4-H Cat Project

WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?
Cats are a wonderful addition to a family and great companions for anyone living alone. They require minimal care but love attention. The 4-H cat project helps you explore what kind of cat fits into your family’s lifestyle. It will enable you to be an excellent trainer and caretaker of your cat.

» Learn major cat breeds and identify their characteristics.
» Study responsibilities of cat ownership.
» Demonstrate cat care and management in feeding, handling, keeping records, grooming and fitting.
» Learn cat health regulations, first aid and simple treatments for ailments.
» Explore careers related to animal science.

Starting Out:
» Gather information and determine the best cat for your family.
» Learn about the proper care, grooming and feeding of your cat.
» Learn to identify the parts of a cat.
» Create a plan to prevent your cat from getting lost and an emergency plan for if it does get lost.
» Purchase the appropriate grooming equipment and use proper grooming techniques on your cat.
» Practice appropriate training for your cat.
» Learn the various body language signs of your cat’s personality.

Learning More:
» Plan a training and exercise program for your cat.
» Prepare your cat for participation in cat shows.
» Make a decision about breeding or not breeding your cat.
» Compare the labels on cat foods to make an informed decision on content and price.
» Keep a diary of your cat’s health and eating habits.
» Research kennel facilities in your area and decide if one is right for your cat.

Expanding Horizons:
» Create a trainer’s diary to assist you when you work with your cat.
» Create a cat ownership budget plan.
» Help a friend make a decision about owning a cat.
» Research diseases in cats.
» Identify symptoms and a course of action if your cat gets sick.
» Research career options dealing with cats.

THE BIG PICTURE

National 4-H Curricula
http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/
» Cats
  • Purr-fect Pals (08148)
  • Climbing Up (08149)
  • Leaping Forward (08150)
  • Helper’s Guide (08151)

Other Resources
» The Cat Fanciers’ Association: http://www.cfa.org/Shows/AboutCFAShows.aspx
» eXtension: http://www.extension.org/category/cat
» The International Cat Association: http://www.tica.org/member.php
FOCUS ON CATS

Science

» Explore the parts and function of a cat’s digestive system.
» Monitor the effect of environmental conditions on your cat.
» Learn about pack behavior and compare it to your own cat’s behavior.

Communication

Prepare a poster or demonstration on:
» How to approach an unfamiliar cat safely.
» How to prepare a cat for showing.
» How to train a cat for showing.
» How to select a nutritional diet.
» How to select cat species for your family.

Citizenship & Leadership

» Volunteer at an animal shelter.
» Write a letter to your local paper about the importance of having cats spayed or neutered.
» Organize a cat show for your club.
» Develop a plan to foster cats of deploying soldiers.

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.
» Learn about service animals and the process of fostering and training one.
» Job shadow at a local business (pet store, veterinary clinic, breeder or groomer) in a cat-related career that interests you.
» Go to local and area cat shows, and explore the differences in cat breeds and the different ways they are shown.
» Explore health safety issues with cats and the diseases cats have that might make humans ill.
» Explore what kinds of cats make the best pets and what breeds make the best inside or outside pets.
» Learn how local pet stores acquire cats.
» Research all the kinds of parasites your cat might get, and find out how to protect yourself and your cat.
» Do some comparison shopping for cat supplies.
» Explore what kind of restrictions and laws your community might have on cats.
» Explore the uses and benefits of animal-assisted therapy.
» Attend a 4-H cat project meeting.
» Complete a cat project record book to track your income, expenses and experiences with your cat.
» Contact your local MSU Extension 4-H staff to be nominated to serve on the State 4-H Companion Animal Committee.
» If you are interested in a college education in animal science or veterinary medicine, visit MSU’s website at www.msu.edu to explore those majors.

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