

Rabbit Project Leader Guide

Level 2



4-H 

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

EM077E



4-H Rabbit Project

Level 2 Activities

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Advancing Through Your 4-H Rabbit Project

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 1

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to set goals

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Their feeling about the importance of setting goals

Material Needed:

- Chalkboard or flip chart
- Paper and pencils

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

4-H'ers' goals should indicate growth in the project as well as the member's learning. Each year the goals should include at least one new skill to learn.

Leader Notes

Have each 4-H'er tell what he or she learned or accomplished during the last year in this project. For example: raised two litters of Angoras, gave a project talk on rabbits, etc.

Ask the members for some suggestions of things they might want to learn during the project year. List these on the chalkboard. Possible ideas might be suggested from lesson titles in Level I.

After you have a large list on the board, pass out the paper and pencils and have the members write their goals for the year.

Have the young people share their goals for the year with the group. With these goals in mind, you can plan the project meetings so that members will be able to accomplish many of their goals.

Leader Notes

After discussing the “Dialog” questions, ask the members to set a short-term goal for something other than their project and write it down. Begin subsequent meetings by discussing progress made toward fulfilling their goals.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

- Q: Why do you think it is important to think back over your past accomplishments?
- Q: Why do you think it is important to set goals for yourself? Why might it be important to write down what your goals are? What could go wrong as you set goals for yourself? As you work toward your goal, what could help you be successful?
- Q: What are some other areas of your life in which it might be helpful to set goals?
- Q: What do you think is the most important reward for a goal accomplished or a job done well?



Producing Healthy Rabbits

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 2

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to raise healthy rabbits

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Factors causing stress and how to deal with stress
- Factors contributing to good health—adequate housing and nutrition, disease control, minimizing stress, etc.

Material Needed:

- Chalkboard or flip chart

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 45 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

A healthy rabbit is alert and active with bright eyes and a shiny fur coat. The healthy rabbit will eat more and have good ear carriage. There will be no discharge from the nostrils. The feces should be round and firm.

Ask members to help you list symptoms or ways you can tell if a rabbit is healthy.

It takes good management to produce healthy rabbits.

Unhealthy rabbits do not convert feed into edible protein efficiently and usually do not mature into animals that approach the Standard of Perfection on a regular basis.

In order to produce healthy rabbits, you must adhere to the following guidelines:

Write guidelines on chalkboard or flip chart.

1. Use healthy breeding stock.
2. Select replacement stock that is healthy—do not keep stock that has health problems, even if it is superior in physical characteristics or bloodlines. If rabbits aren't healthy, eliminate them.
3. Cull breeding stock and growing stock continually—keep only rabbits that are healthy and exhibit disease resistance. Don't let their show records cloud this issue.

Leader Notes

4. Determine the capacity of your rabbitry and do not over-populate it.
5. Maintain adequate ventilation.
6. Maintain proper nutrition. For beginners it is probably best to use commercial rabbit feed.
7. Keep stress factors to a minimum.
8. Determine the cause of every death in the rabbitry. Learn to conduct a necropsy (analyzing for causes of death) on each carcass.
9. Keep accurate and complete records.
10. Cull unhealthy animals from the herd. Do not sell these for breeding stock or exhibit these animals. Learn the proper culling methods and use them.

Hand out Activity Sheet "Producing Healthy Rabbits." Send it home or let members work in small groups to finish it.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Which of the suggestions in the lesson also apply to you and your health? How are the needs of rabbits and people alike?

Q: What causes stress in your life? How does stress make you feel? Do you always know when you are under stress? How do you or people you know deal with stress?

Q: This lesson mentions that you should not allow your rabbitry to overpopulate. What might happen if it does? Are there places in the world with too many people? What problems might that cause? How might those problems affect you?

GOING FURTHER:

Observe a necropsy (analyzing for causes of death).

PRODUCING HEALTHY RABBITS

Activity Sheet

A vertical rectangular box with ten horizontal dashed lines extending from its right side, intended for writing answers.

In raising rabbits, you must consider all of the following. Write these items in the blanks above so that they spell out in the box the result of giving your rabbits good care.

Disease

Good Management

Ventilation

Housing

Culling

Stress

Breeding

Food

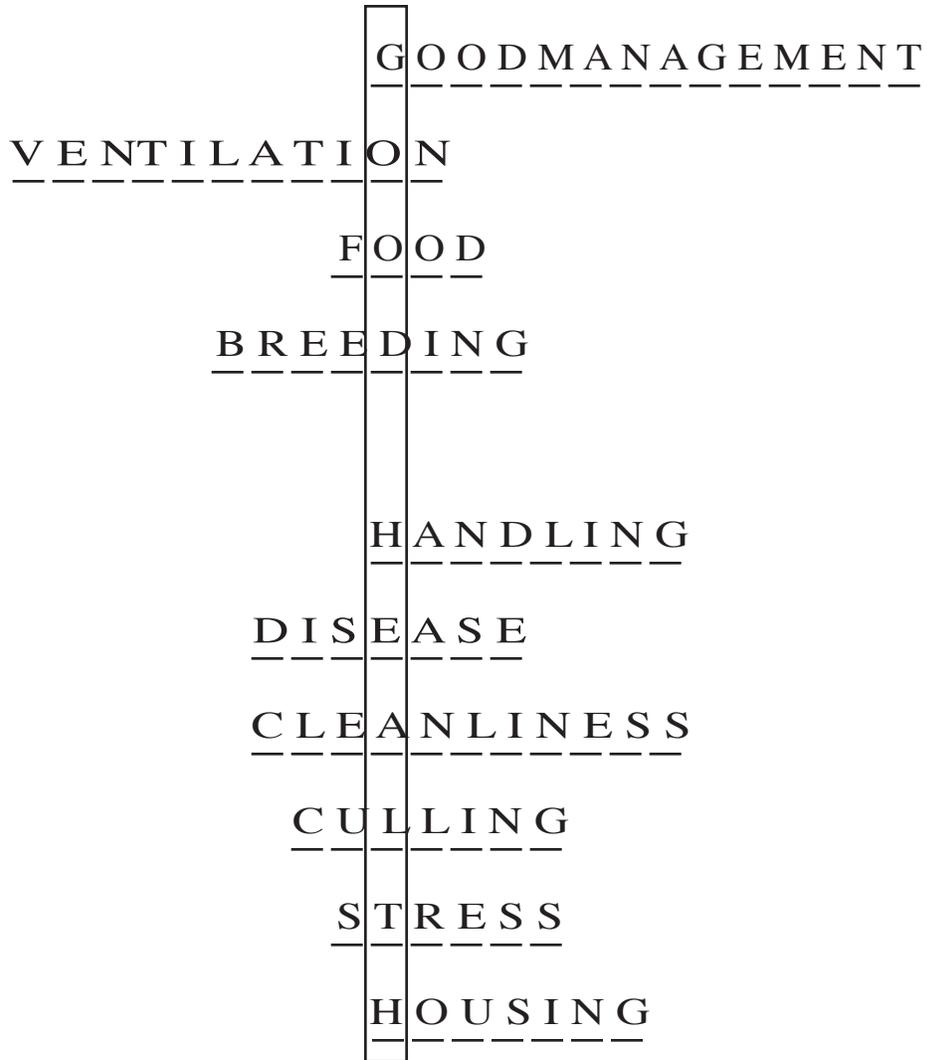
Cleanliness

Handling

PRODUCING HEALTHY RABBITS

Activity Sheet

Leader's Key



In raising rabbits, you must consider all of the following. Write these items in the blanks above in such a way that they spell out in the box the result of having given them consideration.

Disease

Good Management

Ventilation

Housing

Culling

Stress

Breeding

Food

Cleanliness

Handling



Understanding a Feed Tag

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 3

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to read a feed tag

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- How to examine food labels
- How to quickly evaluate nutritional intake

Materials Needed:

- Feed tags from different varieties of rabbit pellets

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

When you purchase rabbit pellets be sure to check the feed tag. Check the amount of protein and fiber. Working does and litters need more fiber than resting does and bucks.

Give each pair of 4-H'ers a feed tag and ask them to find how much protein is in the feed. Then have them find out how much fiber is present.

The ingredients are listed on the tag in order from greatest to least amount. The feed tag also gives the date of manufacture in a coded form.

A Typical Feed Tag Example:

1. Guaranteed Analysis

Crude Protein	(Min.)	18.0%	
Crude Fat	(Min.)	2.5%	
Crude Fiber	(Min.)	20.0%	
Calcium	(Min.)		0.5%
Calcium	(Max.)	1.5%	
Phosphorus	(Min.)		0.5%
Vitamin A	(Min.)	4,000 IU/lb	
Vitamin D	(Min.)	700 IU/lb	
Vitamin E	(Min.)	5 IU/lb	

2. Ingredients

Dehydrated Alfalfa, Wheat Middlings, Soybean Meal, Oat Mill By-Product, Soybean Mill Feed, Cane Molasses, Calcium Carbonate, Salt, Carboxyl Methyl Cellulose, DL Methionine, Vitamin A Supplement, D-Activated Animal Sterol (A source of Vitamin D3), Vitamin E Supplement, Vitamin B 12 Supplement, Riboflavin Supplement, Niacin Supplement, Pantothenic Acid, Choline Chloride, Menadione Sodium Bisulfite Complex, Folic

Leader Notes

Acid, Thiamine Mononitrate, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, D-Biotin, Ethoxyquin (a preservative), Zinc Oxide, Sulfur, Ferrous Carbonate, Ferrous Sulfate, Magnesium Oxide, Copper Sulfate, Copper Oxide, Potassium Chloride, Calcium Iodate, Cobalt Carbonate, Sodium Selenite, Artificial Flavoring.

3. Feeding Directions on back of this bag:

4. **WARNING:** Contains high levels of copper. **DO NOT FEED TO SHEEP.**

5. **REMINDER:** Feed is perishable. Store this product in a cool, dry area away from insects. **DO NOT** feed moldy or insect-infested feed to animals as it may cause illness, abortion, or death.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Why is this a particularly important time for you to be aware of what you eat? (the “formative” years). How can you show responsibility for your diet?

Q: It is recommended that a person your age eat 2 servings from the meat group, 3 or 4 servings from the dairy group, 4 servings from the grain group, and 5 servings from the fruit and vegetable group each day. How can this information help you take responsibility for your diet? How can it help you eat better? (sufficient quantity, variety, etc.)

Hand out “Cereal Box Quiz” activity sheet to take home and bring back at next meeting or have members bring cereal box labels to meeting.

CEREAL BOX QUIZ

Activity Sheet 1

Use the nutrition label on a cereal box to answer the following questions:

Name of the cereal: _____

Main ingredient (ingredients listed in order from most to least): _____

What does RDA mean? _____

For which of the nutrients do you get all you need for one day in one serving? _____

Which of the nutrients increases when you add milk? _____

Compare this label with one on another cereal box. Which cereal is more nutritious, and why? _____

Compare cereal box labels to your rabbit feed tag. What items are similar? Different? Compare various nutrient percentages: _____

Leader Notes



Feeding the Show Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 4

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What conditioning is
- How to achieve good conditioning

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- How diet affects appearance
- What characteristics are inherited

Materials Needed:

- Rolled oats
- Whole oats
- Sunflower seeds

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

A rabbit is said to be in good condition if its coat looks and feels good. The coat should be shiny and full of life. It feels smooth along the entire length of the body, without rough or bony spots. The coat returns to its normal position when stroked toward the head.

Conditioning is partly related to the breed of the rabbit. Some breeds never look and feel as smooth as others.

Conditioning is also partly related to diet. Fur is made up of protein. When rabbits get enough protein, they develop good coats of fur, if they have the breeding for good fur.

Many breeders give their show rabbits feed supplements in order to condition the rabbits for show. Some prefer to give a creep feed such as Rabbit Glow. Other breeders use Calf Manna. Still others use rolled oats, whole oats, or sunflower seeds. There are almost as many ways to condition your show animal as there are rabbit breeders. Choose a conditioner that fits your needs. You may need to try several before you are satisfied. But even the very best feeding program will not get a poor quality animal in condition, since condition is also an inherited trait.

Divide the group into teams and ask each team to list the different feeds used to condition rabbits. Have each team share their lists with the group.

Tips on conditioning:

1. Feed and water your rabbit at the same time each day.
2. Do not allow your rabbit to get too fat. You may need to cut back on the amount of regular feed when you start giving the conditioner. Give your rabbit about a teaspoon of conditioner each day.
3. Rabbits like a treat such as bread or apples. However, these should be given only occasionally.
4. You may want to feed different conditioners to different groups of your rabbits and compare the results of each conditioner.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

- Q: What can happen if your diet contains too much fat or sugar? (weight, complexion, etc.) What foods are high in fat or sugar?
- Q: How does hair vary in humans? This is an inherited characteristic passed on to you from your parents and ancestors. What other features have you inherited?
- Q: Would you say that one kind of hair or color of eyes, etc., is better than others? Why or why not? (Indicate that one type of feature is not inherently better, just different.)

GOING FURTHER:

Attending a rabbit show to check for conditioning.

FEEDING THE SHOW RABBIT

Activity Sheet

Circle the items below that will improve your project's conditioning.

W H O L E O A T S

7 13 26 2 45 16 31 22 8

A D D I T I O N A L M I L K

29 3 24 40 15 5 49 6 9 47 44 21 4 33

E X T R A G R A S S

20 1 12 10 17 52 50 43 37 46

H I G H F I B E R

7 45 13 26 16 8 2 31 22

R A B B I T G L O W

3 15 44 24 6 29 49 33 40 5

C H O C O L A T E

35 48 17 54 18 14 34 11 51

C A L F M A N N A

52 1 37 10 50 12 43 20 35

S U P P L E M E N T A R Y P R O T E I N

47 9 14 51 34 18 4 21 28 36 41 23 42 30 38 25 46 32 39 27

Now, use the numbers underneath the letters of the circled words to solve the following coded riddles:

1. A daily nutritious feeding
of your project

A G O O D R A B B I T H A B I T
23 31 24 44 39 22 13 41 24 6 36

2. Attention to your project's
conditioning

G O O D H A R E C A R E
13 15 23 45 52 31 3 21

3. What you might call your project
when its coat glows

A F U N N Y B U N N Y
8 9 28 20 42 24 9 27 43 42



Making a Rabbit Nest Box and Selecting Nesting Materials

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 5

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to build a nest box
- How to choose the best nesting materials

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- How difficult decisions are made
- How to confront peer pressure

Materials Needed:

- 2 plywood boards, 1/2 x 12 x 16 inches
- 2 plywood boards, 1 x 12 x 12 inches
- Nails
- Hammers
- Saw
- Straw
- Pine shavings
- Shredded paper
- Hay

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 90 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Small breeds can use a nest box 12 x 12 inches and larger breeds will need a nest 12 x 20 inches.

Many materials are suitable for nesting rabbits. If you use hay, the doe will use it to eat and for nesting materials. Shredded paper is used by some breeders with great success. Other breeders prefer to use straw. Rice hulls and pine shavings have also been used. Some breeders like to use a combination, pine shavings and straw, etc. All of these make good nesting material.

Keep the nesting materials clean. If the nesting material becomes soiled in the nest box, replace it. Always replace wet nesting material.

More nesting materials are needed in the winter than in the warmer months. Use about 6–8 inches of nesting materials during the winter and 2–4 inches in the summer.

Leader Notes

Hand out diagram for nest box.

Help each member decide on the type of nest box needed for his or her breed. Then help members make nest boxes. (This would be a good time to have parents help or several junior leaders to assist.)

Leader Notes

Examine various nesting materials. Decide which one you think would be best in your rabbitry.

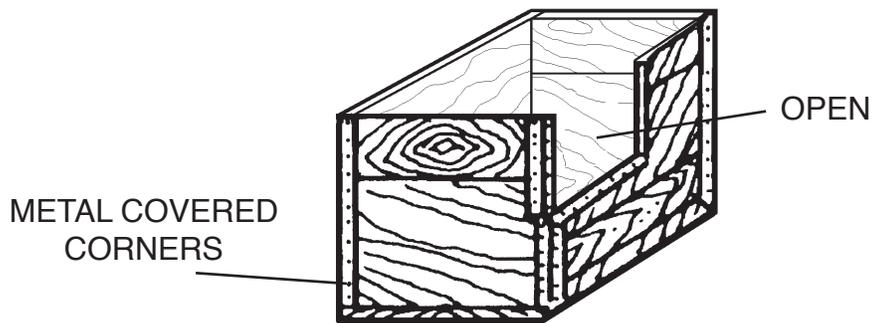
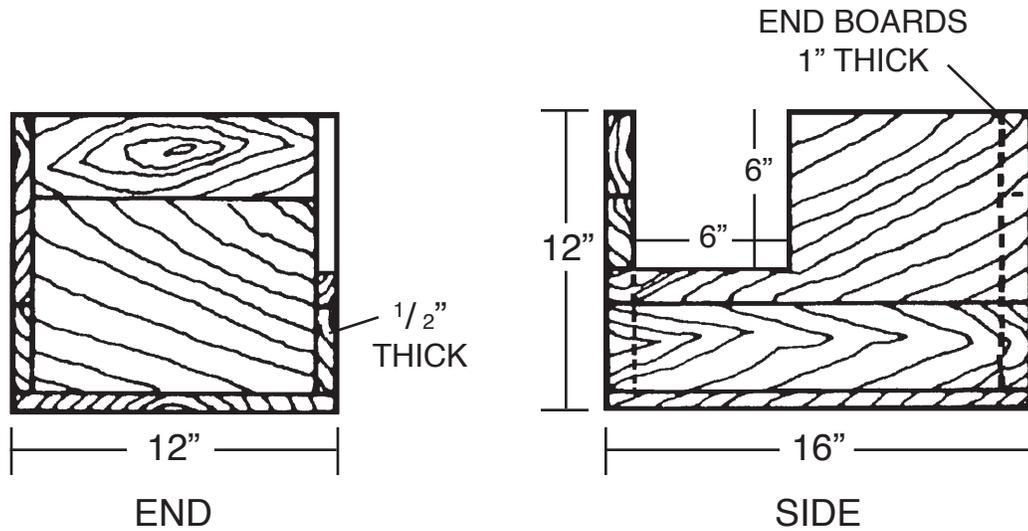
The nest box should be placed with the doe on the 28th day after she was bred. It should be left until the 35th day after the doe was bred.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: This lesson stresses the need to adapt the size of and materials used in the nest box to your rabbit and your situation. You must decide what is best for the rabbit. When have you been allowed to decide what is best for you? How do you know when something is best for you? How do you decide when either choice seems equally good or bad? How do you decide between a choice that you want very much and another which you know is best?

Q: How does it feel when your friends decide to do something which you know is wrong or not the best choice for you? What makes it hard to do the right or the best thing? How can you prepare for this situation?

WINTER NEST BOX DIAGRAM
Activity Sheet



Leader Notes



Recognizing Rabbit Types

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 6

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- The five basic rabbit types

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Awareness of different body types and advantages

Materials Needed:

- Pictures of the five basic rabbit types
- Pictures of various rabbit breeds
- Pencils, glue

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Each breed has a characteristic type. 4-H'ers must to be able to recognize the correct type for their breed.

The five general types of rabbits are:

1. **FULL ARCHED TYPE**—This group is easily recognized by an arch which starts at the nape of the neck, and continues over the shoulders, mid-section, loins, and hips to the base of the tail. Full arched rabbits are much deeper in body height than width. They have long limbs and a long body. Full arched rabbits have a racy appearance.
2. **SEMI-ARCHED BREEDS**—These rabbits are sometimes referred to a Mandolin type. They are well arched, but the arches start at the back of the shoulders instead of the nape of the neck and continue to the base of the tail.
3. **SHORT COUPLED, COMPACT TYPE**—These rabbits are considered good meat type but lighter in weight and shorter in body length. Some are round or tubular, while others are the conventional broader type. These rabbits are shorter in body length than the commercial type. The width, depth, and length are controlled by differences in weight.
4. **COMMERCIAL TYPE**—Most of the meat producing breeds belong to this group. These breeds excel in width and depth of body, fullness of loin, roundness of hips and rump, and hardness in

Leader Notes

Divide the group into teams. Give each team ten pictures of different breeds of rabbits and ask the members to classify the breeds according to type. Check each team's results. Explain why each breed belongs to its particular type.

Have members tell what type of rabbits they are raising.

To review the body types, distribute attached puzzles already cut out and mixed up, either individually or in combination with others. Have members assemble, glue, and label each picture.

flesh. Commercial type rabbits have the smallest amount of waste when dressed. Most are medium length rabbits.

5. CYLINDRICAL TYPE—The body is slim, round, and long enough to show off markings. The head is rather slim and the legs are fine in bone and long; the cylindrical body should lie snakelike upon the judging table.

Examples of Short Coupled, Compact Type Rabbits:

English Angora, Standard Chinchilla, Dutch, Florida White, Havana, Lilac, Netherland Dwarf, Polish, Silver, Dwarf Hotot

Examples of Commercial Type Rabbits:

French Angora, Champagne D'Argent, Creme D'Argent, Californian, Cinnamons, American Chinchilla, French Lop, Harlequin, Hotot, New Zealand, Palomino, Rex, Sable, Satin, Silver Fox, Silver Marten, Blue Vienna

Examples of Full Arched Type Rabbits:

Belgian Hare, Checkered Giant, English Spot, Rhinelander, Britannia Petite, Tan

Examples of Semi Arched Type Rabbits:

American, Beveren, English Lop, Flemish Giant, Giant Chinchilla

Example of Snaky (Cylindrical) Type Rabbits:

The only breed of this type is the Himalayan.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

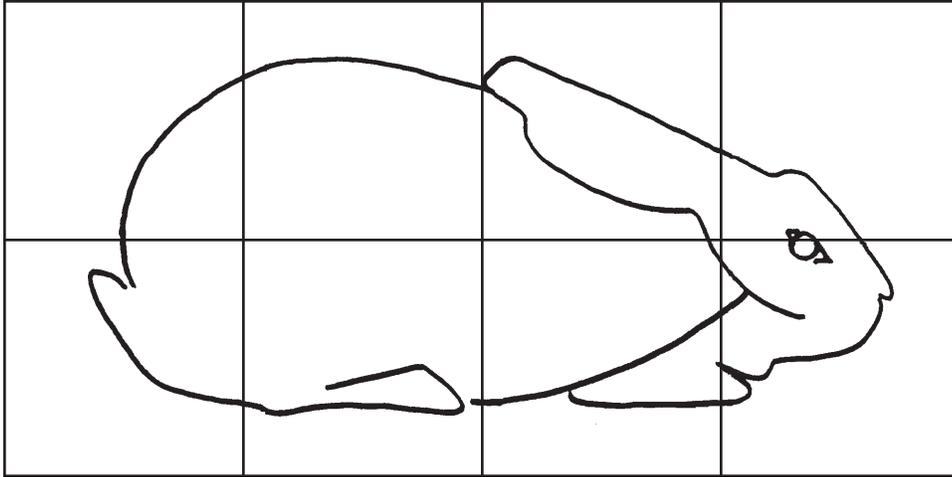
Q: How do people differ in terms of body type? (tall, short, thin, muscular, etc.) Your body type probably makes you better suited for certain activities. Why might it be an advantage to be tall? short? What is something you do well because of your size or weight, etc.?

Q: What body characteristics can be changed? Are there physical features about yourself you would like to change? How will you go about doing it?

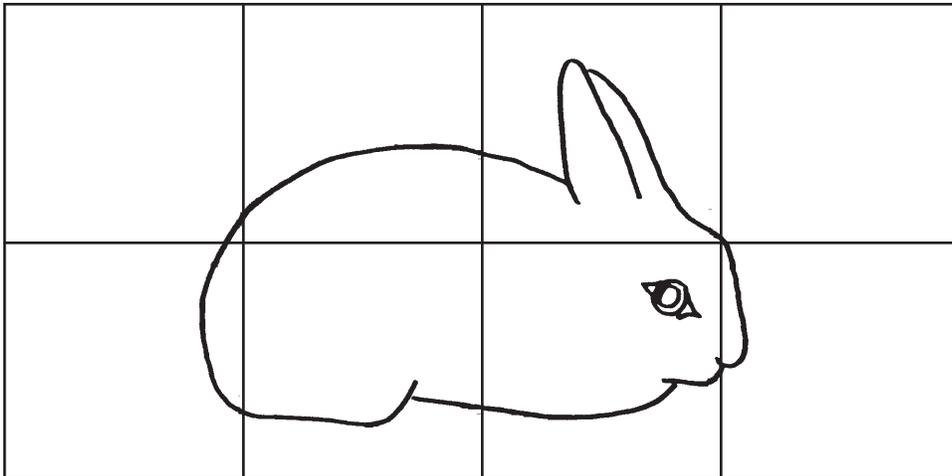
GOING FURTHER:

1. Attend a rabbit show.

RABBIT PUZZLES
Activity Sheet



Commercial

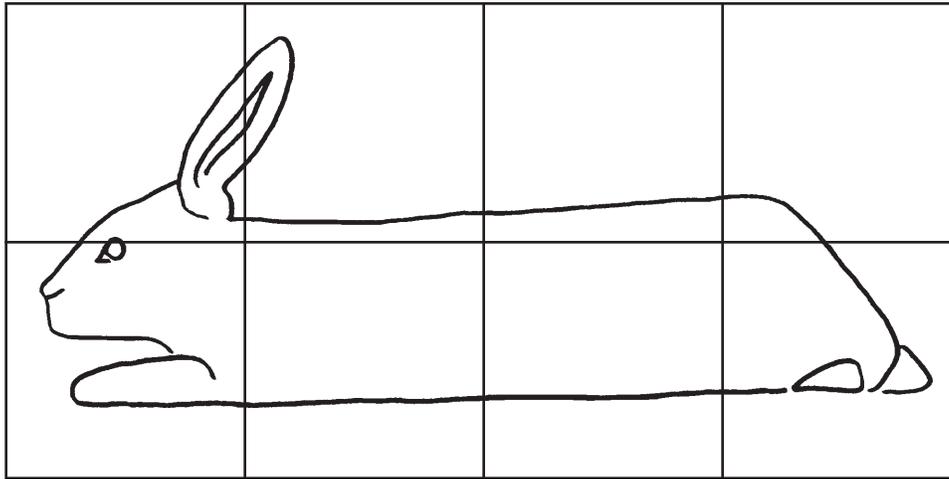


Short Coupled, Compact

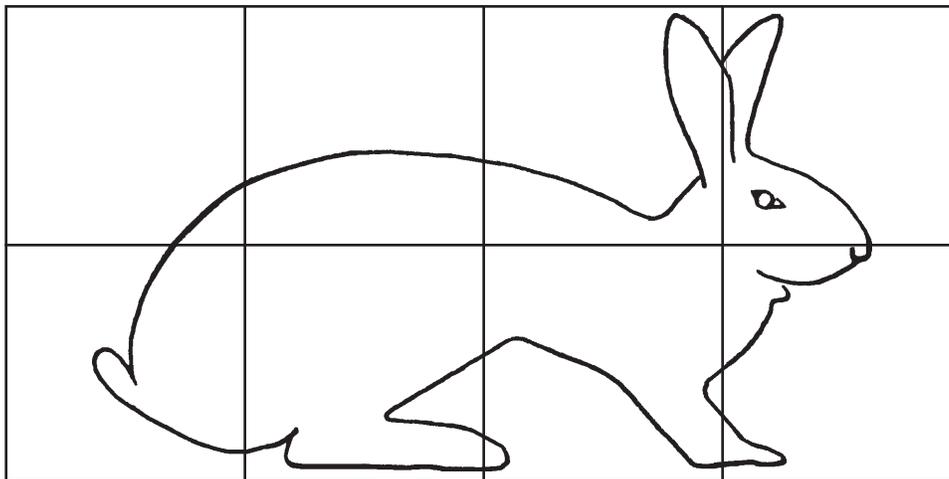
These puzzles may be copied, cut, and distributed to members individually or in combination with others depending on the ability of members. Use the attached sheets to assemble and label each picture.

RABBIT PUZZLES

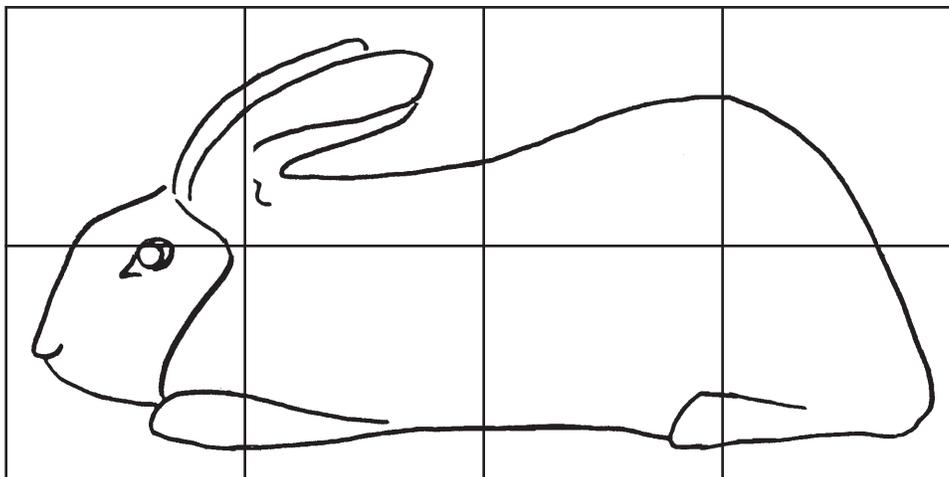
Activity Sheet



Cylindrical

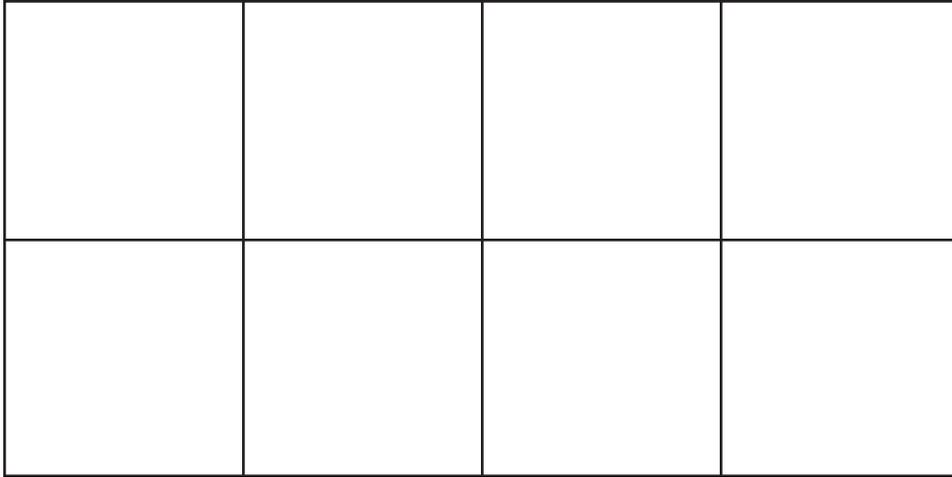


Full-arched

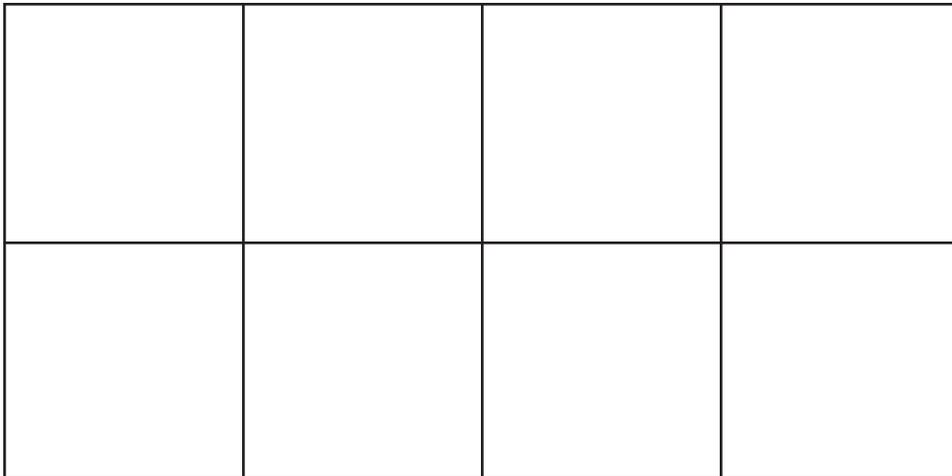


Semi-arched

RABBIT PUZZLES
Activity Sheet



Commercial



Short Coupled, Compact

These puzzles may be copied, cut, and distributed to members individually or in combination with others depending on the ability of members. Use the attached sheets to assemble and label each picture.

RABBIT PUZZLES

Activity Sheet

Cylindrical

Full-arched

Semi-arched



Recognizing Faults in Rabbits

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 7

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What qualities to avoid in selecting stock

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Awareness of personality differences between people
- Importance of open-mindedness in dealing with other people

Materials Needed:

- *Standard Of Perfection*, ARBA
- Chalkboard or flip chart

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

It is important to recognize rabbit faults so you can avoid them in your breeding and show stock.

List general faults on chalkboard or flip chart as each is discussed.

GENERAL FAULTS (ALL BREEDS)

1. Specimen in moult
2. Rabbit out of condition (but not diseased)
3. Hutch stains
4. Broken toenails
5. Stray white hairs in colored fur
6. Double dewlaps
7. Poor tail carriage—one that is not permanently set on either side
8. Poor ear carriage
9. Poor eye color
10. Flabby or overfat
11. Thin and extremely poor flesh

Some faults are likely to be passed to the offspring (inherited). Stray white hairs in colored fur, double dewlaps, poor tail carriage, poor ear carriage, poor eye color, and flesh condition can be inherited. Ask members what breed they raise and then using the ARBA *Standard of Perfection* check the faults of that breed. For example, if a 4-H'er raises Californians, look up Californians to see the faults listed.

Circle inherited faults on your list.

GENERAL BODY TYPE

Faults: Racy, Mandolin, or any type away from a plump, firm, meaty body. **More severe point reductions for:** shoulders wider than hips; long, narrow head; extra long neck; flatness over back, especially over hips; rough; bony and protruding hips.

Leader Notes

Hindquarters

Faults: Narrow; flat; pinched; undercut; chopped; bony rump; weak loin; protruding hip bones; rough over spine.

Midsection

Faults: Narrow; flat; rough; not well-filled; narrow, thin loin.

Shoulders

Faults: Too narrow or too wide to balance with hindquarters; excessive fat; loose, flabby flesh over the shoulders.

Head

Faults: Long, slim head with pinched nose.

Ears

Faults: Heavy, open, spoon-shaped ears; weak ear base.

Feet and Legs

Faults: Long or heavy bone, crooked shape.

Marking and Color

Faults: Chocolate, orange, or any color other than black to have greater point reductions. Other things being equal, the blacker marked rabbit shall place over the gray or lighter marked rabbits. Eyes faded in color.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: How do people's personalities differ? What kind of person do you like in a friend? What kind of person do you try to avoid in choosing a friend?

Q: Have you known someone who had different opinions or different preferences than you? Do you think it is possible to be good friends with someone who often has different opinions or preferences?

Q: What annoys you about other people?

GOING FURTHER:

1. Attend a rabbit show and listen to a judge.
2. Invite a rabbit judge to your meeting to discuss faults.

Look up each breed the members raise and list their faults. Several members will probably raise the same breed so this shouldn't take too long. However, you may wish to divide the group according to breed raised. If you have several helpers and *Standard of Perfection* books, have each helper discuss the faults for that breed.



Identifying Rabbit Eliminations and Disqualifications

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 8

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- General rabbit eliminations
- General rabbit disqualifications

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Their qualities of sporting conduct
- Their feelings toward people with handicaps
- Their feelings about people that alter their appearance

Materials Needed:

- Rabbits with different eliminations and disqualifications (if possible)
- Carpet
- Lists of eliminations and disqualifications from ARBA *Standard of Perfection*

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 60 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Eliminations are conditions that can be corrected.

Discuss general eliminations and have members find some on live rabbits.

You must be able to identify eliminations so you will not plan to show a rabbit with an elimination. Also, you can correct rabbit eliminations.

GENERAL ELIMINATIONS

Ear canker, slobbers, pot belly.

Sore hocks (actually, the foot portion) showing infection or bleeding; not merely bare.

Vent disease, abscesses, noticeably runny eyes.

Mange, or a scurvy condition, with flakes resembling dandruff or scale at the skin at the base of the fur, fungus growth, or scabby condition.

Infestation by mites, fleas, lice.

Permanent ear mark—Illegible tattoo, tattoo not in left ear. Tattoo marred by tattoo ink so as to be unreadable.

Leader Notes

Overweight or underweight—Not within the minimum and maximum weight limits specified in the breed standard. (Elimination for overweight or underweight suspends the rabbit from all further competition, including fur and/or wool classes.)

Teeth—Missing or broken tooth or teeth. (The normal “bite” of the rabbit’s teeth has the upper incisors overlapping the bottom incisors.)

Testicles—All male animals, in the regular showroom classes, must show two normally descended testicles except Juniors. Juniors must show both or none. Those showing only one at time of judging to be eliminated.

Wrong sex, breed, group or variety.

GENERAL DISQUALIFICATIONS

You must be able to identify disqualifications to properly cull rabbits from the herd. Disqualifications are conditions that can’t be changed and thus would make a rabbit unsuitable for competition or shows.

Color—Foreign-colored spots on solid or self-marked animals; or, colored spots in white animals unless noted in breed standard.

Colds—A white nasal discharge. (A wetness around the nostrils or roughened fur on the inside of the forelegs is not sufficient evidence of a cold.)

Tumor or abnormal swelling—A swollen or distended mass forming a lump.

Rupture or hernia—Protrusion of intestines through muscle in abdominal cavity collecting between the skin and muscle.

Lop ears (except lop-eared breeds)—Ears carried below horizontal (ears extending horizontally are guilty of poor ear carriage).

Torn ears or with portion missing—Must noticeably detract from the general appearance.

Blindness in one or both eyes—Usually indicated by filming over cornea obstructing pupil.

Off-colored eyes—Eyes other than called for in standard.

Wall eye (sometimes called moon eye)—Eye with whitish cornea giving milky appearance to the eye.

Be prepared to observe some disqualifications in some live rabbits.

Unmatched eyes—Two eyes of different colors.

Spots or specks on eye—Spots or specks in iris or on cornea (the transparent coating of the eyeball).

Malocclusion—Buck or wolf teeth have the lower incisors extending in front of the upper incisors; sometimes curving to sides, and unusually long.

Simple malocclusion—When the teeth meet head-on with no overlap of the upper teeth.

Crooked Legs—Bent, bowed, or deformed.

Tail—Permanently set to either side. Screw tail, bobtail (portion missing so as to be conspicuously out of proportion). Broken permanently out of line. (The tail is considered an on-line extension of the spine.)

Toenails—Missing toenail(s), including dewclaws (a portion of the toenail missing but allowing determination of the pigmentation is acceptable). Unmatched toenails on corresponding feet, including dewclaw. (Toenails lighter than called for in the breed standard shall be considered a fault.) White toenail(s) disqualify in all solid-colored breeds, including Himalayan, Californian and Pointed White. Colored toenail(s) disqualify in white, or marked breeds in combination with white, unless specifically exempted varieties or in the breed standard.

Dewlaps—Disqualify when noted in the breed standard.

Abnormalities—Any deviation from the normally accepted condition of the body structure, indications of ill health, or departures from generally accepted healthy condition.

Altering appearance—Dyeing, plucking of off-colored hairs so as to be noticeably missing. Trimming or clipping so as to alter markings. Coloring toenails. Any faking: including powdering and indiscriminate use of grooming preparations designed to alter the natural condition or appearance.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Rabbits are eliminated from competition due to conditions that can be corrected. What are circumstances in which a person might be removed from competition of some sort?

Q: Sometimes people are removed from competition because of poor sportsmanship. What kinds of behavior would you expect from a “poor sport?” Which of these do you think should

Leader Notes

eliminate someone from competition? What are qualities shown by a “good sport?” How can you show good sportsmanship in 4-H competitions?

Q: When a rabbit is born with an abnormality, it is a disqualification. Sometimes people are born with abnormalities, or handicaps. What are some handicapping conditions you know about? What special problems might they present? How might a person with a certain condition overcome it or compensate for it? At one time, people with handicaps were not given the opportunity to overcome them, or were shunned. Why do you think this has changed?

Q: A rabbit whose appearance has been artificially altered is a disqualification. How do people artificially alter their appearance? Why do you think they do it? Do you think there is anything wrong with doing so?

Q: Has there been a time when you have been disqualified from an activity? How did you feel? Did you feel the disqualification was justified? Why are some people disqualified in some contests? Why do you think there are sometimes rules which disqualify contestants?

GOING FURTHER:

1. Participate in a rabbit showmanship contest.
2. Participate in a rabbit judging contest and have judge explain various eliminations and disqualifications.

IDENTIFYING RABBIT ELIMINATIONS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS

Activity Sheet

For each of the following conditions, decide if it is an elimination or a disqualification, or neither. Remember an elimination can be corrected. A disqualification cannot be corrected. Put an X in the appropriate column.

Condition	Elimination	Disqualification	Neither
Runny eyes			
Lop ears			
Infected hock			
Mange			
Spots on solid-colored animal			
Hernia			
Does not run fast			
Fleas			
Illegible tattoo			
Overweight			
Nails not clipped			
Ear canker			
Blindness			
Broken tooth			
Crooked leg			
Unmatched eyes			

IDENTIFYING RABBIT ELIMINATIONS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS

Activity Sheet

Leader's Key

For each of the following conditions, decide if it is an elimination or a disqualification, or neither. Remember an elimination can be corrected. A disqualification cannot be corrected. Put an X in the appropriate column.

Condition	Elimination	Disqualification	Neither
Runny eyes	X		
Lop ears		X	
Infected hock	X		
Mange	X		
Spots on solid-colored animal		X	
Hernia		X	
Does not run fast			X
Fleas	X		
Illegible tattoo	X		
Overweight	X		
Nails not clipped			X
Ear canker	X		
Blindness		X	
Broken tooth		X	
Crooked leg		X	
Unmatched eyes		X	



Judging a Rabbit Class

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 9

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What to look for in selecting stock or otherwise judging a rabbit

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- The importance of open-mindedness in meeting new people

Materials Needed:

- Rabbits to be used in a judging class
- Carpet

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

You must be able to select good replacement stock, so you need to know how to judge rabbits.

In order to choose a good rabbit for show you need to know what qualities to look for. Viewing the rabbit from the side, you should look for short neck, ears in proportion to the body, and a back that makes a smooth rise from behind the head to the top of the hips. Avoid rabbits with long ears and a long neck.

Looking down at the top of the rabbits, you should see well filled shoulders and hindquarters. The hindquarters should be wider than the shoulders and the rabbit should feel smooth from front to back.

Looking at the rabbit from a rear view, the rabbit should have smooth arched hips. When viewed from the rear, the rabbit should look like half of a basketball with ears.

JUDGING A RABBIT

A properly posed rabbit should have its feet under it so that the loin is arched. Be careful not to push the feet too far under the body or leave them behind the hip.

Leader Notes

Hand out judging worksheet to each member.

Have members select best side view and discuss.

Have members select best top view and discuss.

Have members select best rear view and discuss.

Have members select which rabbit is posed correctly and discuss.

After using worksheet, judge a class of live rabbits.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: When judging a rabbit, we look at its physical characteristics. Do you judge people? In what circumstances might you commonly judge someone? What characteristics do you use to judge a person in those circumstances? What are some possible dangers in judging a person? How can you keep from judging a person too quickly?

Q: Have your feelings toward someone changed as you got to know that person better? Have you ever not liked someone when you first met him or her, and then changed your mind later?

GOING FURTHER:

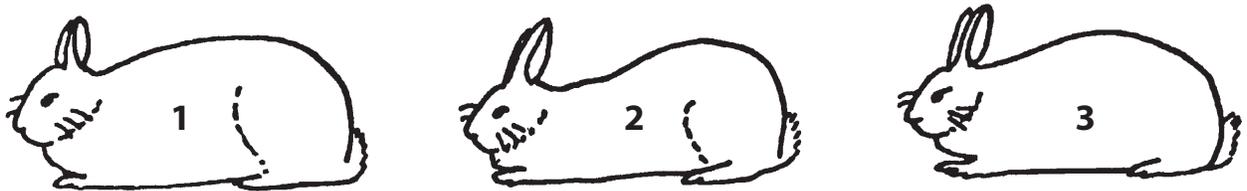
Participate in a rabbit judging contest.

JUDGING WORKSHEET

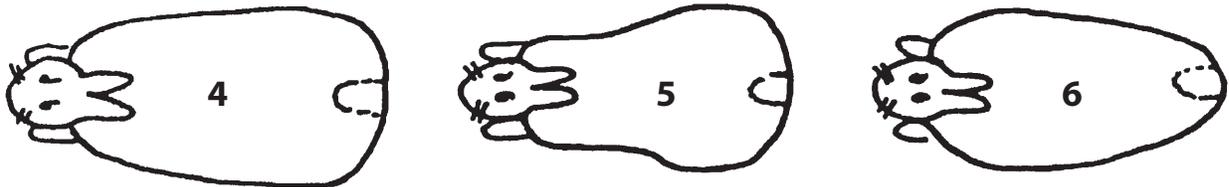
Activity Sheet

In order to choose a good rabbit for a show and for best meat production, you should know what qualities to look for. The following are some tips on what a good rabbit looks like.

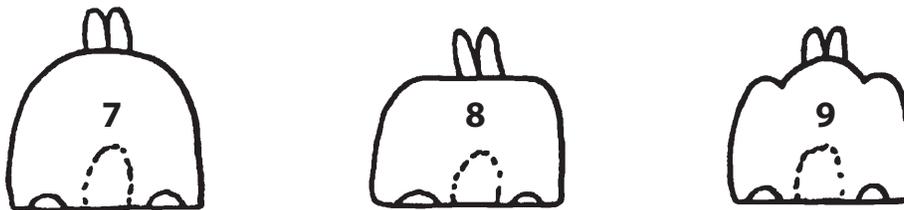
Viewing a rabbit from the side, you should look for a short neck, short ears, and a back that makes a smooth rise from behind the head to the top of the hips. Which of the rabbits drawn below do you think is best?



Looking down at the top of a rabbit, you should see well-filled shoulders and hindquarters. The shoulders shouldn't be as wide as the hindquarters and the rabbit should look and feel smooth from front to back. Which of the next three rabbits would you choose?



Finally, you should **consider a rabbit from the rear view**. A good rabbit should have smoothly arched hips. Which rabbit would you judge best?



Once you have chosen the best rabbit to show you should take care to pose it correctly. Even a rabbit with a good shape looks like a poor example if the legs are set too far forward or too far back. Which rabbit drawn below do you think is posed correctly?



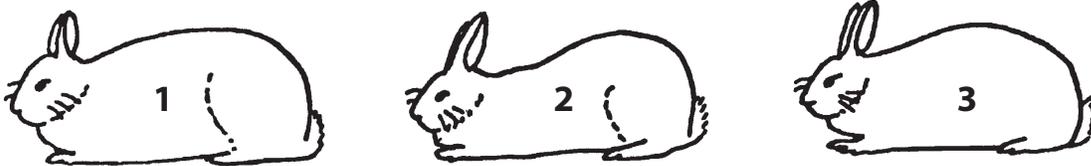
JUDGING WORKSHEET

Activity Sheet

Leader's Key

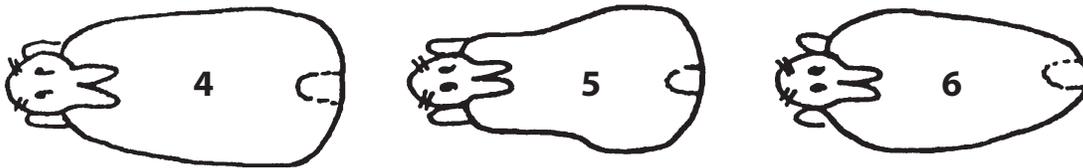
In order to choose a good rabbit for a show and for best meat production you should know what qualities to look for. The following are some tips on what a good rabbit looks like.

Viewing a rabbit from the side, you should look for a short neck, short ears, and a back that makes a smooth rise from behind the head to the top of the hips. Which of the rabbits drawn below do you think is best?



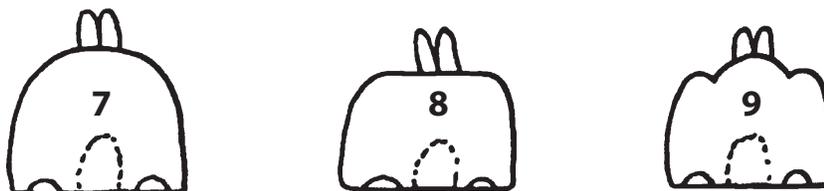
If you chose rabbit 1 you are correct. Rabbit 2 has low shoulders and hips rise in a sudden hump. Rabbit 3 has the highest point of his back well ahead of his hips. Remember that long ears and a long neck do not add meat to the carcass.

Looking down at the top of a rabbit, you should see well-filled shoulders and hindquarters. The shoulders shouldn't be as wide as the hindquarters and the rabbit should look and feel smooth from front to back. Which of the next three rabbits would you choose?



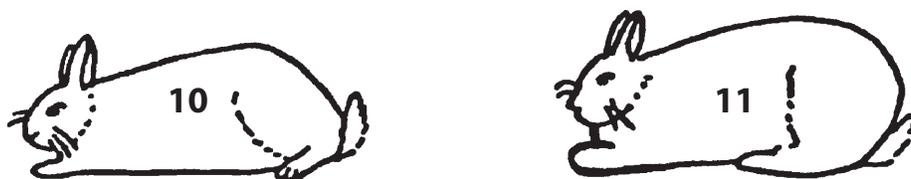
Rabbit 5 has shoulders which are too narrow and make the line from front to back widen suddenly at the ribs. The rabbit should gradually get wider as you go from the shoulders to the hips. The hips on rabbit 6 are narrow. Rabbit 4 is the best example.

Finally, you should **consider a rabbit from the rear view.** A good rabbit should have smoothly arched hips. Which rabbit would you judge best?



Rabbit 7 has the ideal type of smooth arched hips. Rabbit 8 has wide flat hips. Rabbit 9 has the most common fault—narrow bony hips and prominent thigh bones. When you run your fingers along the sides of this kind of rabbit, your fingers get caught by the bony humps.

Once you have chosen the best rabbit to show you should take care to pose it correctly. Even a rabbit with good shape looks like a poor example if the legs are set too far forward or too far back. Which rabbit drawn below do you think is posed correctly? If you chose rabbit 11, you are right.





Mating Rabbits

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 10

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- When it is time to breed their rabbits
- How to mate their rabbits

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Relative maturity at various ages for both sexes

Materials Needed:

- Chalkboard and chalk

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Miniature breeds of rabbits (Netherland Dwarf, Dwarf Hotot, Holland Lop, Jersey Wooly, etc.) are sexually mature at 125 to 150 days (4 to 5 months) of age. Medium-sized rabbits (Florida White, Dutch, Havana, Mini Lop, etc.) will take 150 to 180 days (5 to 6 months) to mature sexually. Commercial breeds (Californian, Champagne, New Zealand, Palomino, etc.) become sexually mature at 180 to 210 days (6 to 7 months) of age. Giant breeds (Flemish Giants, Checkered Giants, Giant Chinchilla, French Lop, etc.) become sexually mature at eight months of age or more. If you breed your does too young, they will not develop to their full potential. Commercial breeds are often mated when they reach a certain weight rather than a particular age.

It is good management practice to examine the external genitals of the buck and doe prior to mating for any infections. Never mate animals with infections.

To mate your rabbits, take the doe to the buck's cage. The buck will mount the doe and move back and forth. The doe will raise her hindquarters. Then the buck will fall off backwards or to the side. If the buck doesn't fall off, the mating hasn't been successful. You will need to have them try again. After several attempts and the mating has not been successful, try the mating again in 2 or 3 days.

Leave the doe in the buck's cage only long enough for the mating to occur.

When rabbits are ready to breed we say they are sexually mature. Smaller breeds mature earlier than larger breeds. Does usually mature 30 to 60 days before bucks.

Leader Notes

If the doe is not receptive, she should be returned to her cage. Try to mate the doe again in two or three days.

When the doe accepts the buck, it is a good idea to remate her in 8 to 12 hours. This will increase the litter size and conception rate.

A mature buck can serve ten to twenty does.

A mature buck may be mated to four to six does per day, if he is allowed to rest five to seven days before he is used again.

A mature male can be used every day if only one or two does are mated per day.

BREEDING PROBLEMS:

Breeding problems are often found in late fall and early winter. This is the normal time for rabbits to be sexually inactive.

A good selective culling of breeding stock, keeping only replacement stock from does who are sexually active all year-round is the first step.

Feed all animals a good balanced ration that has sufficient vitamins A, D and E. Put four to six drops of 50-50 mixture of wheat germ oil and pure peanut oil on the feed each feeding.

Have each member tell what breed they raise and when the does will be old enough to breed.

Make sure does are not too fat.

Use only young aggressive bucks.

House the does in the brightest area of the rabbitry or use artificial light. Rabbits need 14 to 16 hours of daylight.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

To extend this lesson for further consideration of human reproduction systems, encourage children to talk to their parents.

Q: At what ages do humans mature sexually? Do boys or girls mature first? Why do you think so?

Q: What are some indications of sexual maturity?

Q: How does human maturity compare to rabbit maturity as far as age, weight, etc.



Trimming A Rabbit's Nails

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 11

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to examine the needs of a rabbit
- How to trim the nails of a rabbit

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- How to measure and keep track of personal physical growth
- How often to trim our own nails

Materials Needed:

- Rabbits with long nails
- Nail trimmers (ordinary fingernail clippers or dog nail clippers)

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

How do you trim the nails of a rabbit?

Demonstrate how to examine the nails of a rabbit.

There are five nails on each front foot and four nails on each hind foot.

Demonstrate how to trim the nails of a rabbit.

A rabbit with long nails can get them caught in the wire and injure itself or you. The nails of wild rabbits wear down naturally, but those of domestic rabbits must be clipped.

Clip the nails whenever they are long, sometimes every six months. Use dog nail trimmers or regular fingernail clippers. Cut nails to just in front of the cone, the part with the blood vessels. You can see it when you hold the nail up to the light.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: A rabbit's nails, like yours, must be clipped when they have grown too long. How often do you trim your nails? What are some other signs that you are growing? What are some ways of keeping track of how fast you are growing?

Hand out "Body Growth Measurement" activity sheet. Help youth list measurements or have them do it at home and return to discuss.

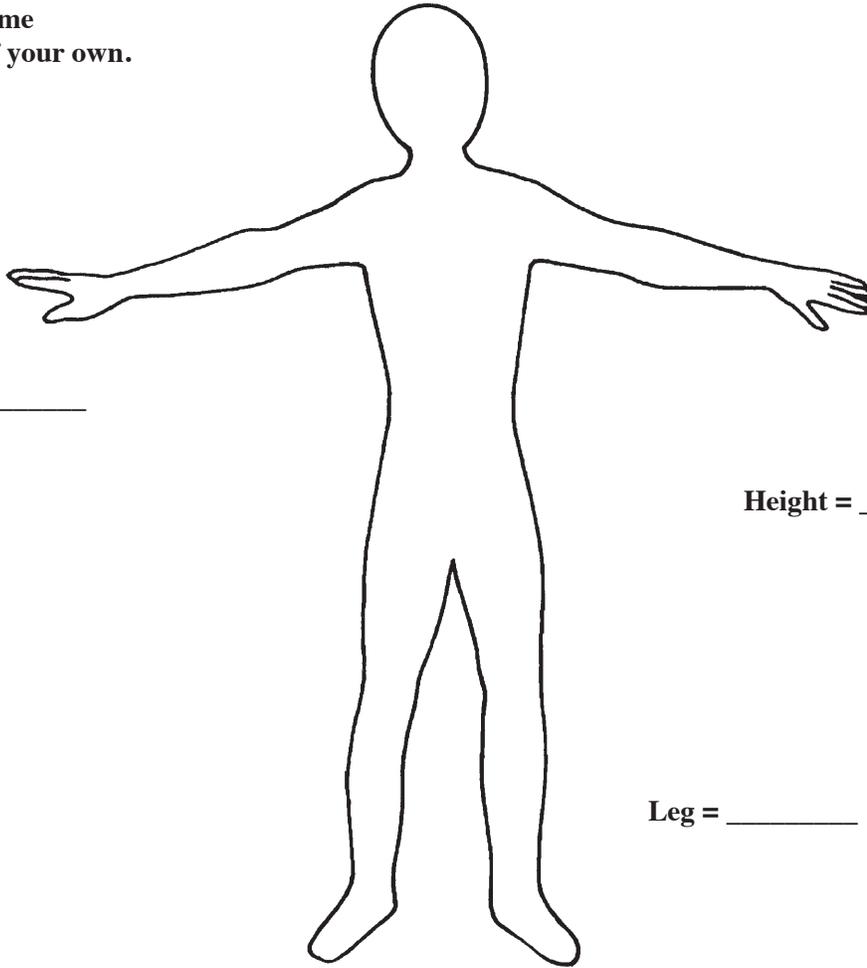
Q: What other kinds of growth are there apart from physical growth? What are some signs that you are growing in other ways? (learning, taking more responsibility, developing new skills, etc.)

BODY GROWTH MEASUREMENTS

Activity Sheet

Find the following measurements for yourself. Then either compare them with the same measurements done on a family member who is older or younger than you, or save this page and repeat the measurements in 6 months or a year.

Come up with some measurements of your own.



Hand span = _____

Height = _____

Leg = _____

Arm span = _____

Weight = _____

Shoe size = _____

Pant size = _____

Shirt size = _____



Registering Your Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 12

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- The reasons for registering a rabbit
- How to register a rabbit

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- The importance of their family tree or ancestors

Materials Needed:

- ARBA *Standard of Perfection*
- Have a registrar visit
- Pedigree blanks
- Scales
- Rabbits to be registered (You may ask the 4-H'ers to bring rabbits which they want registered.)

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Many individuals want to buy breeding stock from rabbitries with registered breeding stock. This ensures that all the recent ancestors have made the minimum weight requirements for the breed. Rabbits must be registered if you wish to receive a grand champion certificate from the American Rabbit Breeders Association, though registration is not required in order to show your rabbit.

Members need three things in order to get their rabbits registered:

1. They must be a current ARBA member.
2. They must have a pedigree that shows the last three generations.
3. They must have a rabbit that is at least six months old, meets the weight requirements, and is free of any disqualifications or eliminations.

You must register your rabbits with a person who has been licensed by the ARBA. The registrar will examine the rabbit for any eliminations or disqualifications and weigh the rabbit. If the rabbit meets the weight requirements and is free of any eliminations or disqualifications, then the rabbit can be registered. The registrar will make

At this point introduce the registrar and have him or her address to the group.

Then allow the registrar to register the rabbits present.

Leader Notes

Discuss and help members fill out pedigree blanks for registering their rabbits. Do a general sample first.

Hand out “Family Tree” activity sheet for each member to take home and complete with their parents.

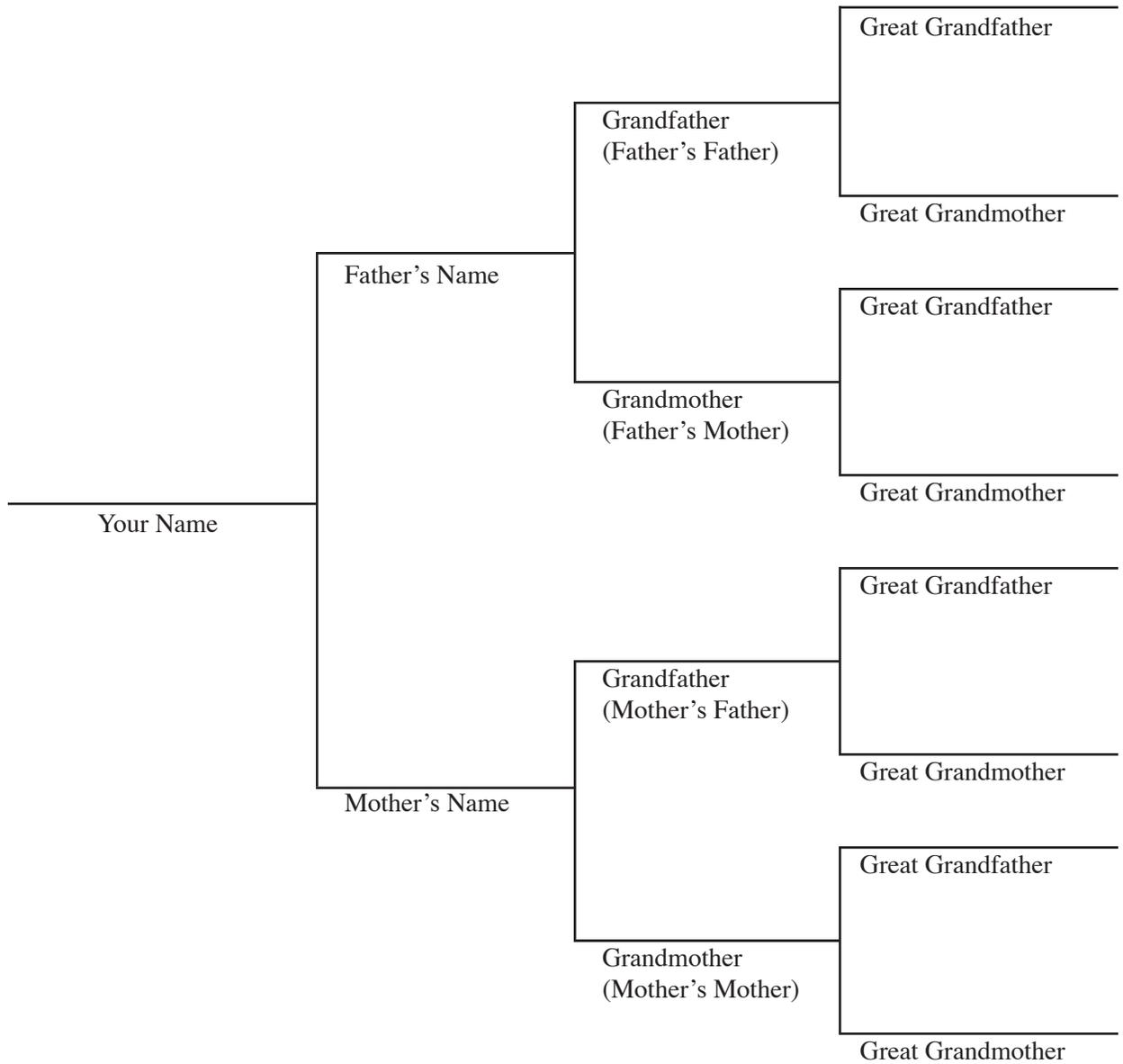
comments on the registration blank about type, color, eyes, ears, bone, balance, fur, etc. After the blank is filled out the registrar will put the registration number in the right ear.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: In order to register a rabbit, you must have a pedigree showing the first three generations. What do we call a human “pedigree”? (family tree) Why do you think some people trace their family history? What could you learn from your family tree? Where do you think people can find information about their ancestors? (libraries, county records, census information, cemeteries, living relatives, etc.)

Q: People must sometimes be registered in order to do certain things. When you are 18, you are old enough to register to vote. Do you think you will? Why or why not? Why might it be important for you to vote?

YOUR FAMILY TREE (PEDIGREE)
Activity Sheet



Leader Notes



Learning Fur Terminology

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 13

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- Fur terminology

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- How to care for their own hair

Materials Needed:

- Rabbits
- Carpet

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

It is important to understand basic fur terminology. If the judge says that your rabbits' fur lacks density and texture, what does that mean?

Density—How thick is the coat? The thicker the coat the more dense it is. When you stroke the fur toward the head, if you readily see the skin, the coat lacks density. A dense coat will not allow you to see much of the skin.

Texture—The character of fur as determined by feel or touch, such as fine or coarse. Observe the texture by stroking the fur towards the head.

A rabbit's coat has two types of hair—the undercoat and guard hairs. Can you explain the difference? (The guard hair is the longer coarser hair of the coat. It protects the undercoat, is more durable, and provides sheen. The undercoat is the fur hair next to the skin and is finer.)

What is a moult?
(It is the act of shedding fur.)

What if the judge says the rabbit's coat is dead?
(This occurs because the rabbit is moulting. The fur lacks life.)

What is a fine coat?
(The coat is too fine in texture, lacks body. Guard hairs are too weak and thin.)

Use a rabbit to show and illustrate each term as it is discussed.

Ask members to give some definitions and discuss as a group before giving the correct answer.

Leader Notes

What does it mean when a coat has “fly back”?

(It is a coat which flies back, returns, to its normal smooth position when stroked from the hindquarters toward the shoulders.)

What does it mean when your rabbit has a “slipping coat”?

(The coat is shedding lots of hairs.)

If a rabbit has a poor coat, what does this mean?

(The fur is not in condition because of moulting or ill health. It can also be caused by inattention to grooming.)

Have the 4-H'ers examine the rabbits present and decide what they could say about the fur. Discuss.

What is the difference between an open coat and a loose coat? (None. It means the fur lacks density in undercoat and guard hairs are fine and lack texture.)

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: What things do we do to keep our hair attractive?

Q: How have human hair fashions changed over time and geography? Why do you think fashions differ or change over the course of time?

Q: Can you think of reasons why someone may wear hair a certain way other than because it looks good? (easy to care for, habit, etc.)

GOING FURTHER:

Observe a rabbit judge using this terminology at a show.

FUR TERMINOLOGY MATCHING

Activity Sheet

Draw lines to match each term with its meaning or another term that means the same thing.

slipping coat

guard hairs

density

texture

fine coat

moulting

flyback

undercoat

loose coat

fur next to skin

how it feels

lacks body

longer hair on outside of coat

ability to smooth itself

thickness

shedding

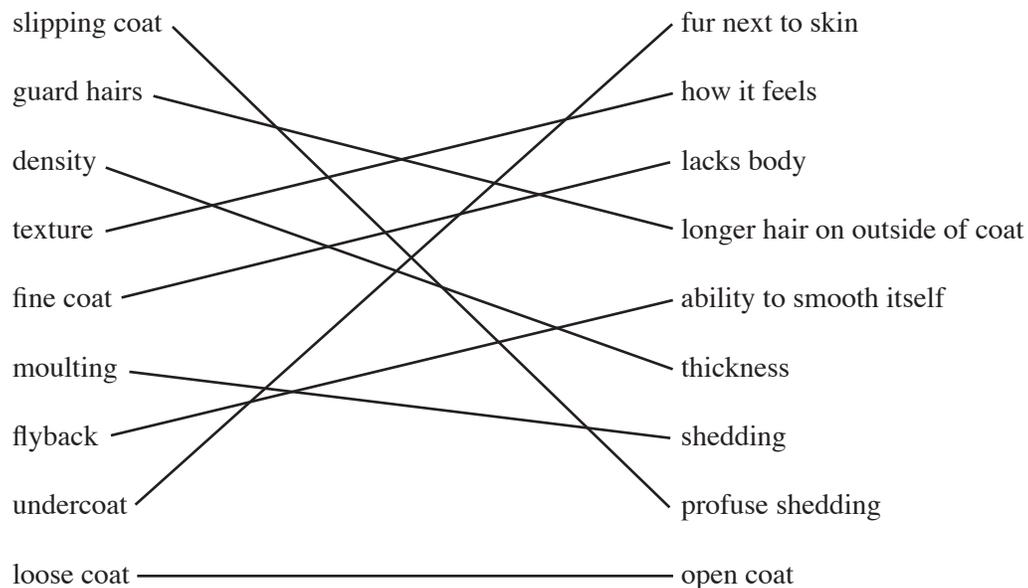
profuse shedding

open coat

FUR TERMINOLOGY MATCHING

Activity Sheet

Draw lines to match each term with its meaning or another term that means the same thing.





Identifying Types of Rabbit Fur

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 14

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- Three types of rabbit fur
- Differences between fur types

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Differences in human hair
- How human hair shows us to be related to all fur-bearing animals

Materials Needed:

- A satin rabbit
- A rex rabbit
- A rabbit with normal fur
- Carpet
- A variety of other rabbits

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

NORMAL FUR

All rabbits are classified as normal fur unless they carry a rex, satin, or wool coat. Normal fur includes several fur structure variations.

Most furs are considered to be commercial normal furs, with the many variations clearly defined under the individual breed listing in the *ARBA Standard of Perfection*.

Many normal fur rabbits carry what is known as a roll back coat, some a very short and snappy fly-back coat, and one breed with no properties of coat return.

The normal fur class is judged on texture, density, balance, and condition.

Texture—The coat should be coarse enough in guard hair to offer resistance when stroked toward the head. The coat should fly back to its natural position and lie smoothly over the entire body. There should be a fine undercoat, which is soft, interspersed thickly with heavier or thicker guard hairs. Texture is more important than density.

Leader Notes

Ask the 4-H'ers what type of fur their breeds have.

Show the three different types of fur.

Have members examine the three rabbits to see the differences in their fur.

Have the 4-H'ers examine the fur of several rabbits and classify them according to type.

Check to see if the 4-H'ers have made the proper identifications.

Discuss each fur type as the members examine them on a rabbit.

Density—The underfur should be fine, soft and dense, interspersed thickly with heavier or thicker guard hairs. These guard hairs should be visible down to the skin and extend above the underfur forming a protective coat for the undercoat, giving body and density to the coat. The same quality fur should carry over the entire usable portion of the pelt.

Balance and Condition—The coat should be well balanced and of fairly good length, with the guard hair no more than one-eighth of an inch longer than the undercoat. A dense, short coat is preferable to a long, thin coat. Texture and density, rather than length, are the important factors. Uniform length is desired. The hair should be set tight in the skin, without breaks due to moult. The coat should be clean, bright, and free of stains.

REX FUR

Rex fur should be extremely dense; five-eighths of an inch long, be straight, upright, as nearly as possible the same length and texture over the entire body, and have a lustrous sheen. Guard hairs should be plentiful and evenly distributed, but not noticeably protruding. The fur should have a good body and plush-like effect which offers a distinct springy resistance to the touch. The fur should feel smooth to the touch, but must not have a soft, silky texture which would destroy the body springiness.

SATIN FUR

Satin fur has a smaller diameter hair shaft and a more transparent hair shell. The greater transparency of the outer hair shell makes satins appear more brilliant in color compared to normal-furred rabbits. The sheen and luster are due to the clarity of the glass-like hair shell and its ability to reflect light.

The fur should be fine, very dense and thick to the touch, due to a soft, very dense undercoat. This undercoat should be interspersed thickly with lustrous, slightly coarser guard hairs visible to the skin and should extend above the underfur evenly about one-eighth of an inch, forming a protective surface for the underfur. The guard hairs give body, density, and resilience so that when stroked toward the head, the fur will return to its natural position and lie smoothly over the entire body. The coat should be well balanced with uniform length. The hair should be set tight to the skin, without breaks due to moult and free from mats and stains. The coat must have a glossy, lustrous sheen.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: How do types of human hair differ? How do we change the natural appearance of human hair? If you could choose to make your hair different, on what style would you decide? Why?

Q: Fur/hair-bearing animals are grouped as mammals. What other things are common to mammals? (live birth, milk for the young, etc.) What are some other mammals? What are some other groups of animals? (birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, all invertebrates)

Q: Rabbits and humans are mammals. Why do you think rabbits have such thick coats of fur? Why don't humans also have thick coats of hair or fur?

GOING FURTHER

Attend a rabbit show and watch fur classes being judged.

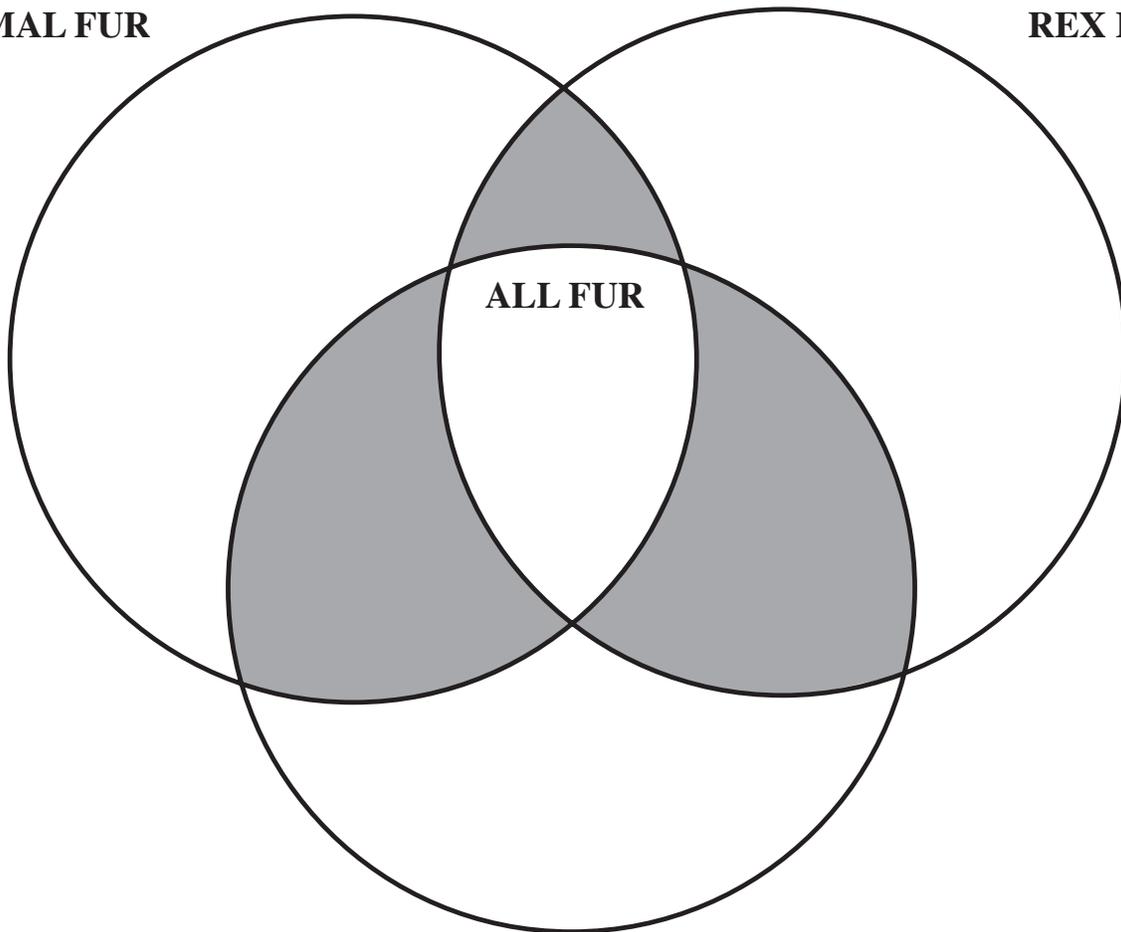
FUR QUALITY COMPARISONS

Activity Sheet

In the diagram, write the following qualities of fur in the area they most apply to. If a quality is common to a good example of all kinds of fur, write it in the center area that is part of each circle.

NORMAL FUR

REX FUR



SATIN FUR

Springy resistance to touch
Transparent hair shell
Fur 5/8 inch long
Soft texture important
Guard hairs do not protrude
Variable return coat
Smooth but not soft and silky

Variable length according to breed
Small diameter hair
Clean, free of stain
Uniform length
Balanced without breaks
More brilliant color

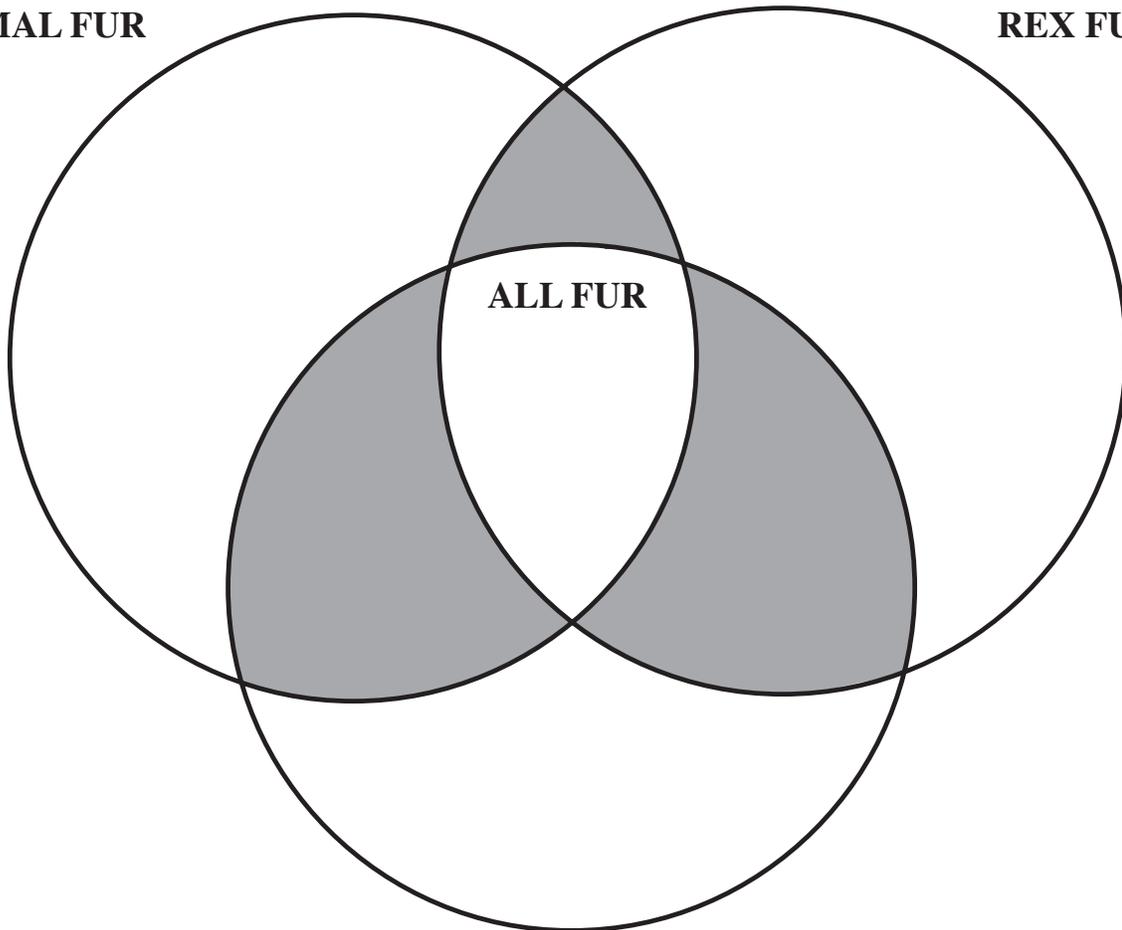
FUR QUALITY COMPARISONS

Activity Sheet

In the diagram, write the following qualities of fur in the area they most apply to. If a quality is common to a good example of all kinds of fur, write it in the center area that is part of each circle.

NORMAL FUR

REX FUR



SATIN FUR

Springy resistance to touch (REX)
Transparent hair shell (SATIN)
Fur 5/8 inch long (REX)
Soft texture important (NORMAL)
Guard hairs do not protrude (REX)
Variable return coat (NORMAL)
Smooth but not soft and silky (REX)

Variable length according to breed (NORMAL)
Small diameter hair (SATIN)
Clean, free of stain (ALL)
Uniform length (ALL)
Balanced without breaks (ALL)
More brilliant color (SATIN)

Leader Notes



Identifying Types of Rabbit Wool

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 15

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to identify types of wool

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Their feelings about importance of wool and other clothing materials

Materials Needed:

- Giant Angora rabbit
- French Angora rabbit
- English Angora rabbit
- Carpet
- Microscope (or a hand lens)
- Example of sheep wool

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Each breed of Angora rabbits has a distinctive wool. Breeders should know what type of wool is desired in their breed.

Angora wool is used for articles of clothing such as gloves and sweaters, etc. The best wool is plucked rather than sheared.

ENGLISH ANGORA WOOL

Density

The greatest density possible is desired. Density all over the animal including the back and belly is preferred. Density should be determined by feeling several places on the body, the sides, rump, and the chest, as well as by blowing into the wool. Length should not be mistaken for density.

Texture

As silky as possible, wool should be alive, healthy, and fall freely. Guard hairs should be present, but not overly evident.

Length

Uniform length of wool over the entire body. Ideal length is 2.5 to 3.5 inches. Minimum length acceptable is 1.5 inches. No advantage is given to wool over 3.5 inches in length. Evenness of growth of

Pluck a strand of wool from each of the breeds and have the members compare the wools.

Ask if the group can distinguish between the breeds by wool type.

View the different types of wool under the microscope.

Provide an example of sheep wool to compare with the rabbit wool.

wool; that is, no break in the outline indicating thinness, broken, or matted wool. Slight moult permissible at nape of neck and forward of shoulders only.

Faults: Wool not uniform in length; wool that is stained, wool that is listless, lifeless, soft, matted, packed, or felting.

Disqualification: Wool that is excessively coarse (resembling French wool).

FRENCH ANGORA WOOL

Density

The greatest possible density is desired. Determine density in the same manner as you would on an English Angora.

Texture

Slightly coarse to coarse wool. Wool should be full of life, strong and fall freely, not soft, matting, or felting. Guard hairs should be present and evident.

Length

Uniform all over the body. Ideal length is 2.5 to 3.5 inches. Minimum acceptable length is 1.5 inches. No advantage is given to wool over 3.5 inches. Evenness in growth of wool important. Slight moult permissible at the nape of the neck and forward of shoulders only.

Faults: Wool not uniform in length; wool that is listless, lifeless, soft, matted, packed, or felted. Wool that is very thin.

Disqualifications: A coat that appears excessively coarse and hairy, due to insufficient undercoat. Excessively soft and silky type wool.

GIANT ANGORA WOOL

Density

The greatest possible density is desired.

Texture

The wooly fleece contains three hair types:

1. Underwool—Should be prominent over the other two hair types. Medium fine, soft with a gentle shine, and delicately waved.
2. Awn fluff—This is soft, wavy wool with a guard hair tip. Found between the underwool and the awn hair (guard hair). Should be longer than the underwool, more strongly waved, and ending in a fine, awn-like tip.

3. Awn hair (guard hair)—Strong straight hair that protrudes above the fleece. Should be present and evident and more predominant in does.

Length

Uniform over the body. Ideal length is 4 inches. Minimum acceptable length is 2 inches. Evenness in growth of wool is important. Slight moult permissible at the nape of the neck and forward of the shoulders only.

Faults: Wool that is not uniform in length. Wool that is listless, lifeless, soft, matted, webbed, packed, or felted. Wool that is very thin.

Disqualifications: Complete absence of wave to wool or excessively coarse coat due to the predominance of awn hair and underwool.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Rabbit wool is made into clothes. What other animal products are used to make clothing? What plant products are used to make clothing?

Q: Why do you think rabbit wool might be preferred over sheep wool for certain items of clothing?

GOING FURTHER:

1. Observe a rabbit wool show.
2. Observe someone plucking rabbit wool for sale.

Leader Notes



Housebreaking a Pet Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 16

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to housebreak a rabbit

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- The usefulness of patience
- The value of positive reinforcement

Materials Needed:

- Rabbit cage
- Young rabbit

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

WARNING: Most breeders do not housebreak rabbits. Rabbits that run loose in the house can chew electric cords and electrocute themselves.

The secret in housebreaking a rabbit lies in watching the bunny just as carefully as you would a young puppy that is not housebroken. After your rabbit has adjusted to its new house (cage), you can let it out for short times. Watch it very carefully. If it starts to eliminate, quickly pick it up and say “no” while carrying it back to the cage so it can finish. You may want to carry the rabbit to the cage occasionally so it can relieve itself. If it does, reward it with “good rabbit” and let it come out to play. You will probably have to closely supervise your rabbit until it is about one year old.

Repeat the same procedure if the rabbit chews on things. However, it may be impossible to keep the rabbit from chewing.

Patience is the key to training any animal. You must be patient when housebreaking a rabbit.

DIALOG TO CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: You must be patient to housebreak your rabbit. Sometimes it is said that patience is stronger than force. How does this apply to training your rabbit? When else in your life has patience been more successful in getting something to happen than other kinds of persuasion, such as force, etc.?

Now open the cage and allow the rabbit to come out. Have the 4-H’ers watch it and put it back in the cage as soon as it starts to eliminate. Scold the rabbit gently so it will learn that it is unacceptable to eliminate outside the cage.

Leader Notes

Q: What kind of reward do you give your rabbit for doing the right thing? Do you think positive rewards are more effective than punishment? When might one be more effective than the other?

Q: When have you used positive reinforcement such as praise with someone else? How does it feel to give or receive positive reinforcement?

GOING FURTHER:

Visit someone who has a housebroken rabbit.



Giving a Rabbit Demonstration

Rabbits, Level 2, Activity 17

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to organize a rabbit demonstration
- How to deliver a demonstration

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- How it feels to give a demonstration
- Different ways that people learn

Materials Needed:

- Poster board
- Marking pens
- Rulers
- Construction paper
- Scissors

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 60 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

A good demonstration has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. In a demonstration, a task is accomplished or a project is made. To develop a demonstration:

1. Select a topic.
2. Decide what materials will be needed.
3. Decide what the necessary steps are to accomplish the task.
4. Select a title.
5. Develop an introduction.
6. Develop a conclusion.
7. Prepare a poster.

Example: If the group chose tattooing a rabbit for the demonstration, the title might be, “Which One is Sue?”

The introduction: Several of the rabbits have gotten out of the fair coops! How can I find my rabbit, Sue? I know! I will look on the rabbits’ ears for her tattoo number.

Steps of tattoo demonstration:

1. Explain equipment needed
2. Put rabbit in tattoo box
3. Put correct number in tattoo pliers

Ask the members if they have any ideas for demonstrations. If no one volunteers topics, suggest some, i.e., tattooing a rabbit, grooming a rabbit, building a nest box, rabbit showmanship, etc.

Lead the group through the steps to develop an outline for a demonstration.

Leader Notes

4. Put tattoo in left ear
5. Rub ink into the tattoo mark
6. Clean out the excess ink with petroleum jelly and paper towels
7. Ask if there are any questions

The conclusion: Explain that a tattooed rabbit can be readily identified.

How you deliver your demonstration will help determine how interested your audience remains. First of all, know what you are going to say and do, and have all your equipment and supplies ready. Practice your demonstration ahead of time. Also, speak loudly and clearly, keep eye contact with the audience, and stand straight. Understand the importance of your topic and be able to handle questions.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: How does it feel to stand in front of a group to give a presentation? What is the best way to prepare to perform in front of a group?

Q: When you give a demonstration, you are asking your audience to learn by watching. What are some other ways we learn? Which way of learning is easiest for you? Do all people learn best in the same way? What is something that is easy for you that other people find hard? What is something that is hard for you that other people find easy?

GOING FURTHER:

Attend a demonstration contest and observe.

Hand out activity sheet, “Who Gave Which Demonstrations?” Have members do it at the meeting or take it home and bring it back to next meeting.

Answers:

Ted—Keeping Records

Sonia—Tattooing

Ellie—Grooming

Josh—Building Nest Box

Steve—Trimming Nails

WHO GAVE WHAT?

Activity Sheet

Sometimes you learn by knowing what something is not rather than what it is.

Ted, Sonia, Ellie, Josh, Steve, and Emily are members of a 4-H club. From the following clues, can you tell who gave which demonstrations at the last meeting?

1. Ted and Josh did not bring rabbits to the meeting for their demonstrations.
2. Sonia did **not** bring clippers to use in her demonstration.
3. Steve did **not** have ink on his hands at the end of the meeting, but somebody did.
4. Ellie's rabbit did **not** have freshly trimmed nails at the end of the meeting.
5. Ted did **not** use a hammer or nails in his demonstration.
6. Ellie did **not** know how to tattoo her rabbit until she learned it at the meeting.
7. Emily did **not** see the grooming, nest box building, tattooing, nail trimming, or recordkeeping demonstrations because she missed the meeting.

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4-H 

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