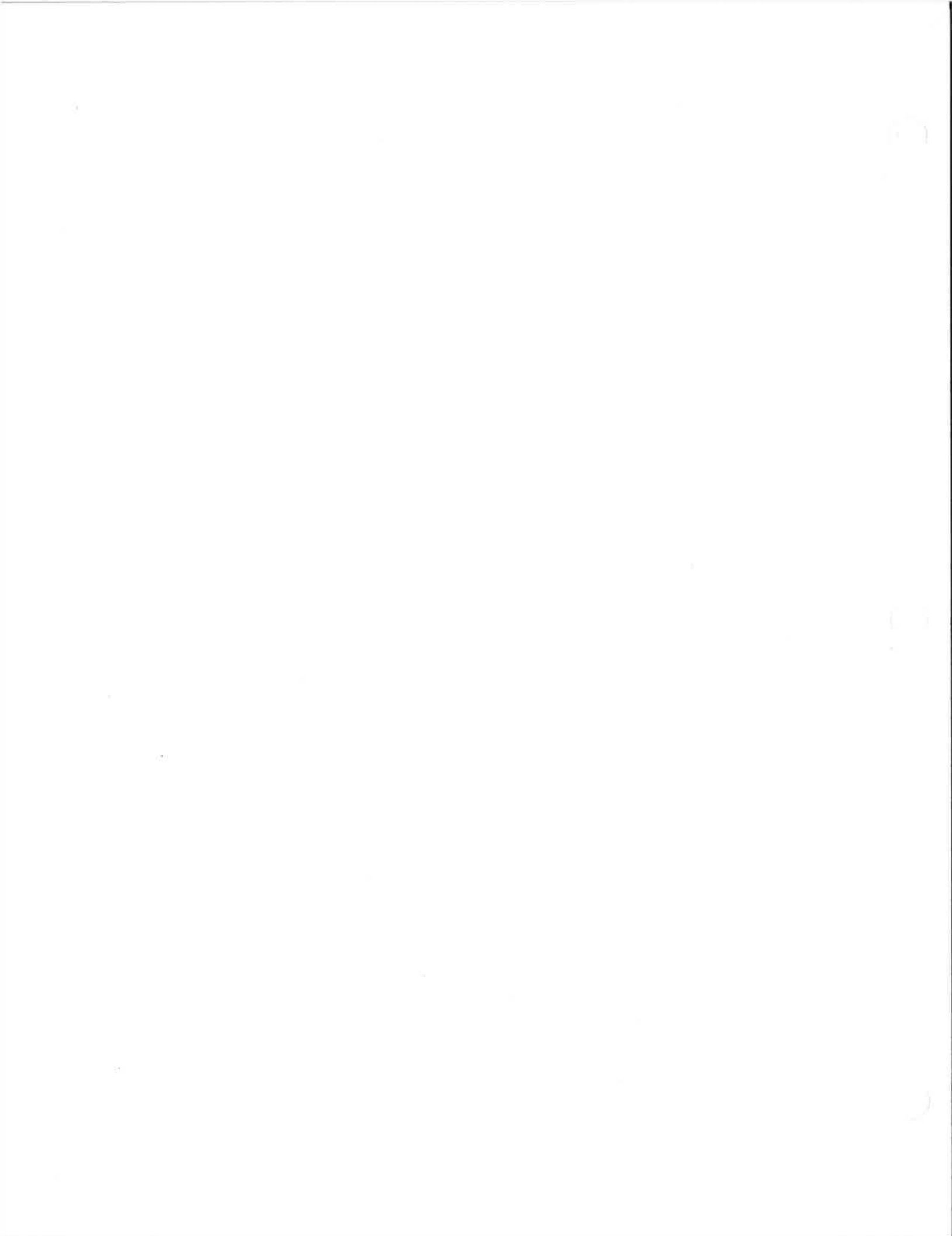


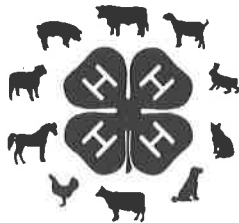
# MINNESOTA 4-H PROJECT MEETING GUIDES

# RABBIT



....to develop  
project and life skills





# RABBIT

## SELECTING 4-H RABBIT PROJECT MEETING TOPICS

THOMAS D. ZURCHER  
Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

This project meeting guide is designed to help you and your 4-H project members identify the topics you will explore at your five or more yearly project meetings. Following each activity is a (1), (2), or (3) to give you an indication of the degree of experience it will usually require for a 4-H'er to be able to demonstrate this skill to others. The higher the number the more experience needed. If your learn-by-doing activities can be sequenced so your members may build on what they already know, a better learning experience will result. You will find a line preceding each topic for you to write in the date of the meeting at which your members will explore that particular topic. Check with your extension agent for the availability of project meeting guides for the topics you and your members choose.

The project meeting guide "Planning The Project Group's Yearly Program" will help your group get off to a good start.

### Selection & Judging

- \_\_\_ Identifying Breeds Of Rabbits (1)
- \_\_\_ Identifying Parts Of Rabbits (1)
- \_\_\_ Selecting Your Project Rabbit (1)
- \_\_\_ Constructing The Ideal Rabbit (2)
- \_\_\_ Identifying Uses Of Rabbits (1)
- \_\_\_ Determining A Rabbit's Finish (1)
- \_\_\_ Identifying Rabbit Disqualifications (1)
- \_\_\_ Identifying Types Of Rabbit Fur (1)
- \_\_\_ Talking Like A Rabbit Judge (2)
- \_\_\_ Judging Rabbit Pelts (3)
- \_\_\_ Judging Rabbit Carcasses (3)

- \_\_\_ Recognizing Abnormalities & Faults in Rabbits
- \_\_\_ Conducting A Judging Contest (3)
- \_\_\_ Selecting A Judging Class (3)
- \_\_\_ Judging A Judging Class (1)
- \_\_\_ Presenting Oral Reasons (2)
- \_\_\_ Scoring A Judging Class (2)

### Management Practices

- \_\_\_ Making A Rabbit Nest Box (1)
- \_\_\_ Selecting Rabbit Equipment (1)
- \_\_\_ Designing A Rabbitry (2)
- \_\_\_ Making A Rabbit Carrying Box (2)
- \_\_\_ Making A Rabbit Tattoo Box (2)
- \_\_\_ Making A Rabbit Wire Hutch (2)
- \_\_\_ Calendarizing Rabbit Management Practices (3)
- \_\_\_ Setting Goals For Profitable Production (3)



## **Kindling Time Practices**

- \_\_\_Preparing Your Rabbit For Kindling (1)
- \_\_\_Caring For The New Rabbit Litter (1)
- \_\_\_Weaning The Rabbit Litter (1)

## **Health Practices**

- \_\_\_Recognizing The Healthy Rabbit (2)
- \_\_\_Taking A Rabbit's Temperature, Pulse and Breathing Rate (2)
- \_\_\_Identifying Rabbit Health Supplies (2)
- \_\_\_Stocking The Medicine Cabinet (2)
- \_\_\_Administering Medication To Rabbits (3)
- \_\_\_Outlining A Herd Health Program (3)
- \_\_\_Treating Minor Wounds (3)
- \_\_\_Examining A Fecal Sample For Parasites (2)
- \_\_\_Controlling External Parasites (2)
- \_\_\_Controlling Internal Parasites (2)
- \_\_\_Tracing The Roundworm's Life Cycle (3)

## **Records and Recognition**

- \_\_\_Receiving Recognition Through 4-H (1)
- \_\_\_Understanding 4-H Livestock Records (1)
- \_\_\_Advancing Through Your 4-H Project (1)
- \_\_\_Keeping Feed Records (1)
- \_\_\_Keeping Your Animal Records (1)
- \_\_\_Registering Your Animal (2)
- \_\_\_Culling Animals Through Records (3)

## **Feeds & Feeding**

- \_\_\_Identifying And Classifying Feed Ingredients (1)
- \_\_\_Selecting And Judging Hay (1)
- \_\_\_Understanding A Feed Tag (2)
- \_\_\_Feeding Your Project Animal (2)
- \_\_\_Understanding Rabbit Nutrient Requirements (3)
- \_\_\_Formulating A Ration (3)
- \_\_\_Balancing A Ration (3)
- \_\_\_Following Feed Through A Rabbit's Digestive System (3)

## **Fitting & Showing**

- \_\_\_Handling A Rabbit (1)
- \_\_\_Trimming A Rabbit's Nails (1)
- \_\_\_Showing Your Rabbit (1)
- \_\_\_Judging Rabbit Showmanship (2)
- \_\_\_Tattooing Your Rabbit (2)

## **Careers**

- \_\_\_Identifying Products From Farm Animals (1)
- \_\_\_Exploring Animal Science Careers (2)

## **Reproduction & Genetics**

- \_\_\_Understanding A Rabbit's Estrus Cycle (2)
- \_\_\_Determining Pregnancy In Rabbits (2)
- \_\_\_Understanding Systems Of Breeding (3)
- \_\_\_Tracing The Development Of The Unborn (3)

## **Meats & Marketing**

- \_\_\_Home Processing A Rabbit (2)
- \_\_\_Caring For A Rabbit Pelt (2)
- \_\_\_Advertising Your Rabbits (2)
- \_\_\_Tanning A Rabbit Pelt (3)
- \_\_\_Preparing Rabbit For The Table (2)

## **Other Project Activities**

- \_\_\_Giving A 4-H Presentation (1)
- \_\_\_Attending A Livestock Show (1)
- \_\_\_Conducting A 4-H Project Bowl (2)
- \_\_\_Conducting A 4-H Beef Skillathon (2)
- \_\_\_Evaluating Your 4-H Project Meeting (2)
- \_\_\_Conducting Tours and Field Trips (3)



# RABBIT

## IDENTIFYING BREEDS OF RABBITS

G. LEE RAETH  
County Extension Agent

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

The choice of a breed of rabbit will be determined largely by whether they are to be raised for fur, show, meat, or solely as pets. It is quite easy to become confused by the more than 30 recognized breeds and even more color varieties that are listed by the American Rabbit Breeders Association. With a little understanding of the most common breeds and their individual merits, project members can more confidently select a breed of rabbit to raise that is appropriate for the purpose they have determined.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

As a result of participating in the activities outlined in this project meeting guide:

1. Each 4-H member will identify and briefly describe at least ten different breeds of rabbits.
2. Each 4-H member will make a decision regarding selecting a breed of rabbit and express that decision verbally to the group.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

The 20-30 minutes activities listed will require a minimum of advance preparation. Many of the needed materials can be made by the members as they are needed. Be sure each project member has a 4-H rabbit project bulletin and reads the chapter on breeds prior to the activities.

Depending on the activity you will want to have available pictures of rabbit breeds with a short description (such as those included in the 4-H Rabbit Project Bulletin), a reference book on rabbit breeds (available from a library), T-pins, 12 x 24 inch piece of cardboard, or other material suitable such as a bulletin board, and a live rabbit if available.

### FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

More excitement is created in learning when youth are involved in doing rather than just listening or watching. The learn-by-doing concept is one under which 4-H was founded. The more realistic the activity the more interest you will be able to arouse in the project members. Involve the project members in planning what they would like to learn and in coming up with ideas of places to visit or tour to reinforce what they are learning.



## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

**Breed-Brainstorming**—See how many breeds the group can name in two minutes. Have someone write them down. Add another 30 seconds. This is often a good team activity. Divide the group into two or three teams. Provide each team with pictures of at least 10 breeds of rabbits. Make sure the breed name is included in the picture but not the description. Use different criteria to categorize breeds of rabbits having each team put their breed picture in the column they feel is most correct. You can score the game if you wish, keeping a running total as the activity progresses.

**Example: Categorize by weight**

92 lbs.	under 9 lbs.	over 12 lbs.
New Zealand White	Silver Martin	Flemish Giant
New Zealand Red	English	Checkered Giant
Californian	Dutch	Giant Chinchilla
Satins		
Silver Fox		
Champagnes D'Argents		
Chinchilla		
Palomino		

After each team has completed the task, give them the correct answers and discuss the breeds as to this characteristic.

Other possible categories:

color (some breeds will fit in more than one column)  
primary use (meat, fur, or show)

**Breed scramble**—Divide the group into two or three teams. (NOTE: Make sure you use different methods of dividing into groups each time.) Provide each team pictures, names, and descriptions of at least 10 breeds of rabbits. Separate the descriptions from the picture. Give each team a designated time to match the picture and name with the appropriate description. Check to be sure the name isn't included in the description. If it is, simply blot it out so it is not readable. At the end of the designated time period have each team pin their matched pieces to the bulletin board. With the group's help check for correctness discussing the breeds as you go.

**Select a breed**—Discussion questions. Give each project member a piece of paper and a pencil. Have them answer the following questions:

1. If you were going to select a breed of rabbits to raise, which one would it be?
2. Why would you select this breed?
3. What would be your main purpose for raising rabbits? Would it be for meat, for show, or for fur?

After the members have completed answering the questions, have each one give their answers to the group. Remember, there are not right or wrong answers to these questions; so you can feel comfortable praising all members on their choices. You can involve the group in discussing each situation and determine what other breeds might be equally appropriate for that purpose.

## SUMMARIZE THE ACTIVITY

Answering the questions concerning selection of a breed will help summarize the activity. You may also want to ask each member to briefly discuss one breed of rabbit that they were not familiar with prior to the activity.

## Supporting Activities

Meeting topics which support this activity include:

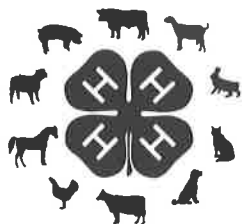
- Identifying Parts Of The Rabbit
- Using Rabbit Breed Standards
- Judging Rabbits
- Identifying Types Of Rabbit Fur
- Field trip to a rabbit show to view different breeds of rabbits

## Pat on the Back

You deserve a pat on the back for giving project members a chance to learn and make decisions.

## References

1. 4-H project manual
2. American Rabbit Breeders Association, 1925 S. Main Street, Box 426, Bloomington, IL 61701



# RABBIT

## DETERMINING THE SEX OF A RABBIT

WAYNE & MARILYN SWANSON  
4-H Project Leaders  
THOMAS D. ZURCHER  
Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

4-H'ers should be able to determine the sex of their rabbits for several reasons:

- to put the rabbit in the proper class at the fair
- to separate the rabbits so unplanned matings do not occur
- to be able to sell the rabbits people want to purchase

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By participating in the learn-by-doing activities described in this guide your members will be able to:

1. Further develop the important life skills of examining closely, utilizing knowledge, and making decisions.
2. Demonstrate how to hold the rabbit properly to determine its sex.
3. Demonstrate how to determine the rabbit's sex at four to six weeks.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

This activity requires only rabbits of different sexes for each team and the 4-H Rabbit Project Manual. The stuffed rabbit made utilizing the University of Minnesota 4-H Rabbit Pattern is designed to be utilized for portions of this activity.

### FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

Before the 4-H'ers are told or shown how to determine the sex have them divide into teams of two or three and see if they can figure this out for themselves. In other words, let them discover for themselves what they need to know to do the task. The importance of this may be summed up this way:

I Hear: I Forget

I See: I Remember

I Do: I Understand

Sometimes simply giving them a realistic situation and task to do will get them started.

For example:

**SITUATION:** A potential buyer is coming over to look at your rabbits and he is interested in purchasing two does. At this point you do not know what you have in your last litter.

**YOUR TASK:** Demonstrate how you'll determine the sex of the rabbits in the litter.



## Questions to Ask

- Q. How would you hold a rabbit to determine its sex?
- A. With your left hand hold the rabbit in a setting position on the table. Using the right hand place your thumb behind the right hind leg and use the index and forefinger to depress the tail backwards and downward. Then use the thumb to gently depress the area in front of the sex organs to expose the reddish mucous membrane.
- Q. How do you tell the difference between a buck and a doe?
- A. In the buck the organ will protrude as a well rounded tip (penis) while in the doe the membrane will protrude to form a slit (vulva) with a depression at the end next to the anus.
- Q. What would happen if litter mates were not separated?
- A. Rabbits at eight to ten weeks are fertile and may breed if not separated. Pregnancy in a doe this young may stunt her growth. Litter loss may also be higher.

## SUMMARIZE THE ACTIVITY

Ask each team to demonstrate how it figured out what sex the rabbits were. Encourage other members of the project group to ask questions. Let your members know that they gave a demonstration so they'll be encouraged to prepare and present one on other occasions.

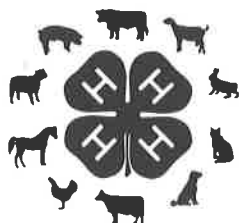
### Pat on the Back

You deserve a pat on the back for allowing your members to actively seek out answers for themselves in a trusting and supporting atmosphere which recognizes your 4-H'ers right to make mistakes and have fun.

### Supporting Topics

Preparing For Your First Rabbit  
Acquiring a 4-H Rabbit  
Selecting and Preparing a Rabbit For Show  
Showing Your 4-H Rabbit  
Tattooing Your Rabbit





# RABBIT

## TRIMMING A RABBIT'S NAILS

WAYNE & MARILYN SWANSON

4-H Rabbit Project Leaders

THOMAS D. ZURCHER

Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

This is an excellent learn-by-doing activity. Members will learn how to trim long nails to avoid injury to the rabbit and possibly to the showperson.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH:

This activity will allow the members to:

1. Practice developing the life skills of decision making, team building, and teaching others.
2. Demonstrate how to examine the nails of a rabbit.
3. Demonstrate how to trim the nails of a rabbit.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

A little time spent preparing will often have your members leaving the meeting saying, "Guess what my team figured out how to do today? It was really fun. I can't wait to check the nails of my rabbit".

**Supplies Needed:** Rabbits with long nails or a model rabbit with velcroed long nails, such as the one made from the University of Minnesota 4-H Rabbit Pattern, and a nail trimmer (ordinary finger nail clippers or dog nail clippers work well.)

### LEARN-BY-DOING ACTIVITY

Divide the group into teams of two or three members each. Provide them with a rabbit and a nail trimmer. Give them a situation and task to do. Stand back and observe. Follow-up with questions to those that are stuck.

**SITUATION:** You notice one of your favorite does has very long nails.

**YOUR TASK:** Demonstrate to the group how you would trim the nails to the proper length.

### Questions to Ask

Strive to have the members figure out the answers for themselves. Answer their questions with a question. You will want to accept their answers and allow them the freedom to change their responses as they more fully understand.

Q. Why is trimming nails important?

A. A rabbit with long nails may injure itself if its nails become caught in the wire. Tenderness, bleeding, and infection may result.



- Q. Why don't wild rabbits have long nails?  
A. Because they wear them off.
- Q. How do you determine the proper length to cut the nails?  
A. Cut them back just in front of the part with the blood supply. This is called the cone area of the nail and can easily be seen when held up to the light.
- Q. What type of equipment could be used to trim the nails?  
A. Regular finger nail clippers or a dog's nail trimmers.
- Q. How often should you trim a rabbit's toenails?  
A. Whenever they start getting long. Some rabbits need to be clipped every six months or more.

## **SUMMARIZING THE ACTIVITY**

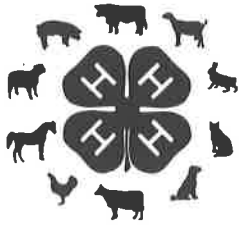
Allow each team an opportunity to show the group how they solved the task. Encourage questions from all members.

### **Pat on the Back**

Give yourself a pat on the back for letting your members figure out how to do the task on their own instead of first telling or showing them how. By "sitting on your hands" you helped them develop many important life skills as well as increasing their understanding of a project related skill.

### **Supporting Activities**

Selecting and Preparing a Rabbit for Show  
Showing your 4-H Rabbit  
Determining the Sex of Your Rabbit



# RABBIT

## TATTOOING A RABBIT

ROSIE HOLINKA & MARILYN SCHLAPKOHL  
4-H Rabbit Project Leaders

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Learning to tattoo the project rabbit is an important and necessary management skill. All animals which are shown or are registered in the ARBA registration system must be tattooed. This practice also provides positive identification for the purposes of record-keeping and protection against theft.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By participating in the learn-by-doing activities included in this project meeting guide the 4-H members (and parents) will:

1. Develop their life skills of working together as a group, presenting a demonstration, and gaining self-confidence.
2. Demonstrate the steps required to tattoo a rabbit.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

Involve your 4-H members as much as possible in the preparation. The more involved they are the more interest and enthusiasm they will bring to the activity.

**Supplies needed:** Metal, 1/4" size needle, tongs or pliers, India or tattoo ink, vaseline, small stiff bristle paint brush, pencil, tissues, a towel or tattoo box, pieces of leather, chamois, or cardboard, a rabbit, and a carpeted high table 36". The stuffed rabbit made from the University of Minnesota 4-H Rabbit Pattern works well as a training aid for this activity.

**Time required:** Allow 20-30 minutes for the activity.

**Resources:** Several rabbit books have good information on tattooing. A 4-H slide set available from the University of Minnesota Extension Library is also an excellent resource.

### FACILITATE THE MEETING

Your role as a 4-H leader is to help your members discover for themselves how to tattoo rabbits before telling or showing them how. Often by dividing members into teams of 2 or 3 and providing them with supplies and a realistic situation and a task to do they

will want to jump in and attempt the activity. Reinforce their successes with praise and ask them questions to help them discover how to do what they don't know. Here is an example of how this might work:

**SITUATION:** You are going to show your rabbit at this year's fair. One of the rules is that all rabbits must be tattooed in order to be eligible to show.

**Your Team's Task:** Demonstrate how you would tattoo your rabbits.

Even if some of your members have no idea what to do, first step back and give them a few minutes to work on the task. Then help them along by asking them questions and answering their questions with questions. Work to make the answers theirs if at all possible.

When members are first learning you will find that using leather, chamois, or cardboard instead of a live ear will be better for all concerned.



## Questions to Ask

- Q. When do you tattoo your rabbit?
- A. When you wean them at six months or older (six months is best).
- Q. How many letters or numbers may be put in the ear?
- A. The tattoo plier holds five letters or numbers.
- Q. If you wanted to be able to tell whose rabbit it was, its number, and month it was born, what combination of letters and numbers might you use?
- A. Possible S3921—Severson, rabbit 39, February 1981.
- Q. What steps would you take to tattoo a rabbit?
- A.
  1. Pick out the metal number needed and put it in the tongs or pliers.
  2. Determine the sex and breed for your records.
  3. Contain the rabbit in a tattoo box or by wrapping firmly in a towel with only the ears exposed.
  4. Wipe the left ear clean with cotton dipped in alcohol.
  5. With the tongs make a puncture in the smooth part of the ear.
  6. With a stiff bristled brush, press the tattoo ink into the holes and use a new pencil eraser end to force the ink through the holes.
  7. Apply a thin film of vaseline over the ink and wipe off with a clean tissue.
- Q. When tattooing what would be some possible problems which might develop if the job is not done carefully?
- A. One might hit the large vein in the upper part of the ear, break or tear the ear, place the tattoo upside down, or drop ink on the fur.

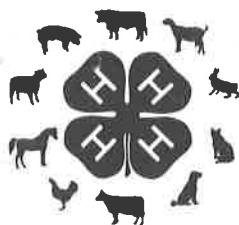
- Q. How do you know the digits will be transferred into the ear correctly?
- A. Push the tongs into a piece of cardboard before applying on the ear.
- Q. What if ink gets on the fur?
- A. Use vaseline three to four days later or just let it wear off.
- Q. How would you correct a poor tattoo?
- A. Using a sharp darning needle, repuncture the holes and repeat the inking steps.
- Q. How do you know if it is a good tattoo?
- A. When ink comes through the opposite side of the ear when rubbing with the eraser.
- Q. What if a rabbit has a tattoo in both ears?
- A. This means the left ear tattoo shows the pedigree number and the right one shows its registration number.
- Q. If a tattoo pliers is not available how could a tattoo be made?
- A. Use a pen type tattoo needle to prick the ear in a series of dots.

## SUMMARIZING THE ACTIVITY

Allow all teams an opportunity to demonstrate how they solved the task. If you have several teams perhaps ask each one to demonstrate one step of the tattooing process. Putting the tasks in a hat and drawing for them works well. Encourage everyone to ask questions as the demonstrations are given.

## Supporting Activities

Determining the Sex of Your Rabbit  
Selecting and Preparing a Rabbit for Show  
Trimming your Rabbit's Nails



# RABBIT

## WEANING A RABBIT

ROSIE HOLINKA, MARILYN SCHLAPKOHL,  
LAURINE SOMERS  
4-H Rabbit Project Leaders

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

4-H'ers who raise rabbits must perform many important management practices when the time comes to wean the litter. In order to be successful the member should know when to wean; how to determine the sex of the rabbits; how to tattoo; and how to make selections for show, breeding, meat, or pet purposes.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

As a result of participating in the activities outlined in the project guide each 4-H'er will be able to:

1. Determine their best rabbits in the litter.
2. Further develop the important life skills of examining closely, utilizing knowledge, and making decisions.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

There should be a supply of the following materials for the 4-H'ers to discuss and study. Judging sheets, ARBA Standards of Perfection, and three or more live rabbits. You may want to ask your 4-H'ers to study the parts of the animal, and disqualifications/eliminations sheet before your meeting so they come prepared.

For the activity provide a rug for the table.

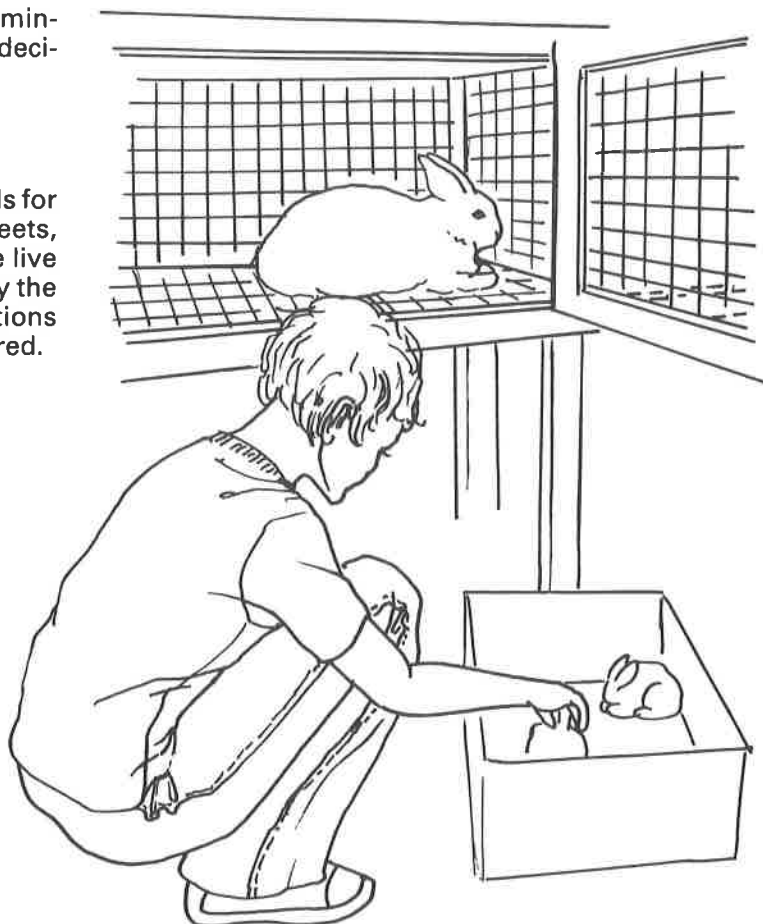
### FACILITATE THE MEETING

Divide your group into 2 or 3 teams. Begin by presenting to them verbally or on a card a situation and task such as follows:

**SITUATION:** Your rabbits fight and torment their mother. You decide to wean the litter.

**YOUR TASK:** Demonstrate the steps you would take in weaning the litter.

After giving each team the task to do step back and allow them time to work out a short demonstration. As



questions come up in their preparation respond with questions so the answers are their own. If your groups have trouble getting started you may want to ask them some questions to stimulate their thinking. Let each group give the demonstration or skit that they have prepared. With additional questions and discussion among the members you will probably cover all the important steps listed in the questions and answers.

## Questions and Answers

- Q. What is the optimum age to wean the rabbit litter?
- A. Six to eight weeks.
- Q. Why should you cull your rabbits?
- A. Undesirable traits should not be passed on to further offspring.
- Q. How can you see the difference between show rabbits and other types?
- A. By looking at your rabbits daily and knowing their breed type, fur quality, and breed markings.
- Q. Why do you separate sexes?
- A. They fight and may breed at too early an age.
- Q. What if I don't have enough cages?
- A. Culls can be put together until butchering. Butchering is done when they reach four to six pounds.

- Q. What are the recommended steps to take when weaning a rabbit litter?
- A.
  - 1. Sexing
  - 2. Culling—determine the use that you want of them—pets, meat, show, breeding. Go through the disqualifications/eliminations list.
  - 3. Tattooing (covered in another project meeting guide).
  - 4. Housing separate cages should be provided for each rabbit retained in the herd.

## SUMMARIZE THE ACTIVITY

The correct method could be done via a demonstration after members have worked the steps out on their own.

## Supporting Activities

Meeting topics which support this topic are:

- Recognizing the Ideal Rabbit
- Parts of the Animal
- Using Judging Terminology
- Recognizing Eliminations and Disqualifications
- Separating Sexes
- Housing



# RABBIT

## DETERMINING PREGNANCY IN RABBITS

G. LEE RAETH  
4-H Extension Agent

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

An accurate method of determining pregnancy is important in managing a rabbit breeding herd. Valuable time can be lost in the breeding schedule if does are assumed to be pregnant when in reality they are not. A number of methods have been advocated to determine whether a doe has conceived. Probably the most unreliable test is to examine the doe for a gain in flesh and swelling of the abdominal area. A second method, test mating, is also unreliable. Pregnant does may accept a buck, or open does may refuse the buck. The third method, palpation, is the only reliable method to diagnose pregnancy. With practice this can be done as early as 10 days after breeding.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

As a result of participating in the activities outlined in this project meeting guide, members will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how to hold a rabbit properly to palpate for pregnancy.
2. Demonstrate how to palpate a doe to determine if she is pregnant.
3. Make decisions whether to rebreed a doe or not, by using the knowledge they have acquired.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

This activity requires a minimum of six female rabbits for the group's use. The stuffed rabbit made using the University of Minnesota 4-H Rabbit Pattern is designed to be used for portions of this activity.

Some advance planning is necessary. From the group of does you plan to use for the project session, leave one-third of them unbred. Breed one-third of them 19-21 days prior to the meeting, and the remainder 12-14 days prior to the meeting.

### FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

Before you demonstrate to your project members how to check for pregnancy, divide them into groups of two to three members and let them try to decide for themselves how to do it. More excitement is created in learning when youth are involved in doing, rather than just listening or watching. The learn-by-doing concept is one under which 4-H was founded. Next, demonstrate the proper way to hold and palpate a doe using a live rabbit, or the model. Have them practice using the model if it is available.

When the 4-H'ers feel comfortable with the procedure, have each group palpate the rabbits for pregnancy. Remember, some of these rabbits are bred, others are not. Some of those that are bred are close to kindling. Do not tell the project members which ones were or were not bred. Have them record which ones they decide are pregnant. Be sure they are aware, however, that all the does were not bred on the same date.

Plan your next meeting to be held in approximately three weeks. Have the members observe which does did kindle. Compare that with what they had recorded at the time of palpation. Once again discuss the palpation process and their observations concerning it.



A word of caution—Be sure the does you use for this experiment are properly identified so that accurate recordings can be made.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Q. How would you hold a rabbit and palpate it for pregnancy?
- A. Hold the ears and the folds of skin over her shoulders in the right hand; place the left hand between the hind legs, slightly in front of the pelvis; place the thumb on the right side and the fingers on the left side of the abdomen; exert light pressure, and move the fingers and thumb gently backward and forward.
- Q. Why is gain in flesh and swelling of the abdominal region not a reliable test for pregnancy?
- A. Only toward the end of the gestation period can this procedure be fairly indicative and if the doe does not prove to be pregnant, valuable time has been lost in the breeding schedule.
- Q. What is test mating and why is it also unreliable as a test for pregnancy?
- A. In test mating, the doe is returned to the buck's cage about the 18th day after mating. If the doe avoids the buck, or fights and whines, she may be pregnant. However, pregnant does may accept the buck again or open does may refuse to allow the buck to serve her.

## SUMMARIZE THE ACTIVITY

Have each group demonstrate how to properly palpate a rabbit and discuss which ones were properly diagnosed as pregnant.

This technique requires a lot of practice before one feels comfortable with it. Be sure to congratulate them for their efforts and help arrange more opportunities for them to practice.

### Pat on the Back

You deserve a pat on the back for giving project members a chance to learn and make decisions.

### Supporting Activities

Meeting topics which support this activity include:

Identifying Parts Of The Rabbit

Acquiring A 4-H Rabbit

Preparing For Your First Rabbit

Showing Your 4-H Rabbit

Field trip to rabbitry to observe and possibly practice palpating for pregnancy

### References

4-H Rabbit Project Manual





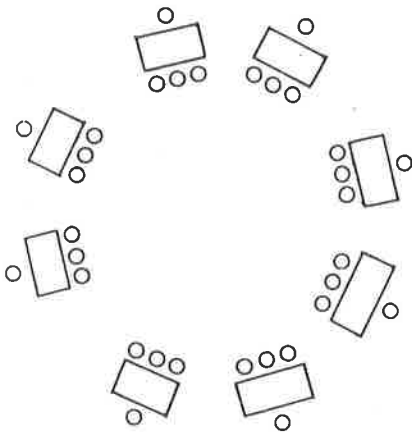
# RABBIT

## CONDUCTING A 4-H RABBIT SKILLATHON

THOMAS D. ZURCHER  
Extension 4-H Specialist

### WHAT IS A 4-H SKILLATHON?

A skillathon is an excellent method of involving your 4-H'ers and their parents in challenging, noncompetitive, learn-by-doing activities. This method of helping 4-H'ers develop both their life skills and project skills is designed as a series of mini-learning stations with a facilitator at each one (see illustration below). The participants rotate from station to station, attempting to perform the specific tasks given at each station. The station facilitator allows all team members to test their own knowledge and abilities before giving them any hints. This technique is referred to in 4-H as experiential learning or learning by doing before being told or shown how.



A skillathon works well not only during project meetings, but also at the 4-H community club. It is an excellent way to involve several project groups in the program at once. By asking various project groups to set up one or two learn-by-doing stations, the entire club can be actively involved at once. In addition, you can use a skillathon to give recognition to the project groups and their leaders.

The skillathon approach has also been successfully used to strengthen the educational value of county and state fairs. Both adults and youths enjoy the challenge posed by situation and task.

This project meeting guide briefly outlines how to set up and conduct a 4-H rabbit skillathon. Included are a checklist for the planning committee, advice for the facilitator, and suggested supplies, situations, and tasks for each station.



### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By participating in a skillathon your 4-H'ers will accomplish the following:

1. Given a situation and a task, they will be able to evaluate their abilities to solve the challenge presented and discover for themselves what they need to know to do the activity.
2. They will learn to work as members of a team.
3. They will practice making decisions and speaking before others.
4. They will receive recognition and praise for their efforts.

### CHECKLIST FOR THE SKILLATHON COMMITTEE

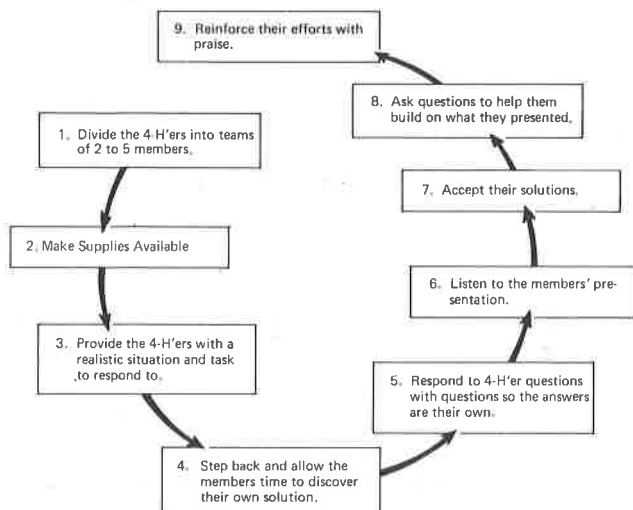
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide on the stations wanted, considering time and resources available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make up a realistic situation and task for each station.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide who will be in charge of each station.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide on the equipment or supplies needed at each station.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Delegate responsibility for gathering supplies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Depending on the size of the group and the number of stations, group the members into teams of 2-4, assigning each team to a station and moving them to the next station every 10 minutes or so.
- \_\_\_\_\_ After all teams have rotated through the stations, have each team select a station and give a short presentation to the entire group on how the team solved the task at a particular station. Let teams choose which station they want to present.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Praise everyone's efforts.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATION FACILITATOR

You will find it challenging and rewarding to be a helper at one of the stations. The extent to which the participants develop project skills and life skills depends largely on how successfully you relate to them. Here are suggested steps to follow:

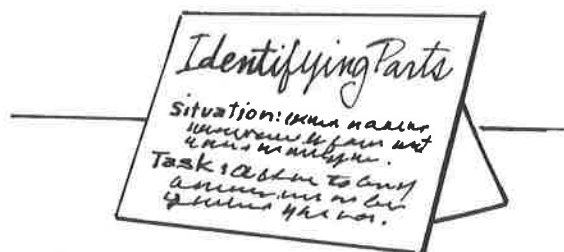
- \_\_\_\_\_ Familiarize yourself with the topic and any available project meeting guides, supplies, and training aids.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Compile a list of questions to ask each team.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set up your station to include a stand-up situation and task sign and necessary supplies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allow the team members to discover for themselves how to accomplish the task, instead of telling or showing them how first.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Facilitate the learning situation for each team in the following suggested manner:



- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask the 4-H'ers how they would set up and conduct this same activity at a 4-H project meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mark the team's participation card if one is used.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare your station for the next team.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Following the skillathon, inventory and pack up all equipment, materials, and signs.

## STATION INFORMATION

Some possible topics and suggestions for presenting topics at each individual station are included here. Station topics are limited only by your imagination and interest. The model rabbit made from the Minnesota 4-H rabbit pattern can be a useful training aid for several of the suggested topics. At all stations, try displaying the situation and task on an 8 x 11" stand-up so that the teams can start solving the task immediately.



You will need the following supplies for each station described: project meeting kit containing the project meeting guide "Conducting a 4-H Skillathon", stand-up situation and task sign as previously described, a project meeting guide about the topic, and a station sign.

### 1. Identifying Breeds of Rabbits

**SUPPLIES:** Pictures of 10 to 15 rabbit breeds, chips with breed names, chips with breed characteristics.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let teams match chips with breed names to the breed pictures. Let them check their answers. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** You are showing one of the new members of your 4-H project group the various breeds at the fair.

**TASK:** Identify the breeds and tell something about each breed.

## 2. Identifying Parts of Rabbits

**SUPPLIES:** Minnesota Rabbit Parts Chart, parts T-pins, sponge for pins, cardboard for chart.

**DIRECTIONS:** Provide pins with parts names on them for the teams to match with the numbers on the chart. Let them check their answers.

**SITUATION:** You are preparing for the rabbit showmanship and judging contest.

**TASK:** Match the names with the parts.

## 3. Determining a Rabbit's Finish

**SUPPLIES:** Two rabbits with different finishes.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let teams demonstrate how to solve the task. Follow-up with questions.

**SITUATION:** You want to select your most desirably finished market rabbit.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to determine different finishes of rabbits.

## 4. Talking Like a Rabbit Judge

**SUPPLIES:** Cards listing 50 different terms and 50 different descriptions or pictures.

**DIRECTIONS:** Ask team members to match the terms with the descriptions and then check their answers and practice using the terms in conversation with one another.

**SITUATION:** You have been asked to be the official judge at the local fair.

**TASK:** Match the terms with the descriptions or pictures.

## 5. Identifying Rabbit Disqualifications

**SUPPLIES:** Minnesota 4-H model rabbit and disqualification pieces.

**DIRECTIONS:** Have the team attach disqualifications to the rabbit or name as many as they can. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** A rabbit may be disqualified for several reasons.

**TASK:** Point out and give a reason for each disqualification.

## 6. Judging a Rabbit Class

**SUPPLIES:** 2 to 4 easily placed rabbits, oral reasons notecards.

**DIRECTIONS:** Allow the team to judge the rabbits and determine the cuts between the pairs. Ask questions concerning the class.

**SITUATION:** You have 4 rabbits to judge.

**TASK:** Judge and place the rabbits.

## 7. Presenting Oral Reasons

**SUPPLIES:** 50 oral reasons notecards.

**DIRECTIONS:** Refer to information on the oral reasons notecard in the kit. Provide each team member with a notecard and assist as needed. Let each one give a complete or partial set of reasons.

**SITUATION:** The parents and members of the 4-H project group are interested in why you placed the class as you did.

**TASK:** Using the 4-H oral reasons notecard as a guide, present your reasons.

## 8. Scoring a Judging Class

**SUPPLIES:** Hormel computing slide, paper, and pencils for scoring judging contests.

**DIRECTIONS:** Provide teams with the official placings, cuts, and project meeting guide to figure their scores. Wait. If they are still completely confused after a few minutes, walk them through an example using the six steps. Let them check their score with the Hormel computing slide.

**SITUATION:** An expert rabbit judge also judged the class of rabbits and presented placings and cuts.

**TASK:** Using the expert's decision as the "official" placing, figure your score for the class.

## 9. Identifying Feed Ingredients

**SUPPLIES:** Packet of 9 to 12 feed ingredients, chips with ingredient and human food names, paper plates with the words PROTEIN, ENERGY, WATER, VITAMINS, and MINERALS written on them.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let the teams match the chips to the ingredients. Then have the place all chips on the plate specifying its nutrient category. Ask questions and discuss.

**SITUATION:** Several feed ingredients are available to feed your animal.

**TASK:** Identify and classify the various ingredients.

## 10. Understanding a Feed Tag

**SUPPLIES:** Feed tags.

**DIRECTIONS:** Provide the team with feed tags and let them explain what they read. Ask questions and discuss. Refer to the project meeting guide.

**SITUATION:** A feed store customer asks your help in understanding a feed tag.

**TASK:** Explain to the customer what information the tag contains and tell how this helps in choosing a feed for a flock or herd.

## 11. Handling a Rabbit

**SUPPLIES:** Rabbit cage, real or model rabbit.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let the team demonstrate the task. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** A 4-H'er has just purchased his or her first rabbit.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how you would help the 4-H'er properly handle the rabbit.

## 12. Showing a Rabbit

**SUPPLIES:** Live or model rabbit, 4-H'er sign, judge sign.

**DIRECTIONS:** Ask one 4-H'er to be the judge and the others the showmanship participants. Have them conduct a short showmanship contest.

**SITUATION:** You are practicing for the showmanship contest.

**TASK:** Team demonstrate your showmanship technique.

## 13. Trimming a Rabbit's Nails

**SUPPLIES:** Rabbit with long nails or Minnesota 4-H model rabbit with nails attached by velcro, nail trimmers.

**DIRECTIONS:** Provide the supplies and let teams demonstrate the task.

**SITUATION:** You notice your rabbit's nails are very long.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to trim them.

## 14. Tattooing a Rabbit

**SUPPLIES:** Tattooing outfit, india or tattoo ink, petroleum jelly, small stiff-bristled paintbrush, pencil, tissues, a towel or tattoo box, pieces of leather, chamois, or cardboard, a rabbit and a carpeted 36" table. The Minnesota 4-H model rabbit works well as a training aid for this activity.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let the teams tattoo a fake ear. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** All rabbits must be tattooed before they can be shown at the fair.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to tattoo your rabbits.

## 15. Caring for a Rabbit Pelt

**SUPPLIES:** Fake rabbit pelt, stretched real rabbit pelt, pelt stretchers.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let the team try to solve the task.

**SITUATION:** You want to sell the pelts and the rabbit you have just processed.

**TASK:** Demonstrate the steps necessary to care for the pelt properly.

## 16. Caring for the New Rabbit Litter

**SUPPLIES:** Model doe and baby rabbits, fake rabbit fur, straw, dish labeled water, a dish labeled feed.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let the team solve its task and follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** Your favorite doe has just kindled.

**TASK:** Demonstrate what you do during the first two days.

## 17. Determining the Sex of a Rabbit

**SUPPLIES:** Buck and doe rabbit or Minnesota 4-H model rabbit.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let the teams solve the task. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** The time has come to separate the bucks from the does.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to tell the difference.

## 18. Determining Pregnancy in Rabbits

**SUPPLIES:** Minnesota 4-H model rabbit or a pregnant and a nonpregnant doe.

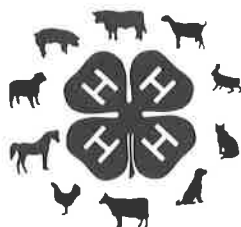
**DIRECTIONS:** Let the teams perform the task and follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** Your doe might be pregnant.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to tell if she is or is not.

## Acknowledgment

Special thanks go to the Minnesota Livestock Breeders' Association which provided funding for the development of the training aids and materials used for the seven species skillathons conducted at the Minnesota State Fair, as well as for the printing of this project meeting guide.



# RABBIT

## RECOGNIZING THE NORMAL RABBIT

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Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development  
Michael M. Pullen  
Extension Veterinarian



### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Rabbit project members who can recognize the characteristics of a normal healthy rabbit will more readily be able to identify changes when they occur. This is an excellent activity for younger members who are just beginning the 4-H rabbit project.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ers WILL ACCOMPLISH

1. Describe five or more characteristics of a healthy rabbit.
2. Examine a rabbit and closely observe its movements.
3. Develop the life skills of observation, recording information and working together as a team.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

Animals and supplies: At least one rabbit to examine, a rectal thermometer and Vaseline, and an  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$  observation chart. Charts can either be made up ahead of time or by the 4-H'ers at the meeting. Rulers and pencils will be needed.

### INVOLVING THE MEMBERS

The activity described is primarily designed to have the 4-H'ers work together in groups of 2 or 3 to identify the normal characteristics of a rabbit. To start the meeting, simply have the members each think of one characteristic which they feel is normal about their rabbit and share it with the group. With this introduction ask each team to fill out the first column of the observation chart. Have the teams compare and discuss their observations. Follow up with questions. If time permits a second animal may be examined with discussion of what might be abnormal characteristics.

### FOLLOW UP TO THE MEETING

Ask each 4-H'er to take a chart home and record his or her observations, one time each week for three weeks and report back at the next meeting.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Q. What attitudes or behaviors might be observed?
- A. A rabbit is normally quite gentle, content, and unexcitable. Sometimes crabbiness or stomping, may occur.

## RABBIT OBSERVATION CHART

Write in what you observe

Characteristics	First Animal	Second Animal	My Animal Week 1	My Animal Week 2
1. Attitude/behavior				
2. Stance				
3. Movement				
4. Appetite				
5. Skin & hair coat				
6. Skin & mucous membranes				
7. Body waste & discharge				
8. Temperature (102.5° F)				
9. Pulse rate				
10. Respiration rate				
11. Sounds				
12. Weight gain				
13. Overall behavior				

Q. What *stance* is normal?

A. Rabbit may sit with hind legs hidden under bellies and forelegs in front of chests. Some "flip" onto a side to sleep when really tired. Others may "sit up" on hind legs. The topline is normally rounded and the ears may be erect or flop down depending on the breed.

Q. What is the normal *gait* of a rabbit?

A. Usually it is a hop but it also may appear to walk when moving slowly to nibble grass.

Q. What diseases might cause a loss in *weight*?

A. Several diseases may cause loss of weight including parasitism.

Q. What is the rabbit's normal *fur condition*?

A. Smooth and glossy. A 6- to 15- week-old rabbit normally sheds fur.

Q. What might *scruffy fur* indicate?

A. Ringworm, fungal disease, ear mites, ticks, nutritional deficiencies.

Q. What color and condition should the rabbit's *skin and mucous membranes* be?

A. The skin is normally soft, loose, and pliable. The mucous membranes which line all body openings such as the eye, ear, nose, mouth, rectum, and vagina should be pink and moist.

Q. What are the two types of *fecal droppings* a rabbit releases?

A. During the day the droppings are round, firm, black, and dry. At night, softer, more brown, moist droppings are released and reingested by the rabbit. This unique practice called coprophagy results in the rabbit not losing as many nutrients and vitamins as would occur otherwise.

Q. What are some examples of abnormal body discharges?

A. Feces containing blood or mucous and runny feces may be signs of mucoid enteritis, coccidiosis, or pneumonia. A vaginal discharge, such as pus, indicates infection such as pasteurellosis.

Q. What are several rabbit *sounds*?

A. Grunts, growls, screams.

Q. When does a rabbit prefer to eat?

A. Many prefer to eat at night or early morning.

Q. How do you take a rabbit's temperature?

A. Lubricate a rectal thermometer with Vaseline and insert to about one inch in the rectum. Remove after two or three minutes and read the temperature.

## ADDITIONAL MEETING TOPICS

This activity often generates several additional ideas for project meetings.

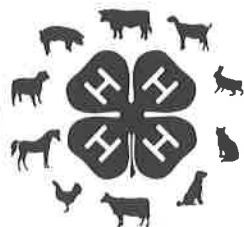
- Recognizing Abnormalities
- Determining the Sex of a Rabbit, AS-49
- Determining Pregnancy in Rabbits, AS-53

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service Veterinary Science Health Supplement by Kathy Smith, 4-H Project Assistant.

A notebook containing a set of over 125 additional animal science project meeting guides may be ordered from Communication Resources/Distribution, 3 Coffey Hall, University of Minnesota, 1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108.

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# RABBIT

## PREPARING FOR RABBIT SHOWMANSHIP

Suzan Liddell  
4-H Project Leader  
Thomas D. Zurcher  
Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

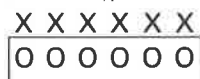
Rabbit showmanship provides 4-H members with an opportunity and incentive to show others the skills they have developed in selecting, breeding, conditioning, handling, managing, and evaluating their rabbits while they gain valuable experience presenting their rabbits to best advantage to a judge.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ers WILL ACCOMPLISH

1. Further develop self confidence, the ability to express themselves, and good sportsmanship.
2. Practice preparing themselves and their rabbits for a showmanship event.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

This guide has been developed to help you involve your members in a learn-by-doing activity as well as prepare them for what will take place in an actual contest. The only supplies needed will be one or more tables covered with a rug or burlap material (figure 1 1/2 linear feet per 4-H'er), rabbits and this guide.



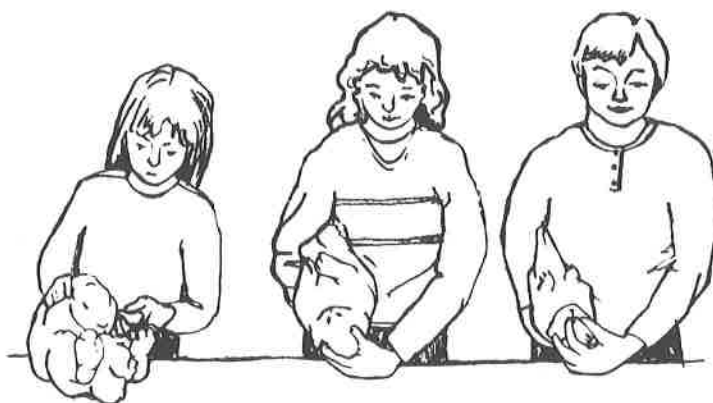
X = 4-Hers  
O = Rabbits

Judge  
Spectators      Clerks

Additional resources and ideas for project meetings which reinforce this activity are listed at the end of this guide.

### INVOLVING THE MEMBERS

Your members will enjoy the opportunity to show you what they know prior to watching someone else or being told how. With one of the members serving as judge and the other members working in teams of two, conduct a short contest. The judge should ask the 4-H'ers to do something with the rabbit and one of the team members attempts the exercise while the other team member assists. Team members should trade off. You and your junior leaders will want to coach those teams having difficulty. The pictures and suggestions in this guide may also help your members.



The judge should ask the members to demonstrate how they would perform each routine listed in the Routine Examinations part of the Showmanship Hints section of this guide.

After everyone has had an opportunity to attempt each exercise, ask each team to demonstrate one of their choice. Follow up with questions.

### SHOWING PROCEDURE

As your members develop greater expertise the following fair procedure should be practiced:

—Judging begins the moment a class is called. At that time 4-H'ers remove their rabbits from their carrier or hutch, correctly carry the rabbits to the table and set them in proper pose.

—When all rabbits are positioned, the judge will examine each rabbit one at a time.

—During this examination, the judge may ask the 4-H'er basic questions about the breed of rabbit, its age, etc.

—Once examinations are completed, the judge asks the exhibitors to perform routine maneuvers such as checking for a cold, broken teeth, and abscess.

—To further identify the top placements the judge may ask members to name parts, define terms, identify breeds, handle other rabbits, and discuss diseases and other management practices.

—When the judge is satisfied with the final placement, oral reasons are given to each class before being dismissed.

## SHOWMANSHIP HINTS

The judge will evaluate each 4-H'er primarily in the following eight areas:

### 1. Exhibitor's Attire—5 points

Clothes should be neat, clean, and appropriate to the activity. Long-sleeve shirts that button or fit securely at the wrist are best. A color that contrasts with the color of the rabbit helps the rabbit to stand out during showmanship. Long hair should be tied back. Hats, buttons, jewelry, anything that could get in the way should be removed.

### 2. Exhibitor's Attitude—5 points

The 4-H'er should be alert at all times. One eye on the judge, one on the rabbit. Courteous, not only to the judge but to other exhibitors. Rabbit never causing other rabbits to move.

### 3. Animal Cleanliness—20 points

Rabbits used for showmanship should be perfect specimens of health. They should be free from matted hair, fur or manure balls, hutch stains, built-up wax in the ears, and debris around the eyes, nose, mouth, and sex organs. Only healthy, clean animals should be exhibited.

### 4. Animal Condition—10 points

Fur should be well groomed, as free of loose hair as the stage of moult will allow. A rabbit in full moult should not be used for showmanship. Toe nails should be clipped. The rabbit should be in firm flesh condition without being overly fat.



### 5. Pick Up and Carry—5 points

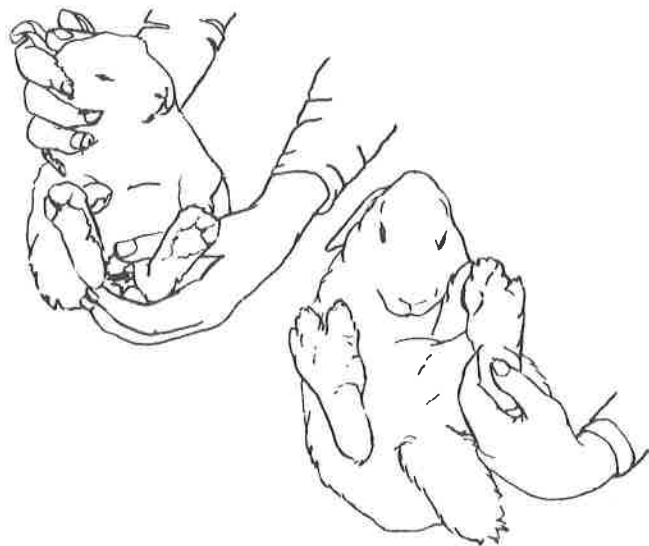
When preparing to lift the rabbit, the loose skin over the shoulder should be grasped with one hand, ears clasped underneath and the other hand placed under the rump. The rabbit is then lifted with the weight being supported by the hand under the rump. After lifting the rabbit, turn it tucking it securely under the arm. (figure 1 and 2) (Note: When handling a Lop only one ear is clasped.)

### 6. Posing the Rabbit—5 points

The rabbit should be posed as close to the ideal body type for that breed. Whenever possible the rabbit should be posed to emphasize its good points, hiding its bad points.

### 7. Routine Examinations—15 points

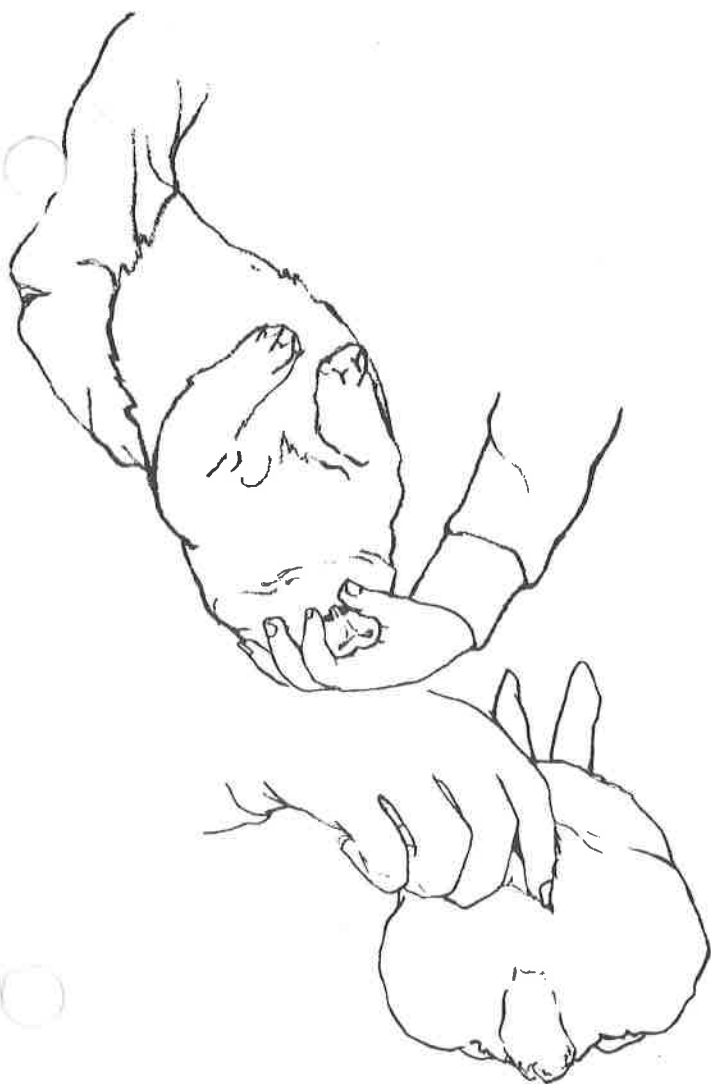
The 4-H'ers will need to learn the correct way to perform the following routine examinations. A short explanation describes how to help your 4-H'ers perform each one.



**Sex and Vent Disease**—Show sex organs to the judge. Clamp tail with index and second finger; place thumb below vent area and push toward front of rabbit. (figure 3)

**Sore Hocks**—Show the bottom of all four feet to judge. Rest the rabbit on its rump. This frees a hand for examination. (figure 4)





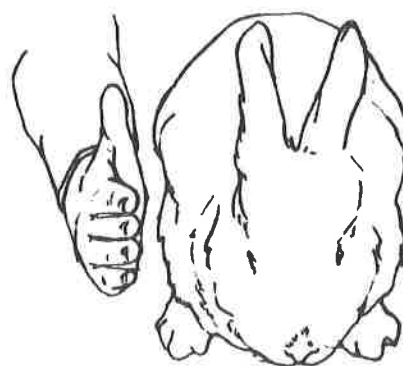
**Tooth Defects**—Push the lips back to show teeth. Note position of the rear feet and legs. (figure 5)

**Wry Tail**—Turn rabbit with rear facing judge. Pull tail straight up, release and show to judge. (figure 6)

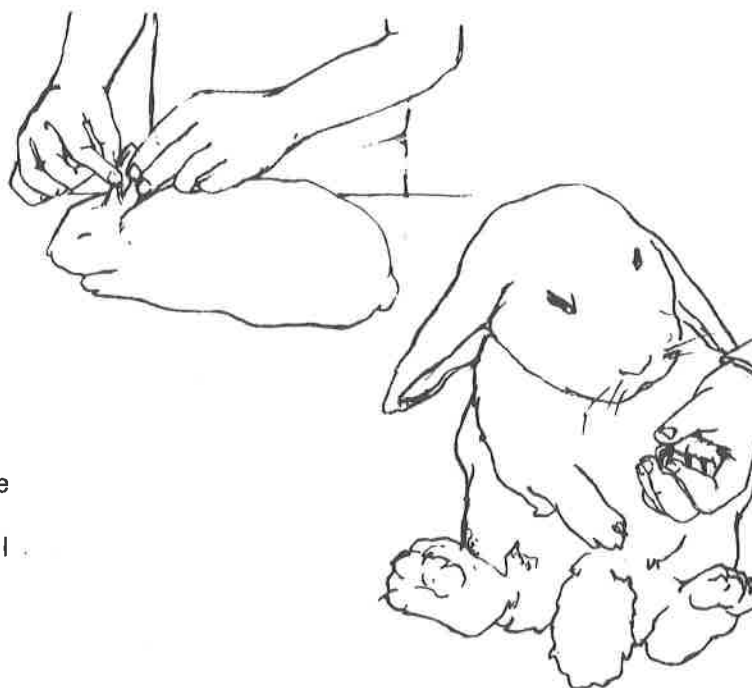


**Cold**—Check nose and eyes for watery discharge; inside of front feet for wet fur or dry matter.

**Snuffles**—Check nose, eyes, and front feet as for a cold. In addition listen to nasal and chest cavities for wheezing sounds. Snuffles discharge tends to be a thick, yellowish matter.

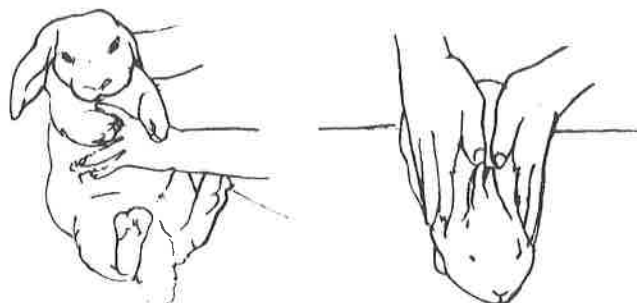


**Blindness**—Use a quick hand flick to see if rabbit blinks. Also look into both eyes to check for any visible defects such as cloudiness.



**Ear Canker or Mites**—Check both ears so judge can see deep into ears by pivoting first to one side then the other.

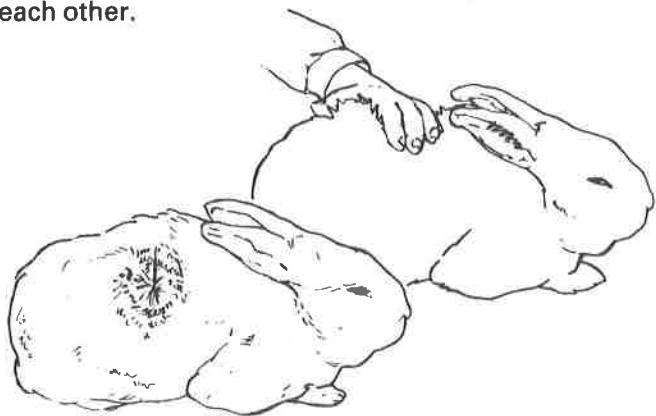
**Toenails**—Push thumb into center of foot pad and hold back fur if necessary with finger.



**Ruptures, Tumors, Abscesses**—Ruptures occur only on the underneath side of a rabbit. Check carefully from head to tail as on the left. Tumors and abscesses can occur anywhere on a rabbit, so check the top of the rabbit, too, from head to tail.

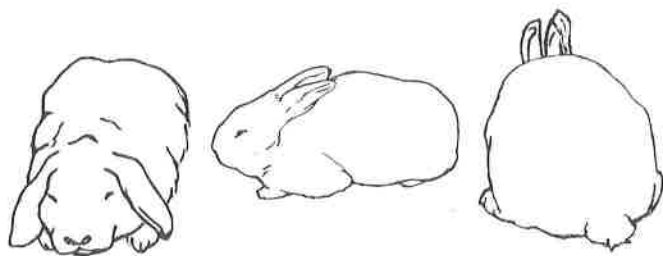


**Straightness of Legs**—With rabbit resting on its rump, fully extend the front legs from shoulder to foot by slowly drawing them forward. Extend the hind legs by gently pushing down on the stifle joint. If extending the legs 2 at a time, be careful not to draw the legs toward each other.



**Fly Back, Roll Back, Density or Condition of Fur**—Stroke rabbit against the fur from tail to head.

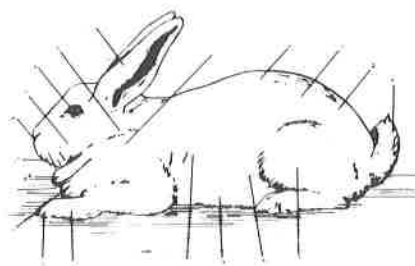
**Ring Definition**—Simply blow into the rabbit's fur to show rings.



**Normal Front View, Side View, and Rear View**—If judge asks you to pose your rabbit in a side or rear view, keep your animal in that view until judge instructs otherwise. Always begin the class with rabbit in normal front view.

When performing any examination be smooth and efficient, keeping movements to a minimum. Always keep the rabbit's comfort and safety in mind. Practice with your rabbit so both of you know what to expect.

## 8. Exhibitor's Knowledge—35 points



Key for Rabbit Chart

1. Shoulder	6. Hock	11. Foot	16. Nose
2. Loin	7. Leg	12. Toes	17. Cheek
3. Hip	8. Flank	13. Chest	18. Eye
4. Rump	9. Belly	14. Dewlap	19. Neck
5. Tail	10. Rib	15. Mouth	20. Ear

When identifying any *part*, position the rabbit so as to best expose that part. Be very specific so the judge knows you know exactly where it is on the rabbit.

Study common *terms* as they apply to rabbits. Several of the references cited in this guide have glossary of terms.

Thoroughly know the STANDARD OF PERFECTION for your breed. Be able to identify other popular breeds shown in your area. Advanced members should have a good understanding of the standard for other common breeds.

Identify symptoms and describe the treatment of *common illnesses and ailments* such as sore hocks, ear mites, colds, snuffles, enteritis, and coccidiosis.

Members should know about *breeding, feeding, and managing their rabbits*.

Each of these areas can be used as topics for exciting learn by doing project meetings. Rabbit quiz bowls, matching exercises, skillathons, relays, trivia, and several other methods are popular.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

4-H Rabbit Project Manual, slide set on rabbit showmanship, the American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA) Standards of Perfection Book, the ARBA Handbook and Scorecard. Several rabbit project meeting guides are also available which reinforce showmanship activities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Two Extension publications Washington State University Cooperative Extension Service Publication EM 3486 *4-H Rabbit Fitting and Showmanship Guide* by Daniel Andrews, Extension Poultry Specialist and University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Service, AS/R 109.13 *Rabbit Showmanship* by Ken Olson, extension specialist 4-H were utilized as references for writing this guide. Appreciation is expressed to each author.

A notebook containing a set of over 125 additional animal science project meeting guides may be ordered from Communication Resources Distribution, 3 Coffey Hall, University of Minnesota, 1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108.

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