WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?

The 4-H rabbit project can provide youth with the opportunity to learn about selection, management, health, marketing and careers in the rabbit industry.

» Learn the basic principles of animal science by owning, caring for and keeping records on one or more rabbits.
» Explore knowledge of sound breeding, feeding and management practices.
» Investigate marketing and project expansion, and discover how you can start a career in the rabbit business.

THE BIG PICTURE

Starting Out:

» Learn the different types of breeds and their characteristics.
» Determine the use of your rabbit projects.
» Develop a rabbit management and care plan.
» Identify rabbit equipment and its uses.
» Locate and name rabbit body parts.
» Learn proper feeding techniques.
» Discover proper rabbit showmanship steps.
» Learn parts of a pedigree.
» Examine rabbit behavior.
» Learn proper breeding management.
» Build a nest box.
» Learn proper rabbit terminology.

Learning More:

» Learn to judge rabbits and give oral reasons.
» Learn the difference between 4-class and 6-class rabbits.
» Explore the different rabbit body types and their functions.
» Design a plan for preparing rabbits for show.
» Learn proper grooming techniques.
» Learn about tattooing rabbits.
» Learn about diseases and environmental concerns.
» Keep records of rabbit expenses and income.
» Identify the characteristics of different coat types.

Expanding Horizons:

» Learn about rabbit breeding programs and genetics.
» Manage your rabbitry.
» Determine pregnancy and palpation techniques.
» Design a rabbitry.
» Identify bones on a skeleton.
» Evaluate rabbit health.
» Complete rabbit pedigree and registration papers.
» Market your rabbits to others.
» Expand your project into other areas.
» Learn the importance of genetics in rabbits.
» Learn the principles of culling.

CURRICULA & RESOURCES

Michigan 4-H Curricula

http://4h.msue.msu.edu/

» Rabbit Fitting and Showing Member’s Guide (4H1268)

National 4-H Curricula

http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/

» Rabbits
  • What’s Hoppening?: Level 1 (08080)
  • Making Tracks: Level 2 (08081)
  • All Ears!: Level 3 (08082)
  • Rabbit Helper’s Guide (08083)

» Rabbits, Rabbits, Rabbits (4H 662) (Check your local Michigan State University [MSU] Extension office for this publication.)

Other Resources

» American Rabbit Breeders Association: http://www.arba.net
» American Satin Rabbit Breeders Association: http://www.asrba.org
FOCUS ON RABBITS

Science

» Explore the parts and function of the rabbit digestive system.
» Monitor the effect of environmental conditions on your rabbits.
» Track genetic traits in your breeding rabbits.

Communication

» Design a poster on the parts of a rabbit.
» Participate in the contests at the Michigan State 4-H Rabbit & Cavy Expo.
» Explain the use of rabbits for meat production.

Citizenship & Leadership

» Volunteer your rabbit for a community petting zoo.
» Hand out food samples at your local grocery store or farmers market.
» Volunteer to help at a local rabbit show.
» Teach others how to handle rabbits safely.
» Lead a rabbit selection and feeding clinic.

Life Skills

» Use critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills to help you make good decisions about project management.
» Keep records on your project expenses and income.
» Practice personal resiliency through successes and challenges in your project.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

» Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for workshops, activities and events.
» Tour a rabbit producer’s farm.
» Attend a rabbit show and observe the judges and their techniques.
» Attend a 4-H rabbit project meeting.
» Design a business card or marketing brochure for your farm.
» Write an educational article about some aspect of rabbit production for your local newspaper.
» Participate in a rabbit skillathon.
» Organize a rabbit showmanship contest.
» Attend a national conference.
» Job shadow a local veterinarian to learn about animal health.
» Learn about the different uses for rabbits.
» Attend the Michigan State 4-H Rabbit Show or the Michigan State 4-H Rabbit & Cavy Expo.
» Show at your county fair.
» Complete a rabbit project record book to track your income, expenses and experiences in your rabbit project.
» Contact your local MSU Extension 4-H staff to be nominated to serve on one of the state 4-H rabbit committees.
» If you are interested in a college education in animal science or veterinary medicine, visit Michigan State University’s website at www.msu.edu to explore those majors.


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