4-H Rabbit Project

**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** (4H662) (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.msuedu to explore those majors.


MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Thomas G. Coon, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. The name “4-H” and the emblem consisting of a four-leaf clover with stem and the “H” on each leaflet are protected under Title 18 U.S.C. 707. (4H1609 1P-WEB-12:2011-LP) Produced by ANR Communications.