



**outline
for
4-H rabbit
project**



CooperativeExtension

College of Agriculture Washington State University Pullman
In cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture.
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Washington State Cooperative Extension, J. O. Young, Director

A rabbit project is suggested for those boys and girls who do not have adequate facilities for other livestock or garden projects. Rabbits may help supplement the family food supply. If raised for market, success depends on large volume and efficiency.

Objectives

- To gain knowledge and skills in managing and caring for rabbits.
- To learn to select quality rabbits.
- To maintain management records in order that decisions may be made regarding feeding, breeding, and production gains.
- To participate in club activities and grow with the program.

TYPES OF PROJECTS

Meat

Fryers. Young rabbits of either sex weighing 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 lb at 2 months of age. These may be raised for home consumption or for sale.

Roasters and Bakers. A roaster is a young rabbit of either sex weighing 6 lb or more. Bakers are older animals that have served their period of usefulness in the herd. Rabbits in this division should be utilized for their food or salvage value but should not be considered economical to raise.

Breeding Stock

Raising breeding stock for replacement and for sale. Rabbits are shown by breed as: commercial or heavy breeds; fancy or small breeds. Show participation is necessary for sale of show stock. Records of rapid growth are necessary for sale of commercial meat stock.

Pet

For youngsters with extremely limited facilities, a rabbit can be housebroken and treated as a family pet. The youth shall plan to exhibit the rabbit (if purebred) in rabbit shows or fairs. Any well-trained and handled rabbit, purebred or crossbred, may be entered in the 4-H Fitting and Showmanship contests.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

A youth may enroll in the program with only one rabbit but more are desirable. He or she should plan to take good care of the rabbits and provide adequate food, water, housing, and general management.

The youth, if a lone member, should try to find a 4-H club where he or she can meet with other youth and enjoy the full 4-H club program.

The following suggestions are helpful in assisting a boy or girl to have a good time while learning more about the animal world. Most of the youth, with adequate room available, would be encouraged to:

- Start the project with at least two does, either young or mature, and have definite plans for obtaining or utilizing the services of a good buck.
- Raise at least three litters of young rabbits per year as fryers either for home use or sale.
- Raise four rabbits for breeding stock replacement or for sale.
- Keep an accurate record of expenses and receipts of the project.
- Give at least one demonstration during the year before the club or some other group.
- Exhibit at one community, county, or state fair during the year.
- Participate in a Judging or Fitting and Showmanship contest in your community or county.
- Assist the rabbit barn superintendent during the fair or show.
- Enjoy the rabbits and learn as much as possible about them.
- Learn how to cook rabbit stew, fried rabbit, rabbit barbeque.

PROJECT GROWTH

A member should plan to complete rabbit projects for more than one club year if possible and therefore should make definite plans for expansion. The second year's project should at least double the first year minimum requirements. A member should try to improve breeding stock

through selection practices and increase in knowledge about other rabbit project activities, such as fitting and showing, judging, cooking, housing, etc.

GOALS FOR THE 4-H RABBIT PROJECT

Each member should have definite goals in mind when starting a rabbit project. Following are some suggestions:

- Start with good production-bred, disease-free, breeding stock.
- Follow recommended management and feeding practices.
- Demonstrate recommended management practices to other 4-H members and neighbors.
- Raise and market 3-5 litters from each mature doe each year.
- Raise a portion of the family meat supply.
- Expand the project knowledge areas each year.
- Pick a breed and learn all about its history and methods of selection.
- Concentrate on breeding for improved breed or growth characteristics.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEMONSTRATIONS

- How to Judge Rabbits
- How to Fit and Show a Rabbit
- Construction of a Rabbit Hutch
- Construction of a Self-Feeder
- Methods of Handling and Carrying Rabbits
- Selecting Young Does for Breeding Stock
- Cleaning and Disinfecting Equipment
- Construction of a Nest Box

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- Selecting Young Bucks for Future Breeders
- Disposing of Rabbit Manure—Compost Pile
- Killing and Dressing Rabbits
- How to Cut Up Fryers or Stewers
- Serve a Rabbit Barbeque
- Tanning a Rabbit Skin

REFERENCE MATERIALS

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| EM 3809 | <i>Raising Rabbits; Helpful Suggestions for Beginners</i> |
| EM 1771 | <i>Preparing Rabbits for Show</i> |
| EM 3486 | <i>4-H Rabbit Fitting and Showmanship Guide</i> |
| USDA-ARS | <i>Domestic Rabbits; Diseases and Parasites</i> |
| AHN 490 | <i>Commercial Rabbit Raising</i> |
| AH 309 | <i>The Nomenclature Chart of Rabbit</i> |
| C 0055 | <i>Glossary of Rabbit Terms</i> |
| EM 0697 | <i>Rabbit Shipping Crate</i> |
| EM 0599 | <i>Your 4-H Rabbit Project</i> |
| PNW 0163 | <i>Judging Rabbit Pelts</i> |
| EM 4353 | <i>Judging Rabbits</i> |
| EM 4502 | |

Domestic Rabbit Production by George Templeton, Interstate Publishers
Official Guide to Raising Better Rabbits, The American Rabbit Breeders Assn.
Standard of Perfection-Rabbits and Cavies, The American Rabbit Breeders Assn. 1925 South Main, Box 426, Bloomington, IL 61701
Domestic Rabbit Biology and Production, by L. Q. Arlington and Kelley, Univ. Press of Florida, 15 NW 15th St., Gainesville, FL 32603

