to that breed of rabbit.

There is no right or wrong way to show a rabbit but there are ways that do flow better and make your presentation appear well put together.

1. Carrying a Rabbit
  - a. Tuck the head under one arm and place the other hand under the rump to support the rabbit. One hand supports the weight of the rabbit while the other controls it so it is not dropped.
  - b. Be sure that all four feet of the rabbit are showing. A rabbit dropped from this position can easily break its back, so keep a firm grip. If a judge asks you to move your rabbit to another location, carry your rabbit like this.
2. Member gives an introduction of themselves and their rabbit.
  - a. Example: My name is Nicole and I am with the Split Lips and Company 4-H Club. This is my rabbit Missy, her breed is Dutch and her variety (color) is Blue. I will now begin my presentation.
3. Posing the Rabbit
  - a. Rabbits need to be posed according to the breed standards.
  - b. If they are not, you will be docked points.
4. Showing the Five Points of View
  - a. The five points of view are: Left View, Hind View, Right View, Front View, and Under View.
  - b. Below is a list of the parts of a rabbit that are visible from each view.

Left View -

Eyes

Ears - Tattoo

Saddle

Loin

Rise





Hind View -

Rump

Tail

Right View -

Eyes

Ears - Registration Tattoo if there is one.

Saddle

Loin

Rise

Front View -

Nose

Eyes

Ears

Under View -

Teeth

Front Legs

Front Toenails

Blemishes (Chest & Abdomen Area)

Hind Legs

Hind Toenails

Hocks

Sexing of Rabbit

Conclusion -

Fur

Finish Presentation (Example: This concludes my presentation. Are there any questions?)





# THINGS TO DO OR LOOK FOR WITH EACH BODY PART

Things to Do or Look For With Each Body Part

TIME: 20 MINUTES

1. Check the ears to make sure the tattoo is legible, look for ear mites, sores, and torn or missing parts of the ear that distract from general appearance.
2. Check each eye for signs of abnormality and blindness. Check for eye discharge, unmatched eyes, spots or specks in the eyes, off colored eyes, and walleye or mooneye (a milky appearance).
3. Check the nose for signs of a cold. White nasal discharge or matted fur on the inside of the front legs may indicate a cold or snuffles.
4. There are two ways to check teeth. If you are comfortable with your rabbit and you know that they will not bite you, take your index and middle finger to pull the lips apart to show the teeth. If you are working with a rabbit that tends to bite, take your free hand and come over the top of the rabbit's head. Then with your thumb and index finger pull the top lip back to show the teeth. This will keep your hand above the teeth in case the rabbit does try to bite you. You are looking to see if the rabbit's top teeth slightly overlap the bottom teeth. If the teeth are off to the side, the top meet the bottom, or the bottom overlap the top, you have what is called a malocclusion.
5. Check the front legs for straightness by extending the front legs. You can pull up each leg individually or you can place your hand below the elbow and push up both legs at the same time.
6. To check the front toenails, push your thumb into the center of the paw, pushing the fur back with your index finger if necessary to see the toenails. Check for missing or broken toes, toenails, unmatched toenails on corresponding feet, and proper colored toenails. There should be four toenails and a dewclaw on each foot.
7. Check the chest and abdomen for abscesses, tumors, swollen teats, and abnormalities by running your hands over the chest and abdominal area.
8. Check the hind legs for straightness by extending the hind legs. You can pull up each leg individually or you can place your hand above the knee and push down both legs at the same time.
9. To check the hind toenails, push your thumb into the center of the paw, pushing the fur back with your index finger if necessary to see the toenails. Check for missing or broken toes, toenails, unmatched toenails on corresponding feet, and proper colored toenails. There should be four toenails on each foot.
10. Check the bottom of the hind feet (hocks) for sores, infected, or bleeding areas (sore hocks). Fungal growth may be indicated by bare areas.
11. To check the gender, place your thumb below the vent and push towards the front of the rabbit with your forefinger to check the sex of the rabbit. Also look for signs of vent disease, a split penis, and testicles. In a regular show, a buck must show two normally descended testicles. Junior bucks must have both or neither testicles normally descended to remain in the show.
12. To check the tail, return the rabbit to the pose position and check to see if the tail is straight, permanently set





to either side, or permanently out of line. A rabbit with a screw or wry tail will be disqualified.

13. Check for foreign color spots, correct surface color, and smut on the usable portions of a pelt on Pointed White California and Himalayan breeds. Check for undercolor and ring color by stroking the fur forward all over the body.
14. Show the fur quality and cleanliness. Show the fur going back to the natural position by stroking the fur towards the head. Check the density of appropriate breeds by patting and blowing into several areas of the fur. Check for a mold condition by stroking the rabbit from head to rear. Look for stains on the fur.
15. Pose the rabbit to be evaluated. Check the rabbit for overall balance from the front, rear, and side views. Locate the shoulders, rib spread, and fullness of loin with your hand. Stretch your hand across the width and depth of the rump to check for the fullness of the hindquarters. Run your hand over the top of the hip to the tail so you can check the hips for smoothness.
16. It is important to go through each of these steps in your showmanship presentation.

### ADDITIONAL ITEMS

The type of questions the judge may ask you will correspond with your age, knowledge level and experience you have. Questions that may be asked by the judges are:

1. What is the maximum weight of a senior doe for your breed?
2. Is your breed of rabbit a Four Class or Six Class?
3. What fur type does your rabbit have?
4. How many varieties or color groups does your breed of rabbit have?
5. What is the largest breed of rabbit?
6. What is the smallest breed of rabbit?
7. \*Remember: Showmanship takes practice. You or your rabbit may get frustrated or tired the first time. Take a break and try again the next day. Just keep practicing! Showmanship is your ability to properly handle and examine your rabbit. Additional reading can be done on the arba.net website.

Tips For Showmanship Presentation:

1. Have good posture.
2. Keep eye contact with the judge throughout the presentation.
3. Pull back long hair so it is not getting in your face.
4. No dangly jewelry.







5. Do not chew gum.
6. Wear clean and neat show attire (long sleeve collared shirt, long pants, closed toed shoes).
7. Don't rush your presentation and have confidence in yourself and your rabbit!
8. Smile!



## Reflect

- How do you properly handle your rabbit?
- How do you flip your rabbit over?
- How should you begin your showmanship presentation?
- How should your rabbit be posed while doing your showmanship presentation?

## Apply

- The more you practice your showmanship presentation and the more comfortable you are with your rabbit, the more comfortable you will become with showing rabbits. What other skills are improved upon if you practice?
- How does showing rabbits help you to learn in everyday life?

### 4-H MISSION MANDATES

#### Healthy Living

The authors of a study done on the benefits of youth exhibiting livestock indicated that six major benefits surfaced as a result of competition through exhibiting livestock: (1) social relations, (2) character, (3) family, (4) competition, (5) learning new cultures and environments, and (6) helping finance youth's higher education.

#### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

##### Independence

Encourage youth to practice showmanship on their own after practicing several times with a leader or parent. This will help members become more confident in themselves and their abilities.

##### Generosity

Be sure that members are being courteous and respectful to one another during the showmanship practice. Encourage them to help each other and be patient with those who are struggling. Also, remind them that it is important to congratulate the winning exhibitor. Teach them to be gracious and kind to the judge.

##### Mastery

As the youth diligently work on their showmanship presentation, they create good habits. This skill will help them throughout their lives.

#### References and Other Resources

<https://qualitycage.com/blogs/quality-rabbit-care/tips-for-successful-4-h-rabbit-showmanship>

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2018, June 1). Rabbit and Cavy Showmanship. Retrieved from: <https://arba.net/showmanship/>

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2011). Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies. Blooming, IL.

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2016). Standard of Perfection. Bloomington, IL





## Preparing for the Fair



### Supplies

- Pencils or Pens
- Clipboard or hard surface to write on
- Copy of Lesson, Rabbits
- Grooming Supplies
- Tattooing Kit or Sharpies
- Care Kit

### INTRODUCTION

During this meeting you will begin to teach members how to prepare their rabbit(s) and themselves for the fair so they can have a great experience.

### PRIOR TO MEETING

1. Have members bring their rabbit(s) and go through each step with them to help prepare them and their rabbits for the fair.
2. Make sure you inform all members and parents of the meeting location.
3. Assign members to read pages 49-51 in Discover 4-H Rabbit Curriculum.

## GROOMING

TIME: 10 MINUTES

It is important to make sure that your rabbit's fur or wool is in good condition.

1. Use a damp rag or moisten your hands with water and slowly stroke the rabbit's fur from tail to head several times to remove loose fur.
2. Do not stroke back and forth in both directions, as it will cause the fur to break. Also, using a brush or comb is discouraged. Using a comb or brush can pull the guard hairs out which provide protection to the under fur. However, if your rabbit has wool you will want to use a small carding comb.
3. To remove the fur build up on your hands, rub them together or wipe them on a towel. Gently stroke once more, head to tail to smooth the fur back down. Rabbits do shed or molt 3-4 times a year. This method of grooming helps remove the loose hairs from the rabbit. This will help keep excess amounts of hair out of the cage. If you have a wool breed, special care is required.

## Activity #1

Grooming





4. Baths are not recommended for rabbits. Rabbit's fur takes a long time to dry and soaking them in water can lower their body temperature. If fur is dirty, spot clean it with a cloth and warm water.
5. Stains may be removed from white fur by rubbing cornstarch into the stain and buffering it out with a cloth. Vinegar can also be used with a cloth.
6. Have members groom their rabbit with the proper technique.

## Activity #2

### Toenail Trimming



## TOENAIL TRIMMING

TIME: 10 MINUTES

It is very important to trim your rabbit's toenails to help prevent you or the judge from getting clawed. Keeping your rabbit's toenails trimmed is also safe for the rabbit. It will prevent the rabbit from accidentally getting its toenail(s) snagged on the cage floor.

Remember! There are four toenails and a dewclaw on each front foot and four toenails on each back foot. Rabbit toenails should be clipped every 3-4 months. Clippers used for cats and dogs are acceptable for rabbits. Toenails have a quick that can be seen when held in good light. The quick is harder to see in dark toenails.

1. Trim nails in a location with adequate lighting. To trim the toenail, clip above the quick to avoid injuring the rabbit.
2. If the quick is clipped or damaged, use flour to help clot the blood or press a cotton ball to the affected toenail to stop the bleeding.
3. After showing them these steps, have each member trim their rabbit's toenails.

## Activity #3

### Tattooing Your Rabbit's Ear



## TATTOOING YOUR RABBIT'S EAR

TIME: 10 MINUTES

It is important for a rabbit to have a tattoo or earmark because it helps you tell which rabbit is yours. The earmark is also needed for keeping records and showing a rabbit. The earmark should be placed in the left ear.

If you own a tattooing kit, follow these steps:

1. Place letters and/or numbers in the tattoo pliers
2. Practice tattooing on a piece of paper or paper towel first to make sure you put the needles in correctly.
3. Have someone hold the rabbit in a towel with the ears exposed, or put it in a rabbit wrap.
4. Clean the rabbit's ear with rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab.
5. Check for major blood veins and be sure to not hit them.





6. Tattoo the left ear carefully with the pliers. Be gentle, but firm enough to puncture the ear.
7. Rub the tattoo ink into the punctured skin. Make sure to get it well into the holes.
8. Rub a little Vaseline over the tattoo and then wipe the area clean. Bag Balm also works well.
9. If you do not own your own tattooing kit, talk with leaders in your county or local breeders to see if they can help you tattoo your rabbit's ear.
10. If this is not a possibility, you can use a permanent black marker to write the rabbit's ID in its ear. This process will have to be repeated as the ID fades over time.

## Activity #4

### Show Time



## SHOW TIME

TIME: 20 MINUTES

Showroom etiquette and sportsmanship are an important part of the rabbit project. You can help younger members learn how to enjoy the competition and to have fun being with new friends. You will have the chance to see "The Best of the Best." Not everyone will be a grand champion but you can learn what you need to be working on and how you can improve with your rabbit project.

Show Tips:

1. Prior to the show date make sure your entries are filled out correctly and fees are paid to the show secretary.
2. Always try to help anyone who may need a word of encouragement or help. You can make great friends this way.
3. Bring only your best animals. If any of your rabbits appear sick, leave them at home.
4. Bring a small first aid kit, baby wipes, Q-tips, carpet square/mat, paper, and a pencil.
5. Practice showmanship and bring showmanship attire.
6. \*Important tip for club leader: Encourage members to make a poster to display at the County Fair. The poster could teach some concepts the member has learned and they would like to share with other people.

## Reflect

- How do you groom your rabbit?
- How do you trim your rabbit's toenails?
- What do you need to do to prepare for show time?





## Apply

- How can you apply what you have learned while raising your rabbit to your schoolwork?
- What lessons or knowledge have you learned from meeting as a 4-H club that are not directly related to raising a rabbit? How can you apply this knowledge to your everyday life?
- Where does your club go from here? (Continue focusing on raising rabbits more in-depth or begin a new Discover 4-H project area.)
- Preparing and showing at the fair can be stressful and difficult, but very rewarding and fun.
- How can you handle stressful situations?
- When else have you had to do something difficult that was rewarding? Was it worth it?

### 4-H MISSION MANDATES

#### Citizenship

Now that you have completed the six activities on raising a rabbit, you may want to consider planning a service project as a club that would meet a need in your community.

#### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

##### Belonging

As a club, you may want to coordinate for the fair. You can create a t-shirt, hat or something else that identifies your club. If allowed, it can also be fun to create signs for your club. Let the members take part and be creative with ideas and designs.

##### Independence

Now that you have completed the activities provided, it is important to allow members the opportunity to plan where they want to go from this point forward. Be sure to listen to each person's ideas and help members realize their thoughts to influence the group's direction. As the discussion progresses, bring up what goals the club wants to accomplish. Use these goals to guide what the club does now. It is crucial that each member's ideas be heard and considered instead of one or two members controlling the direction of the club.

##### Generosity

Youth should be kind and courteous to the judges and other showman they are working with. Remind youth that it is courteous to thank the judges and show organizers after the show and congratulate the winning showman. After the show, you may want to have an activity where you do something for those who have helped with your rabbit project as a way to show your gratitude.

##### Mastery

After completing the first six provided lessons, the members have learned much and have done a lot of self-growth. Ask them what they have learned and remind them how much they have improved and progressed.

#### References and Other Resources

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2011). Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies. Blooming, IL.

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (2016). Standard of Perfection. Bloomington, IL



## More to *Discover*

Congratulations on completing your Discover 4-H club meetings! Continue with additional curriculum in your current project area, or discover other 4-H project areas. Check out the following links for additional 4-H curriculum.

1. [www.discover4h.org](http://www.discover4h.org)
2. <http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/>
3. <http://utah4h.org/curriculum/>

## Become a 4-H Member or Volunteer

To **register** your Utah club or individuals in your club, visit and contact your county Extension office.

<http://utah4h.org/about/>

<http://utah4h.org/join/index>

For help registering in 4-H online, visit:

<http://utah4h.org/staffresources/4honlinehelp>

Non-Utah residents, please contact your local 4-H office:

<http://www.4-h.org/get-involved/find-4-h-clubs-camps-programs/>



## Stay *Connected*

### Visit Your County Extension Office

Stay connected with 4-H activities and news through your county Extension office. Ask about volunteer opportunities, and don't forget to register for your county newsletter. Find contact information for counties in Utah here:

<https://extension.usu.edu/locations>

## Enjoy the Fair!

Enter your project or create a new project for the county fair. Learn about your county fair and fair judging here:

<http://utah4h.org/events/index>



## Participate in Local or State 4-H Activities, Programs, Contests, or Camps

For Utah state events and programs, visit:

<http://utah4h.org/events/index>

<http://utah4h.org/projects/>

For local Utah 4-H events and programs, visit your county Extension office:

<https://extension.usu.edu/locations>

Non-Utah residents, please contact your local 4-H office:

<http://www.4-h.org/get-involved/find-4-h-clubs-camps-programs/>



## Discover *Service*

### Become a 4-H Volunteer!

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBemO5VSyK0>

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8n4o9gHvAA>

To become a 4-H volunteer in Utah, visit us at:

<http://utah4h.org/join/becomevolunteer>

### Serve Together as a 4-H Club or as an Individual 4-H Member

Use your skills, passions, and 4-H to better your community and world. You are needed! Look for opportunities to help in your area or participate in service programs that reach places throughout the world (religious groups, Red Cross, etc.).

### Hold a Club Service Project

USU Collegiate 4-H Club hosted "The Gift of Giving" as a club activity. Club members assembled Christmas stockings filled with needed items for CAPSA (Community Abuse Prevention Services Agency).

<http://tinyurl.com/lu5n2nc>





## Donate 4-H Projects

Look for hospitals, nursing homes, or other nonprofit organizations that will benefit from 4-H projects. Such projects include making quilts for CAPSA or Primary Children's Hospital, or making beanies for newborns. During Utah 4-H State Contests, 40 "smile bags" were sewn and donated to Operation Smile.

## Partner with Local Businesses

92,000 pounds of processed lamb, beef, and pork were donated to the Utah Food Bank in 2013 by multiple companies.

<http://tinyurl.com/pu7lxyw>

## Donate Money

Clubs or individuals can donate money gained from a 4-H project to a worthy cause. A nine-year-old 4-H member from Davis County donated her project money to help a three-year-old battle cancer.

<http://tinyurl.com/mqtfwxo>



## Give Us Your *Feedback*

Help us improve Discover 4-H curriculum. We would love feedback or suggestions on this guide.

Please go to the following link to take a short survey: [Click here to give your feedback](#)

or go to: <https://goo.gl/iTfiJV>