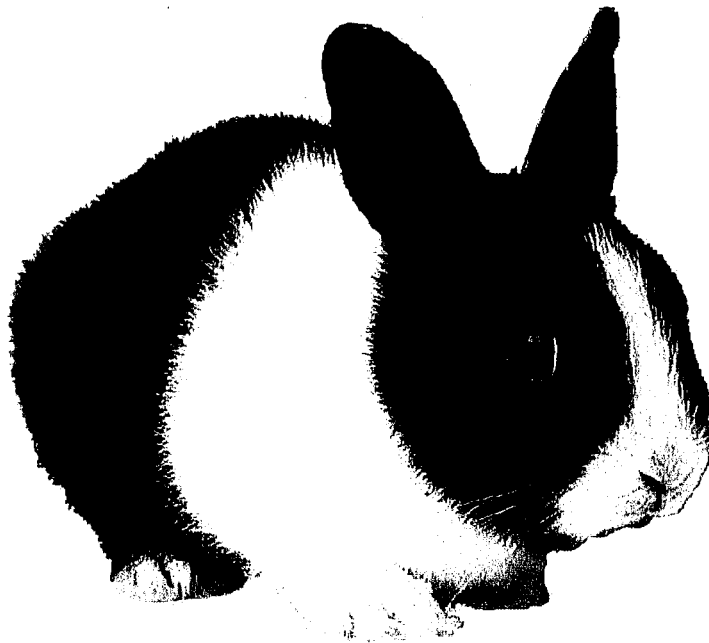
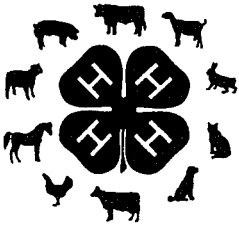


UC  
CE

# Rabbits



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# RABBIT

## SELECTING 4-H RABBIT PROJECT MEETING TOPICS

THOMAS D. ZURCHER  
Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

This project meeting guide is designed to help you and your 4-H project members identify the topics you will explore at your five or more yearly project meetings. Following each activity is a (1), (2), or (3) to give you an indication of the degree of experience it will usually require for a 4-H'er to be able to demonstrate this skill to others. The higher the number the more experience needed. If your learn-by-doing activities can be sequenced so your members may build on what they already know, a better learning experience will result. You will find a line preceding each topic for you to write in the date of the meeting at which your members will explore that particular topic. Check with your extension agent for the availability of project meeting guides for the topics you and your members choose.

The project meeting guide "Planning The Project Group's Yearly Program" will help your group get off to a good start.

- \_\_\_ Recognizing Abnormalities & Faults in Rabbits
- \_\_\_ Conducting A Judging Contest (3)
- \_\_\_ Selecting A Judging Class (3)
- \_\_\_ Judging A Judging Class (1)
- \_\_\_ Presenting Oral Reasons (2)
- \_\_\_ Scoring A Judging Class (2)

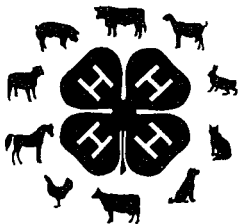
### Management Practices

- \_\_\_ Making A Rabbit Nest Box (1)
- \_\_\_ Selecting Rabbit Equipment (1)
- \_\_\_ Designing A Rabbitry (2)
- \_\_\_ Making A Rabbit Carrying Box (2)
- \_\_\_ Making A Rabbit Tattoo Box (2)
- \_\_\_ Making A Rabbit Wire Hutch (2)
- \_\_\_ Calendarizing Rabbit Management Practices (3)
- \_\_\_ Setting Goals For Profitable Production (3)

### Selection & Judging

- \_\_\_ Identifying Breeds Of Rabbits (1)
- \_\_\_ Identifying Parts Of Rabbits (1)
- \_\_\_ Selecting Your Project Rabbit (1)
- \_\_\_ Constructing The Ideal Rabbit (2)
- \_\_\_ Identifying Uses Of Rabbits (1)
- \_\_\_ Determining A Rabbit's Finish (1)
- \_\_\_ Identifying Rabbit Disqualifications (1)
- \_\_\_ Identifying Types Of Rabbit Fur (1)
- \_\_\_ Talking Like A Rabbit Judge (2)
- \_\_\_ Judging Rabbit Pelts (3)
- \_\_\_ Judging Rabbit Carcasses (3)





# RABBIT

## IDENTIFYING BREEDS OF RABBITS

G. LEE RAETH  
County Extension Agent

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

The choice of a breed of rabbit will be determined largely by whether they are to be raised for fur, show, meat, or solely as pets. It is quite easy to become confused by the more than 30 recognized breeds and even more color varieties that are listed by the American Rabbit Breeders Association. With a little understanding of the most common breeds and their individual merits, project members can more confidently select a breed of rabbit to raise that is appropriate for the purpose they have determined.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

As a result of participating in the activities outlined in this project meeting guide:

1. Each 4-H member will identify and briefly describe at least ten different breeds of rabbits.
2. Each 4-H member will make a decision regarding selecting a breed of rabbit and express that decision verbally to the group.

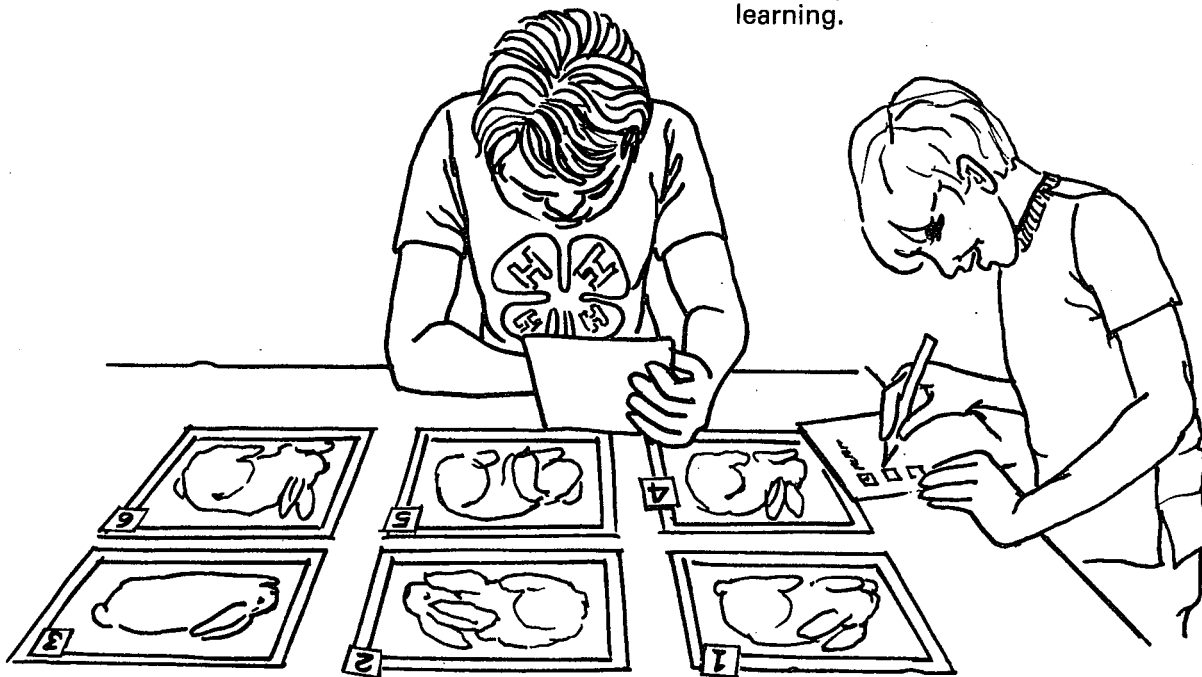
### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

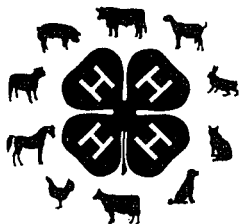
The 20-30 minutes activities listed will require a minimum of advance preparation. Many of the needed materials can be made by the members as they are needed. Be sure each project member has a 4-H rabbit project bulletin and reads the chapter on breeds prior to the activities.

Depending on the activity you will want to have available pictures of rabbit breeds with a short description (such as those included in the 4-H Rabbit Project Bulletin), a reference book on rabbit breeds (available from a library), T-pins, 12 x 24 inch piece of cardboard, or other material suitable such as a bulletin board, and a live rabbit if available.

### FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

More excitement is created in learning when youth are involved in doing rather than just listening or watching. The learn-by-doing concept is one under which 4-H was founded. The more realistic the activity the more interest you will be able to arouse in the project members. Involve the project members in planning what they would like to learn and in coming up with ideas of places to visit or tour to reinforce what they are learning.





# RABBIT

## DETERMINING THE SEX OF A RABBIT

WAYNE & MARILYN SWANSON  
4-H Project Leaders  
THOMAS D. ZURCHER  
Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

4-H'ers should be able to determine the sex of their rabbits for several reasons:

- to put the rabbit in the proper class at the fair
- to separate the rabbits so unplanned matings do not occur
- to be able to sell the rabbits people want to purchase

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By participating in the learn-by-doing activities described in this guide your members will be able to:

1. Further develop the important life skills of examining closely, utilizing knowledge, and making decisions.
2. Demonstrate how to hold the rabbit properly to determine its sex.
3. Demonstrate how to determine the rabbit's sex at four to six weeks.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

This activity requires only rabbits of different sexes for each team and the 4-H Rabbit Project Manual. The stuffed rabbit made utilizing the University of Minnesota 4-H Rabbit Pattern is designed to be utilized for portions of this activity.

### FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

Before the 4-H'ers are told or shown how to determine the sex have them divide into teams of two or three and see if they can figure this out for themselves. In other words, let them discover for themselves what they need to know to do the task. The importance of this may be summed up this way:

I Hear : I Forget  
I See : I Remember  
I Do : I Understand

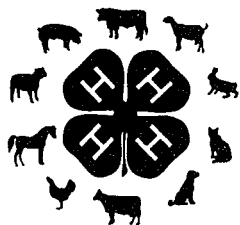
Sometimes simply giving them a realistic situation and task to do will get them started.

For example:

**SITUATION:** A potential buyer is coming over to look at your rabbits and he is interested in purchasing two does. At this point you do not know what you have in your last litter.

**YOUR TASK:** Demonstrate how you'll determine the sex of the rabbits in the litter.





# RABBIT

## TRIMMING A RABBIT'S NAILS

WAYNE & MARILYN SWANSON  
4-H Rabbit Project Leaders  
THOMAS D. ZURCHER  
Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

This is an excellent learn-by-doing activity. Members will learn how to trim long nails to avoid injury to the rabbit and possibly to the showperson.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH:

This activity will allow the members to:

1. Practice developing the life skills of decision making, team building, and teaching others.
2. Demonstrate how to examine the nails of a rabbit.
3. Demonstrate how to trim the nails of a rabbit.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

A little time spent preparing will often have your members leaving the meeting saying, "Guess what my team figured out how to do today? It was really fun. I can't wait to check the nails of my rabbit".

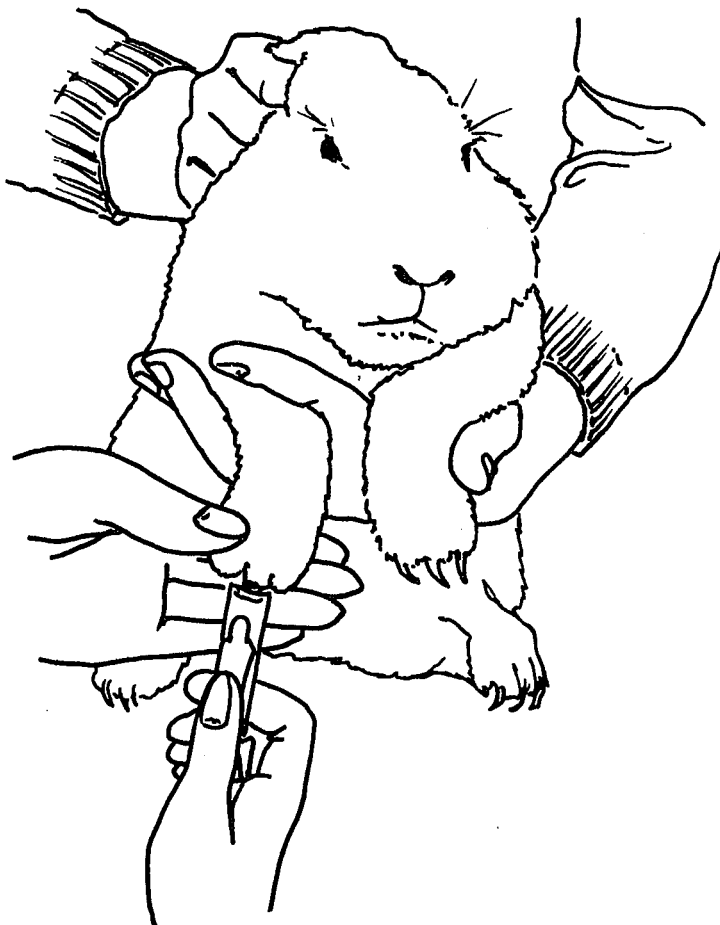
**Supplies Needed:** Rabbits with long nails or a model rabbit with velcroed long nails, such as the one made from the University of Minnesota 4-H Rabbit Pattern, and a nail trimmer (ordinary finger nail clippers or dog nail clippers work well.)

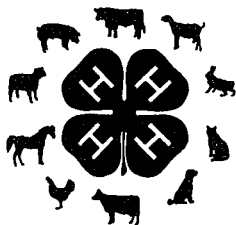
### LEARN-BY-DOING ACTIVITY

Divide the group into teams of two or three members each. Provide them with a rabbit and a nail trimmer. Give them a situation and task to do. Stand back and observe. Follow-up with questions to those that are stuck.

**SITUATION:** You notice one of your favorite does has very long nails.

**YOUR TASK:** Demonstrate to the group how you would trim the nails to the proper length.





# RABBIT

## TATTOOING A RABBIT

ROSIE HOLINKA & MARILYN SCHLAPKOHL  
4-H Rabbit Project Leaders

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Learning to tattoo the project rabbit is an important and necessary management skill. All animals which are shown or are registered in the ARBA registration system must be tattooed. This practice also provides positive identification for the purposes of record-keeping and protection against theft.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By participating in the learn-by-doing activities included in this project meeting guide the 4-H members (and parents) will:

1. Develop their life skills of working together as a group, presenting a demonstration, and gaining self-confidence.
2. Demonstrate the steps required to tattoo a rabbit.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

Involve your 4-H members as much as possible in the preparation. The more involved they are the more interest and enthusiasm they will bring to the activity.

**Supplies needed:** Metal, 1/4" size needle, tongs or pliers, India or tattoo ink, vaseline, small stiff bristle paint brush, pencil, tissues, a towel or tattoo box, pieces of leather, chamois, or cardboard, a rabbit, and a carpeted high table 36". The stuffed rabbit made from the University of Minnesota 4-H Rabbit Pattern works well as a training aid for this activity.

**Time required:** Allow 20-30 minutes for the activity.

**Resources:** Several rabbit books have good information on tattooing. A 4-H slide set available from the University of Minnesota Extension Library is also an excellent resource.

### FACILITATE THE MEETING

Your role as a 4-H leader is to help your members discover for themselves how to tattoo rabbits before telling or showing them how. Often by dividing members into teams of 2 or 3 and providing them with supplies and a realistic situation and a task to do they

will want to jump in and attempt the activity. Reinforce their successes with praise and ask them questions to help them discover how to do what they don't know. Here is an example of how this might work:

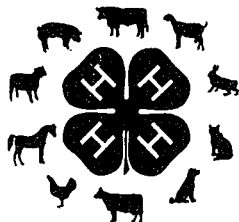
**SITUATION:** You are going to show your rabbit at this year's fair. One of the rules is that all rabbits must be tattooed in order to be eligible to show.

**Your Team's Task:** Demonstrate how you would tattoo your rabbits.

Even if some of your members have no idea what to do, first step back and give them a few minutes to work on the task. Then help them along by asking them questions and answering their questions with questions. Work to make the answers theirs if at all possible.

When members are first learning you will find that using leather, chamois, or cardboard instead of a live ear will be better for all concerned.





# RABBIT

## WEANING A RABBIT

ROSIE HOLINKA, MARILYN SCHLAPKOHL,  
LAURINE SOMERS  
4-H Rabbit Project Leaders

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

4-H'ers who raise rabbits must perform many important management practices when the time comes to wean the litter. In order to be successful the member should know when to wean; how to determine the sex of the rabbits; how to tattoo; and how to make selections for show, breeding, meat, or pet purposes.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

As a result of participating in the activities outlined in the project guide each 4-H'er will be able to:

1. Determine their best rabbits in the litter.
2. Further develop the important life skills of examining closely, utilizing knowledge, and making decisions.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

There should be a supply of the following materials for the 4-H'ers to discuss and study. Judging sheets, ARBA Standards of Perfection, and three or more live rabbits. You may want to ask your 4-H'ers to study the parts of the animal, and disqualifications/eliminations sheet before your meeting so they come prepared.

For the activity provide a rug for the table.

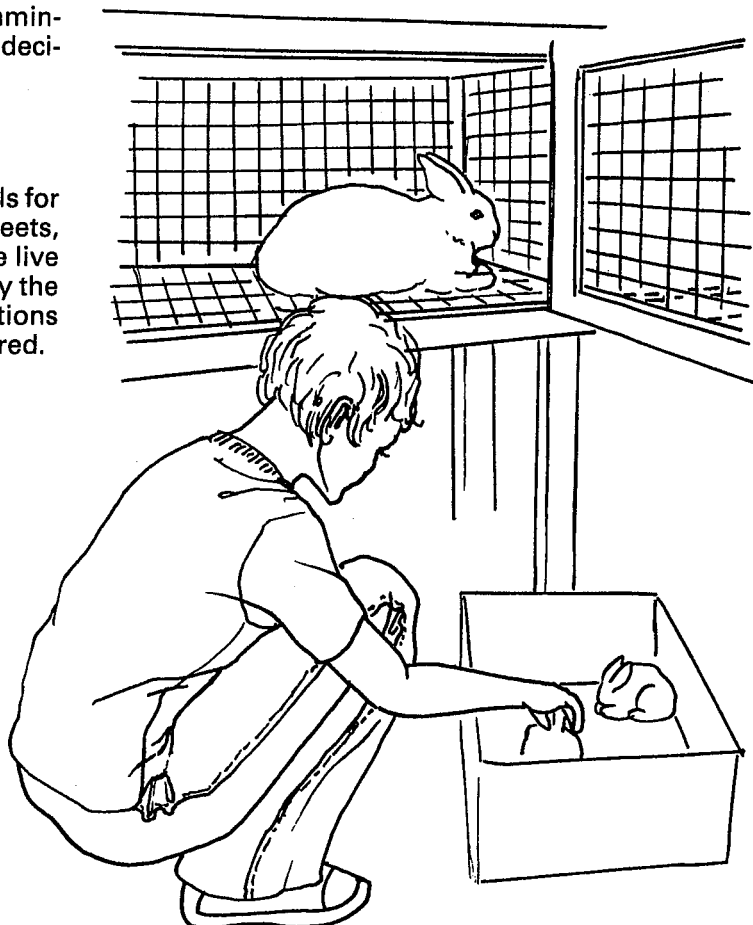
### FACILITATE THE MEETING

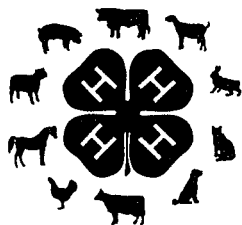
Divide your group into 2 or 3 teams. Begin by presenting to them verbally or on a card a situation and task such as follows:

**SITUATION:** Your rabbits fight and torment their mother. You decide to wean the litter.

**YOUR TASK:** Demonstrate the steps you would take in weaning the litter.

After giving each team the task to do step back and allow them time to work out a short demonstration. As





# RABBIT

## DETERMINING PREGNANCY IN RABBITS

G. LEE RAETH  
4-H Extension Agent

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

An accurate method of determining pregnancy is important in managing a rabbit breeding herd. Valuable time can be lost in the breeding schedule if does are assumed to be pregnant when in reality they are not. A number of methods have been advocated to determine whether a doe has conceived. Probably the most unreliable test is to examine the doe for a gain in flesh and swelling of the abdominal area. A second method, test mating, is also unreliable. Pregnant does may accept a buck, or open does may refuse the buck. The third method, palpation, is the only reliable method to diagnose pregnancy. With practice this can be done as early as 10 days after breeding.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

As a result of participating in the activities outlined in this project meeting guide, members will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how to hold a rabbit properly to palpate for pregnancy.
2. Demonstrate how to palpate a doe to determine if she is pregnant.
3. Make decisions whether to rebreed a doe or not, by using the knowledge they have acquired.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

This activity requires a minimum of six female rabbits for the group's use. The stuffed rabbit made using the University of Minnesota 4-H Rabbit Pattern is designed to be used for portions of this activity.

Some advance planning is necessary. From the group of does you plan to use for the project session, leave one-third of them unbred. Breed one-third of them 19-21 days prior to the meeting, and the remainder 12-14 days prior to the meeting.

### FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

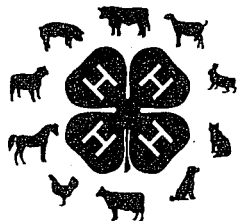
Before you demonstrate to your project members how to check for pregnancy, divide them into groups of two to three members and let them try to decide for themselves how to do it. More excitement is created in learning when youth are involved in doing, rather than just listening or watching. The learn-by-doing concept is one under which 4-H was founded. Next, demonstrate the proper way to hold and palpate a doe using a live rabbit, or the model. Have them practice using the model if it is available.

When the 4-H'ers feel comfortable with the procedure, have each group palpate the rabbits for pregnancy. Remember, some of these rabbits are bred, others are not. Some of those that are bred are close to kindling. Do not tell the project members which ones were or were not bred. Have them record which ones they decide are pregnant. Be sure they are aware, however, that all the does were not bred on the same date.

Plan your next meeting to be held in approximately three weeks. Have the members observe which does did kindle. Compare that with what they had recorded at the time of palpation. Once again discuss the palpation process and their observations concerning it.







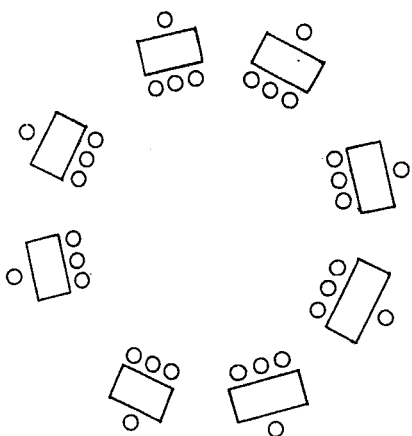
# RABBIT

## CONDUCTING A 4-H RABBIT SKILLATHON

THOMAS D. ZURCHER  
Extension 4-H Specialist

### WHAT IS A 4-H SKILLATHON?

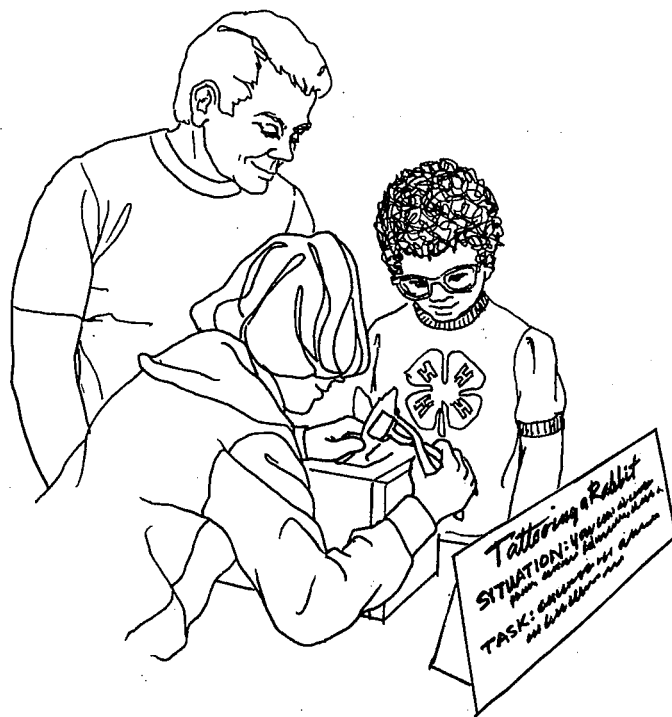
A skillathon is an excellent method of involving your 4-H'ers and their parents in challenging, noncompetitive, learn-by-doing activities. This method of helping 4-H'ers develop both their life skills and project skills is designed as a series of mini-learning stations with a facilitator at each one (see illustration below). The participants rotate from station to station, attempting to perform the specific tasks given at each station. The station facilitator allows all team members to test their own knowledge and abilities before giving them any hints. This technique is referred to in 4-H as experiential learning or learning by doing before being told or shown how.



A skillathon works well not only during project meetings, but also at the 4-H community club. It is an excellent way to involve several project groups in the program at once. By asking various project groups to set up one or two learn-by-doing stations, the entire club can be actively involved at once. In addition, you can use a skillathon to give recognition to the project groups and their leaders.

The skillathon approach has also been successfully used to strengthen the educational value of county and state fairs. Both adults and youths enjoy the challenge posed by situation and task.

This project meeting guide briefly outlines how to set up and conduct a 4-H rabbit skillathon. Included are a checklist for the planning committee, advice for the facilitator, and suggested supplies, situations, and tasks for each station.



### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By participating in a skillathon your 4-H'ers will accomplish the following:

1. Given a situation and a task, they will be able to evaluate their abilities to solve the challenge presented and discover for themselves what they need to know to do the activity.
2. They will learn to work as members of a team.
3. They will practice making decisions and speaking before others.
4. They will receive recognition and praise for their efforts.

### CHECKLIST FOR THE SKILLATHON COMMITTEE

- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide on the stations wanted, considering time and resources available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make up a realistic situation and task for each station.

## 2. Identifying Parts of Rabbits

**SUPPLIES:** Minnesota Rabbit Parts Chart, parts T-pins, sponge for pins, cardboard for chart.

**DIRECTIONS:** Provide pins with parts names on them for the teams to match with the numbers on the chart. Let them check their answers.

**SITUATION:** You are preparing for the rabbit showmanship and judging contest.

**TASK:** Match the names with the parts.

## 3. Determining a Rabbit's Finish

**SUPPLIES:** Two rabbits with different finishes.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let teams demonstrate how to solve the task. Follow-up with questions.

**SITUATION:** You want to select your most desirably finished market rabbit.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to determine different finishes of rabbits.

## 4. Talking Like a Rabbit Judge

**SUPPLIES:** Cards listing 50 different terms and 50 different descriptions or pictures.

**DIRECTIONS:** Ask team members to match the terms with the descriptions and then check their answers and practice using the terms in conversation with one another.

**SITUATION:** You have been asked to be the official judge at the local fair.

**TASK:** Match the terms with the descriptions or pictures.

## 5. Identifying Rabbit Disqualifications

**SUPPLIES:** Minnesota 4-H model rabbit and disqualification pieces.

**DIRECTIONS:** Have the team attach disqualifications to the rabbit or name as many as they can. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** A rabbit may be disqualified for several reasons.

**TASK:** Point out and give a reason for each disqualification.

## 6. Judging a Rabbit Class

**SUPPLIES:** 2 to 4 easily placed rabbits, oral reasons notecards.

**DIRECTIONS:** Allow the team to judge the rabbits and determine the cuts between the pairs. Ask questions concerning the class.

**SITUATION:** You have 4 rabbits to judge.

**TASK:** Judge and place the rabbits.

## 7. Presenting Oral Reasons

**SUPPLIES:** 50 oral reasons notecards.

**DIRECTIONS:** Refer to information on the oral reasons notecard in the kit. Provide each team member with a notecard and assist as needed. Let each one give a complete or partial set of reasons.

**SITUATION:** The parents and members of the 4-H project group are interested in why you placed the class as you did.

**TASK:** Using the 4-H oral reasons notecard as a guide, present your reasons.

## 8. Scoring a Judging Class

**SUPPLIES:** Hormel computing slide, paper, and pencils for scoring judging contests.

**DIRECTIONS:** Provide teams with the official placings, cuts, and project meeting guide to figure their scores. Wait. If they are still completely confused after a few minutes, walk them through an example using the six steps. Let them check their score with the Hormel computing slide.

**SITUATION:** An expert rabbit judge also judged the class of rabbits and presented placings and cuts.

**TASK:** Using the expert's decision as the "official" placing, figure your score for the class.

## 9. Identifying Feed Ingredients

**SUPPLIES:** Packet of 9 to 12 feed ingredients, chips with ingredient and human food names, paper plates with the words PROTEIN, ENERGY, WATER, VITAMINS, and MINERALS written on them.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let the teams match the chips to the ingredients. Then have the place all chips on the plate specifying its nutrient category. Ask questions and discuss.

**SITUATION:** Several feed ingredients are available to feed your animal.

**TASK:** Identify and classify the various ingredients.

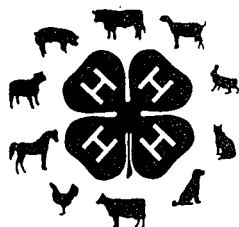
## 10. Understanding a Feed Tag

**SUPPLIES:** Feed tags.

**DIRECTIONS:** Provide the team with feed tags and let them explain what they read. Ask questions and discuss. Refer to the project meeting guide.

**SITUATION:** A feed store customer asks your help in understanding a feed tag.

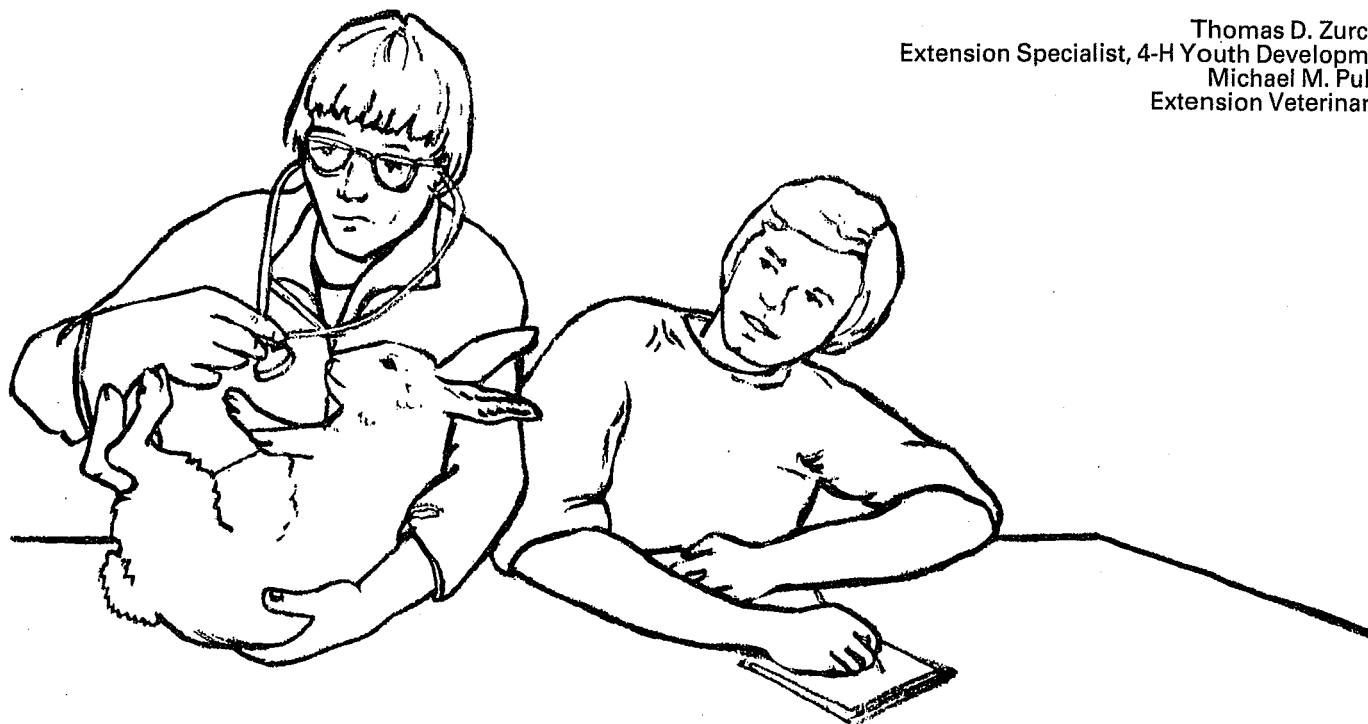
**TASK:** Explain to the customer what information the tag contains and tell how this helps in choosing a feed for a flock or herd.



# RABBIT

## RECOGNIZING THE NORMAL RABBIT

Thomas D. Zurcher  
Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development  
Michael M. Pullen  
Extension Veterinarian



### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Rabbit project members who can recognize the characteristics of a normal healthy rabbit will more readily be able to identify changes when they occur. This is an excellent activity for younger members who are just beginning the 4-H rabbit project.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ers WILL ACCOMPLISH

1. Describe five or more characteristics of a healthy rabbit.
2. Examine a rabbit and closely observe its movements.
3. Develop the life skills of observation, recording information and working together as a team.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

**Animals and supplies:** At least one rabbit to examine, a rectal thermometer and Vaseline, and an 8½ × 11 observation chart. Charts can either be made up ahead of time or by the 4-H'ers at the meeting. Rulers and pencils will be needed.

### INVOLVING THE MEMBERS

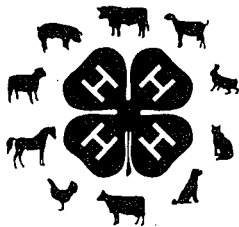
The activity described is primarily designed to have the 4-H'ers work together in groups of 2 or 3 to identify the normal characteristics of a rabbit. To start the meeting, simply have the members each think of one characteristic which they feel is normal about their rabbit and share it with the group. With this introduction ask each team to fill out the first column of the observation chart. Have the teams compare and discuss their observations. Follow up with questions. If time permits a second animal may be examined with discussion of what might be abnormal characteristics.

### FOLLOW UP TO THE MEETING

Ask each 4-H'er to take a chart home and record his or her observations, one time each week for three weeks and report back at the next meeting.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Q. What attitudes or behaviors might be observed?
- A. A rabbit is normally quite gentle, content, and unexcitable. Sometimes crabbiness or stomping, may occur.



# RABBIT

## PREPARING FOR RABBIT SHOWMANSHIP

Suzan Liddell  
4-H Project Leader  
Thomas D. Zurcher  
Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

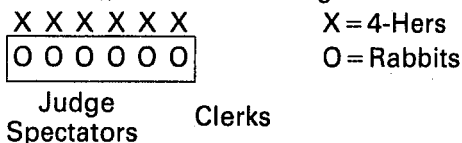
Rabbit showmanship provides 4-H members with an opportunity and incentive to show others the skills they have developed in selecting, breeding, conditioning, handling, managing, and evaluating their rabbits while they gain valuable experience presenting their rabbits to best advantage to a judge.

### WHAT YOUR 4-H'ers WILL ACCOMPLISH

1. Further develop self confidence, the ability to express themselves, and good sportsmanship.
2. Practice preparing themselves and their rabbits for a showmanship event.

### PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

This guide has been developed to help you involve your members in a learn-by-doing activity as well as prepare them for what will take place in an actual contest. The only supplies needed will be one or more tables covered with a rug or burlap material (figure 1 1/2 linear feet per 4-H'er), rabbits and this guide.



Additional resources and ideas for project meetings which reinforce this activity are listed at the end of this guide.

### INVOLVING THE MEMBERS

Your members will enjoy the opportunity to show you what they know prior to watching someone else or being told how. With one of the members serving as judge and the other members working in teams of two, conduct a short contest. The judge should ask the 4-H'ers to do something with the rabbit and one of the team members attempts the exercise while the other team member assists. Team members should trade off. You and your junior leaders will want to coach those teams having difficulty. The pictures and suggestions in this guide may also help your members.



The judge should ask the members to demonstrate how they would perform each routine listed in the Routine Examinations part of the Showmanship Hints section of this guide.

After everyone has had an opportunity to attempt each exercise, ask each team to demonstrate one of their choice. Follow up with questions.

### SHOWING PROCEDURE

As your members develop greater expertise the following fair procedure should be practiced:

—Judging begins the moment a class is called. At that time 4-H'ers remove their rabbits from their carrier or hutch, correctly carry the rabbits to the table and set them in proper pose.



—When all rabbits are positioned, the judge will examine each rabbit one at a time.



—During this examination, the judge may ask the 4-H'er basic questions about the breed of rabbit, its age, etc.



—Once examinations are completed, the judge asks the exhibitors to perform routine maneuvers such as checking for a cold, broken teeth, and abscess.



—To further identify the top placements the judge may ask members to name parts, define terms, identify breeds, handle other rabbits, and discuss diseases and other management practices.



—When the judge is satisfied with the final placement, oral reasons are given to each class before being dismissed.



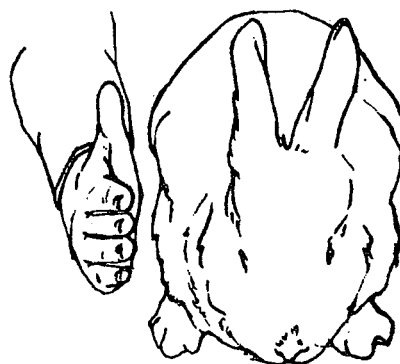
**Tooth Defects**—Push the lips back to show teeth. Note position of the rear feet and legs. (figure 5)

**Wry Tail**—Turn rabbit with rear facing judge. Pull tail straight up, release and show to judge. (figure 6)

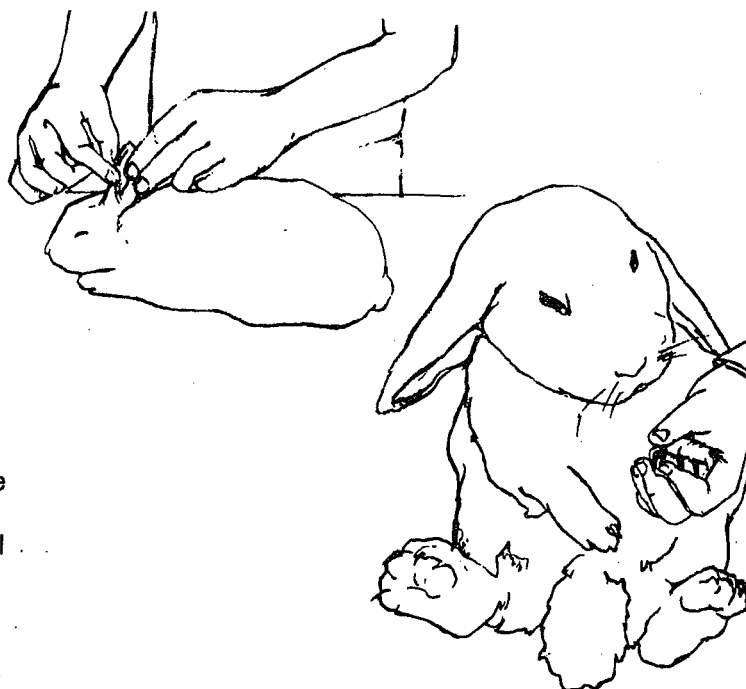


**Cold**—Check nose and eyes for watery discharge; inside of front feet for wet fur or dry matter.

**Snuffles**—Check nose, eyes, and front feet as for a cold. In addition listen to nasal and chest cavities for wheezing sounds. Snuffles discharge tends to be a thick, yellowish matter.

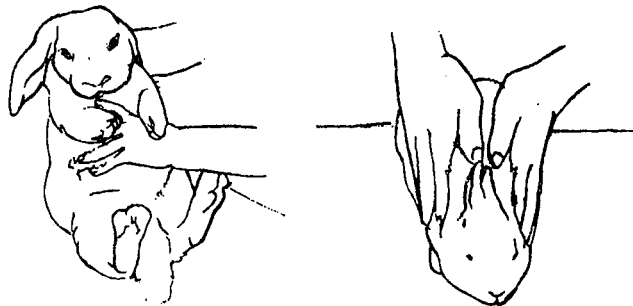


**Blindness**—Use a quick hand flick to see if rabbit blinks. Also look into both eyes to check for any visible defects such as cloudiness.

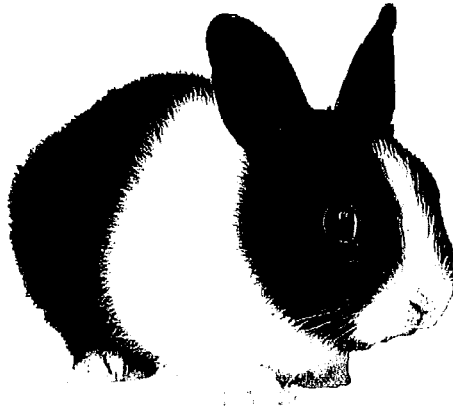


**Ear Canker or Mites**—Check both ears so judge can see deep into ears by pivoting first to one side then the other.

**Toenails**—Push thumb into center of foot pad and hold back fur if necessary with finger.

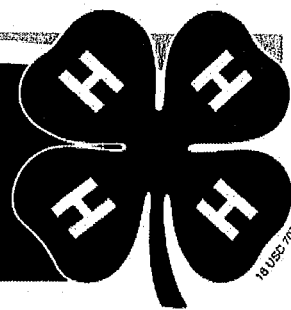


**Ruptures, Tumors, Abscesses**—Ruptures occur only on the underneath side of a rabbit. Check carefully from head to tail as on the left. Tumors and abscesses can occur anywhere on a rabbit, so check the top of the rabbit, too, from head to tail.

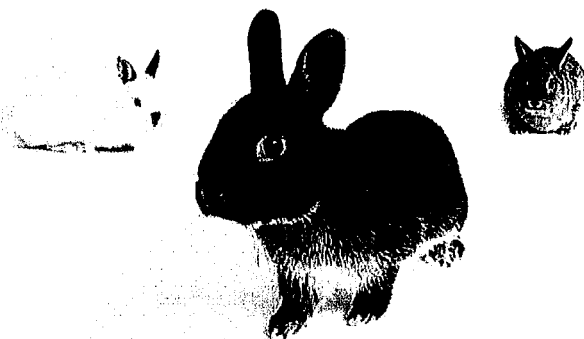


***This We Believe:***

- The boy and girl are more important than the projects.
- The member should be their own best product.
- No award is worth sacrificing the reputation of a member or leader.
- Competition is a natural human trait and should be recognized as such. It should be given no more emphasis than other fundamentals.
- Learning how to do the project is more important than the project itself.
- Many things are caught rather than taught.
- A blue ribbon member with a red ribbon project is more desirable than a red ribbon member with a blue ribbon project.
- To learn by doing is fundamental in any sound educational program.
- Generally speaking, there is more than one good way of doing most things.
- Every member needs to be noticed, to feel important, to win, and to be praised.
- Our job is to teach members *how* to think, not what to think.



# 4-H RABBIT PROJECT



## 4-H THRIVE

### Help Youth:

#### Light Their Spark

A spark is something youth are passionate about; it really fires them up and gives them joy and energy. Help youth explore what they love about animals.

#### Flex Their Brain

The brain grows stronger when we try new things and master new skills. Encourage youth effort and persistence to help them reach higher levels of success.

#### Reach Their Goals

Help youth use the GPS system to achieve their goals.

**Goal Selection:** Choose one meaningful, realistic and demanding goal.

**Pursue Strategies:** Create a step-by-step plan to make daily choices that support your goal.

**Shift Gears:** Change strategies if you're having difficulties reaching your goal. Seek help from others. What are youth going to do when things get in their way?

#### Reflect

Ask project members how taking care of an animal can make them more confident, competent and caring. Discuss ways they can use their skills to make a contribution in the community, improve their character, or establish connections.

In the rabbit project, youth can learn about selecting and raising a rabbit. Youth learn about the breeds, characteristics, and sound care and management practices.

- Learn the basic principles of animal science by owning, caring for, and keeping records on rabbits.
- Explore knowledge of sound breeding, feeding, and management practices.
- Investigate marketing, project expansion, and how you can start a career in the rabbit business. Learn how to market the animals and products for breeding, fur, meat or pets.

### Starting Out *Beginner*

- Gather information and determine the best rabbit for your family.
- Determine the purpose of your rabbit projects.
- Develop a rabbit care management plan.
- Identify rabbit equipment and their uses.
- Locate and name parts of a rabbit.
- Learn proper feeding.
- Learn proper grooming. Discover proper rabbit showmanship steps.

### Learning More *Intermediate*

- Learn the different types of breeds and their ideal weight.
- Learn and explain judging criteria for rabbit health.
- Learn the difference between class 4 and 6 rabbits.
- Explore the different rabbit body types and their functions.
- Design a plan for preparing rabbits for show.
- Practice or learn how to tattoo rabbits.
- Learn about diseases and environmental concerns.

### Exploring Depth *Advanced*

- Learn about rabbit breeding programs and genetics.
- Design a rabbitary.
- Manage your rabbitary.
- Learn palpation techniques to determine pregnancy.
- Identify bones on a skeleton.
- Evaluate rabbit health.
- Complete rabbit pedigrees and registration papers.
- Market your rabbits to others.

The activities above are ideas to inspire further project development. This is not a complete list.

*Light Your Spark*

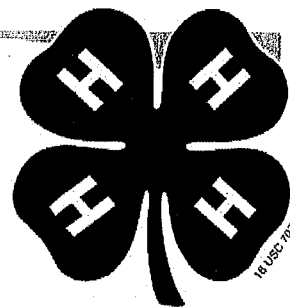
*Flex Your Brain*

*Reach Your Goals*

*Light Your Spark*

*Flex Your Brain*

*Reach Your Goals*



# Expand Your Experiences!

## Science, Engineering, and Technology

- Research the nutritional needs of rabbits and compare to nutritional needs of other animals.
- Explore the need for bio-security measures when handling animals. Create a list of recommendations for competitive rabbit events.
- Design and test various habitats to find the one that works best for your rabbit.

## Healthy Living

- Discuss the necessity of washing your hands before and after handling your rabbit.
- Discuss your rabbit's life expectancy, what to look for when they get older.
- Create a display or skit on rules for rabbit safety.

## Citizenship

- Use the confidence obtained through shows and expos in all aspects of life.
- Use your animal as therapy for sick and disadvantaged individuals.
- Create a presentation or book on the origin of the "lucky rabbit foot." Present to a group.

## Leadership

- Become a role model for others by taking the position of junior/teen leader in your project.
- Recruit younger youth into a 4-H rabbit project.

## Resources

- Iowa 4-H Pets  
[www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/projects/livestock/pets.htm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/projects/livestock/pets.htm).
- Service Animal  
[//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service\\_animal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_animal).
- Animal Assisted Therapy  
[//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal-assisted\\_therapy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal-assisted_therapy).
- Healthy pets  
[www.cdc.gov/healthypets](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets)  
[//vetmed.illinois.edu/pet\\_columns](http://vetmed.illinois.edu/pet_columns)  
[www.avma.org/firstaid/procedures.asp](http://www.avma.org/firstaid/procedures.asp)
- American Red Cross Pet First Aid/ CPR  
[www.redcross.org/pets](http://www.redcross.org/pets)
- California State Fair  
[www.bigfun.org](http://www.bigfun.org)
- American Rabbit Breeders Association  
[www.arba.net](http://www.arba.net)

The UC 4-H Youth Development Program does not endorse, warrant, or otherwise take responsibility for the contents of unofficial sites.

Connections & Events	Curriculum	4-H Record Book
<p><b>Presentation Days</b> – Share what you've learned with others through a rabbit presentation.</p> <p><b>Field Days</b> – During these events, 4-H members may participate in a variety of contests related to their project area.</p> <p><b>County &amp; State Fair</b> – Enter your rabbit(s) and show the judge what you have learned in showmanship! Contact your county 4-H office to determine additional opportunities available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's Happening, Level 1 ((4H 663A))</li> <li>• Making Tracks, Level 2 ((4H 663B))</li> <li>• All Ears, Level 3 ((4H 663C))</li> <li>• Rabbit Leader Guide ((4H 663 HDR))</li> </ul> <p>Available from <a href="http://www.4-h.org/4-h/record-books">www.4-h.org/4-h/record-books</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rabbits, Rabbits, Rabbits ((4H 662))</li> <li>• ARBA Standard of Perfection</li> <li>• Learning Lab Kit: Rabbit</li> </ul>	<p>4-H Record Books give members an opportunity to record events and reflect on their experiences. For each project, members document their personal experiences, learning, and development.</p> <p>4-H Record Books also teach members record management skills and encourage them to set goals and develop a plan to meet those goals.</p> <p>To access the 4-H Record Book online, visit <a href="http://www.4-h.org/record-books">www.4-h.org/record-books</a>.</p>



University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

Light Your Spark

Flex Your Brain

Reach Your Goals

Light Your Spark

Flex Your Brain

Reach Your Goals



# RABBITS

## *Sonoma County 4-H*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Guidelines for Project Proficiency Award

#### Beginner:

	<u>Date Completed</u>	<u>Leader's Initials</u>
1. Identify and describe three breeds of domestic rabbits.	_____	_____
2. Name, point out, and spell the following parts of a rabbit: Hindquarters, loin, saddle, shoulder, belly, chest, dewlap, and hock.	_____	_____
1. Demonstrate (show and tell) how to lift, hold and carry a rabbit.	_____	_____
2. Describe a good type of hutch and the equipment that a beginner should have.	_____	_____
3. Explain what feeds are important for rabbits	_____	_____
4. Know the standard weights for your breed of rabbit.	_____	_____
5. Demonstrate how to tell the sex of a young rabbit.	_____	_____
6. Explain the tattoo of a rabbit.	_____	_____
7. Explain why the doe should be taken to the buck's hutch for breeding, give at least two reasons.	_____	_____
8. Prepare a nest for a doe and put it in a hutch at the right time before kindling.	_____	_____
9. Submit management records covering a minimum of 90 days or more in providing fresh water; clean feed, clean hutch, financial records, and general care of your rabbit.	_____	_____
10. Be familiar with rabbit showmanship techniques.	_____	_____
11. Name and describe six breeds of domestic rabbits.	_____	_____
12. Give one or more examples each of rabbits used for meat, fur, fancy, and laboratory purposes.	_____	_____
13. Describe desirable characteristics of meat type rabbits; hindquarters, loin, saddle and shoulders.	_____	_____
14. Tattoo a rabbit.	_____	_____
15. Give a demonstration at County Presentation Day.	_____	_____

Project Leader's Signature of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Leader's Signature of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# RABBITS

## *Sonoma County 4-H*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Guidelines for Project Proficiency Award

#### Intermediate:

<u>Date</u> <u>Completed</u>	<u>Leader's</u> <u>Initials</u>
---------------------------------	------------------------------------

- |   |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|
| 1. Prepare a nest for a doe and put it in a hutch at the right time before kindling.  | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Submit management records covering a minimum of 90 days or more in providing fresh water, clean feed, clean hutch, financial records, and general care of your rabbit. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Describe or demonstrate what you might do for the protection of your rabbit during hot weather and during cold weather.  | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Describe and give control measures for at least three diseases or problem conditions of rabbits, such as ear canker, sore hock, diarrhea, or vent disease.             | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Visit an approved rabbitry and learn how rabbits are housed, fed, watered and bred; how the young are cared for; and how the rabbits are marketed.                     | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Keep a doe production and breeding record for 90 days minimum. Give a report on it   | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Make out a pedigree for one of your rabbits.   | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Invite and introduce a guest speaker at one of your club meetings.   | _____ | _____ |
| 9. For example: a local producer, butcher, farm advisor, feed dealer, or a housewife who cooks and serves rabbit.   | _____ | _____ |
| 10. Help butcher a rabbit and demonstrate how rabbits are cut up.   | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Cook and help eat a rabbit.   | _____ | _____ |
| 12. Demonstrate how to check a doe for pregnancy.   | _____ | _____ |
| 13. Attend at least two rabbit shows.   | _____ | _____ |
| 14. Attend a 4-H rabbit showmanship or judging contest.   | _____ | _____ |
| 15. Build a piece of equipment for use in your rabbitry (a picture should be shown to verify).  | _____ | _____ |
| 15. Give demonstration at County Presentation Day.  | _____ | _____ |
| 16. Tattoo a rabbit.  | _____ | _____ |

Project Leader's Signature of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Leader's Signature of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# RABBITS

***Sonoma County 4-H***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guidelines for Project Proficiency Award

**Advanced:**

Date                      Leader's

<u>Completed</u>	<u>Initials</u>
------------------	-----------------

1. Complete a junior leader program in the rabbit project.
2. Enroll and assist other members in the rabbit project.
3. Assist younger members in designing and construction of needed equipment.
4. Prepare teaching materials for use at project meetings.
5. Help develop and assist putting on a rabbit demonstration at a county or area-demonstration judging event, or train a junior team for such an event.
6. Serve as a speaker on a rabbit-based subject before an organization other than your 4-H club.
7. Assist at a rabbit show as a clerk, a secretary, a recorder, or as an assistant to the judge.
8. Show how a rabbit is registered at a project meeting and show the pedigree of an animal.
9. Develop a breeding program for your own rabbit stock.
  - a) Chart the procedures and analyze genetic results for key characteristics.
  - b) Make an oral or written report on findings.
10. Using the advanced Livestock form, learn the costs and income of your project, make enough income to support your project.
11. Make a chart explaining how good selection can improve your stock, using your own animal in the chart. Explain inbreeding, advantages of each.

Orally summarize a 300 word report at your rabbit project meeting or county member educational event. Use one of the following subjects:

### Management of rabbits.

### Rabbit feeds, feeding and nutrition.

## Rabbit diseases, prevention and control, and general sanitation.

### Markets and methods of marketing rabbits.

### Reproduction, breeding, and genetics.

Fur preparation for market, how marketed, and use.

Keeping and using records as a basis for improving your 4-H rabbit project.

Other.

Project Leader's Signature of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Leader's Signature of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# CLOVER SAFE

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



#1

## SAFE CARE AND HANDLING OF RABBITS

*Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older.*



*Photographs Courtesy of  
Elkus Youth Ranch*

### Rabbit Characteristics

Rabbits belong to the order of mammals called Lagomorpha which also includes hares and pikas. When living in the wild, rabbits spend their time on the ground eating green grasses and leaves and avoiding predators such as hawks and coyotes. Because rabbits are preyed upon by other animals, they have well developed senses of smell, hearing, and long distance sight. Furthermore, rabbits are capable of high speed running and maneuvering to escape predators. Rabbits also are excellent diggers and will burrow out underground homes, called warrens, where they feel

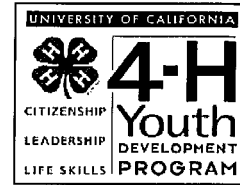
protected and prefer to rest and sleep.

### Safe Care and Handling of Rabbits

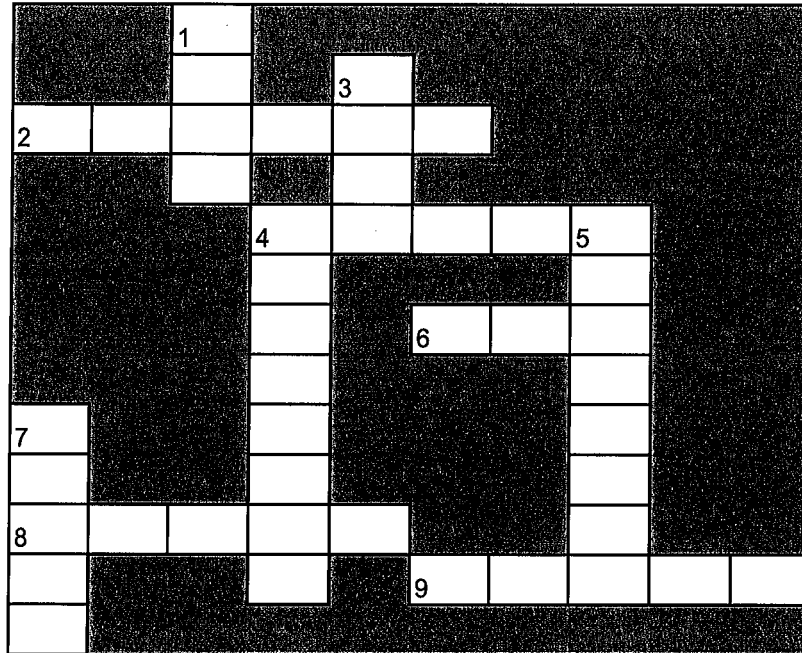
Being aware of rabbit characteristics provides guidance on how to safely care for and handle rabbits as follows:

- Rabbits have a natural instinct to flee and at first, may resist human contact by kicking, scratching, and/or biting when handled. Slowly allow your rabbit to become familiar with you by sitting on the floor and letting the rabbit first explore you.
- Initially touch the rabbit by gently petting the top of its head or stroking its back.
- Begin to pick up your rabbit after the rabbit has become familiar with you. Carefully pick up your rabbit by sliding one hand under the rabbits haunches (hind legs) while using your other hand to gently hold the rabbit under the chest. This lifting procedure protects the rabbit's spine while being picked up.
- Never pick up a rabbit by the ears.
- Avoid creating loud/sharp sounds and/or making fast movements to prevent spooking your rabbit.
- If scratched or bitten by a rabbit, notify your group leader, parent, or guardian. Wash the wound with soap and water and cover with a clean bandage. Seek medical attention if the wound is large/deep or appears to be infected.
- A rabbit's diet should consist of green rabbit pellets with fresh hay and some fresh vegetables. Never feed a rabbit chocolate, cookies, crackers, bread, cereal, or table scraps. A piece of apple or a carrot is considered a treat by a rabbit.
- Healthy rabbits require exercise and should be allowed out of their cage or pen for several hours daily. If you allow a rabbit to roam inside parts of your home you will need to rabbit proof those portions of your house.
- If a rabbit does not respond to your attention or moves away from you, leave it alone. Be patient and let the rabbit interact with you on its terms.
- Never chase a rabbit for fun. It will think it is being hunted.
- A rabbit cage or pen should be large enough to comfortably accommodate the fully grown rabbit and for that rabbit to stretch out and lie down.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling a rabbit or any other animal.





## SAFE CARE AND HANDLING OF RABBITS CROSS-WORD PUZZLE



Directions: Using the Clover Safe information, choose the best words for the blank spots in the DOWN and ACROSS clues below and put the words in the cross-word puzzle above.

### DOWN

1. Never pick a rabbit up by its \_\_\_\_.
3. Always wash your hands with \_\_\_\_ and water after handling a rabbit.
4. Initially touch a rabbit by gently \_\_\_\_ its back.
5. Healthy rabbits require \_\_\_\_.
7. Never \_\_\_\_ a rabbit for fun.

### ACROSS

2. A rabbit considers a \_\_\_\_ to be a treat.
4. A rabbit should be carefully picked up to protect its \_\_\_\_.
6. The rabbit cage or pen should be large enough for the rabbit to \_\_\_\_ down.
8. If a rabbit does not respond to your attention, then you should leave it \_\_\_\_.
9. Rabbits have a well developed sense of \_\_\_\_.

# MINNESOTA 4-H PROJECT MEETING GUIDES

# RABBIT



....to develop  
project and life skills

# 4-H RABBIT PROJECT HEALTH SUPPLEMENT



Publication 4H369I

4-H Veterinary Science project members investigate the normal health of several animal species. It's important that you become familiar with the normal health of your project animals so that you can recognize when one of your animals isn't well.

This rabbit project health supplement should acquaint you with common health characteristics.

Think about your doe or buck. If your rabbit is normal they are probably quite sturdy, gentle, content, and unexcitable. It's easy to ignore such a quiet pet. Observe your bunny daily to maintain her good health. You are important to your rabbit because it's your job to keep them well and to know when they need veterinary care.

Recognition of the following normal characteristics will help you and your veterinarian work as a team to keep your rabbit in good health.

You should keep a record of any abnormalities which do occur. This record will be important as a case history when your veterinarian begins to formulate a diagnosis. You can create your own chart or use Wisconsin 4-H Publication No. 4H369A.

Your rabbit's **attitude** is a characteristic with which only you are familiar. An abrupt or gradual change in your animal's behavior may be an indication of sickness. Is your doe normally crabby when you handle her? Does your buck regularly stomp in his cage when he wants fresh water or pellets? Most rabbits carry a look of continuous disinterest as their facial expression. It's difficult to measure attitude from a rabbit's eyes. But maybe your bunny is different. Do you think they smile or scowl? A change in behavior must have a reason. Try to find the cause.

Your rabbit's **stance** varies. Most rabbits sit with hind legs hidden under their bellies, and forelegs in front of their chests. A doe often rests her head on her fluffy dewlap as if it were a built in pillow! Some rabbits "flip" onto their sides to sleep when they're really tired. You should know whether or not your rabbit does this, or should you suddenly see your bunny flat out on its side you would be needlessly alarmed!

Your rabbit may often "sit up" on their hind legs for a special carrot treat or as a request to be released from her cage. A rabbit's top line is normally rounded. Ears may be erect or flop down depending on breed.

Abnormalities in these characteristics may be genetic or due to disease. Myxomatosis causes a rabbit's ears to fall down and nose to appear rounded due to fluid accumulation. However, the French and English Lop rabbits normally have roman noses and floppy ears.

The rabbit's normal **gait** is to hop. Your rabbit may also appear to walk when moving very slowly to nibble grass or sniff flowers. Take note if your rabbit stumbles or drags a limb. A rabbit's light bone structure injures easily. Problems with movement could imply paralysis due to a neurological disorder. Handle your rabbit properly so they won't struggle and fall. They could easily damage their back or spinal column.

Keep track of your rabbit's **weight**. Normal weight varies with breed, age, and pregnancy. A tiny adult Polish rabbit weighs about 2 1/2 pounds, while a French Angora may surpass 8 pounds, and a Flemish Giant tips the scale at 22! Increase feed gradually to maintain your pregnant doe's weight. Be concerned with a sudden or gradual weight loss. This is a sign of several rabbit disease problems, such as, parasitism or pseudotuberculosis.

The normal rabbit **fur condition** is smooth and glossy, although this varies with breed and age. Don't mistake normal seasonal fur shedding for hair loss caused by ticks or other fur diseases. A six to fifteen week old rabbit normally molts. This is not abnormal, but adding one-half teaspoon of vegetable oil to the diet per day will help replace lost natural oils.

Scruffy fur may indicate mucoid enteritis. Circular patches of hair loss are signs of ringworm, a fungal disease. Formations of crusts in the ears are signs of ear mites. You should notice these abnormal conditions early so that your veterinarian can prescribe treatment.

**Skin and mucous membranes** (color and condition) are important indicators. Normally a rabbit's skin is soft, loose, and pliable. Tight skin may be a sign of water loss or dehydration.

Mucous membranes line all body openings, such as, the eye, ear, nose, mouth, rectum, and vagina. These membranes should be pink and moist in a healthy rabbit. Skin rash or scabs may indicate rabbit pox or vent disease. Wet dewlap or hutch burn may redden skin.

An obvious characteristic to notice on your project animal is their **bodily discharges**. Fecal droppings should be round, firm, black, and dry during the day. However, a rabbit releases two types of droppings. At night softer, more brown, moist droppings are released and re-ingested by your rabbit. This practice is called coprophagy. It is not only normal but necessary. These "super" drop-pings contain many nutrients and vitamins which would be lost if your rabbit were not able to eat them. This practice is necessary because of the unique design of your rabbit's digestive system. Abnormal feces would contain blood or mucus. These may be signs of mucoid enteritis, coccidiosis or pneumonia.

A rabbit's urine is normally more copious (thicker and whiter) than a dog or human, for example.

What about your rabbit's **voice**? Rabbits can grunt and growl when they're provoked and angry. They can also scream when subjected to severe pain. However, when content, your pet probably doesn't have much to say.

A healthy rabbit has a good **appetite**. They enjoy pellets, lettuce, celery, and carrots. A rabbit doesn't like dusty or dirty food, however. Watch how much food your rabbit consumes in one sitting. They probably save some for later in the day or at night. Many rabbits prefer to eat at night or early morning.

Know your pet's habits so you can recognize any abnormalities. You know you don't like to eat when you're not feeling well!

Observe your rabbit's **nails**. Hold their paw toward a light. The tip of the nail should protrude only slightly beyond the "quick" or nail blood supply. Lack of contact with a solid surface eliminates the friction which would normally wear down your rabbit's nails. Too long nails break easily, often causing digital abscesses, and are dangerous. Trim with human nail clippers within 1/4 inch of the quick.

Normal **teeth** are necessary to keep your rabbit in good health. Provide them with items for constant chewing and gnawing. Malocclusion or wolf teeth are a genetic problem where the lower jaw is shorter or longer than the upper jaw. A rabbit with this problem cannot eat properly. Your veterinarian may correct this temporarily by cutting back the teeth.

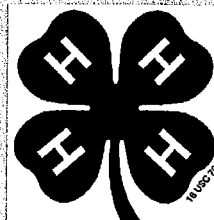
The normal **temperature** of a domestic rabbit is 102.5° F (plus or minus 10). You can measure this with a rectal thermometer. Lubricate the thermometer with Vaseline and insert to about one inch. Remove after two or three minutes and read the temperature.

Practice recognizing and recording many of these common health characteristics on you rabbit every day. When you need to contact your veterinarian, be prepared with a complete report of all the signs you have noticed.

If you'd like further information on animal health, join the 4-H Veterinary Science project. You may use your rabbit as a Veterinary Science project animal!

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If you need this material in another format, please contact the Department of 4-H Youth Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 431 Lowell Hall, 610 Langdon St., Madison, WI 53703; phone: 608-262-1223.



# OBSERVING THE NORMAL ANIMAL

Publication No. 4H369A

**PURPOSE:** Learn to use your senses to develop skill in recognizing the normal healthy animal.

Your project animal's health depends on you. You must be able to recognize normalities in order to recognize abnormalities. A systematic way to observe normals is by performing a **physical exam** on your project animal. Be gentle and calm when handling your animal!

## THE BASIC PROCEDURE FOLLOWS.

**Step 1: Be sure your equipment is handy.** You may need: containers with food, water, brush, grooming tools; thermometer, vaseline; stethoscope, watch with second hand.

**Step 2: Try to evaluate mental condition.** Comparison or familiarity with the animal's normal behavior is important. Does the animal's attitude seem sad or unusually excited?

**Step 3: Observe stance.** Is the animal's posture normal? Does it hunch its back? This may indicate abdominal pain.

**Step 4: Observe movement (gait).** Is there evidence of limping (e.g., stiff joints may indicate arthritis)?

**Step 5: Listen to voice.** Is the cat purring? Is the dog whining?

**Step 6: Is appetite normal?** Perhaps offer food and water. Keep a record. Mark the water bowl.

**Step 7: Observe sexual activity when it occurs.** Record heat periods on your calendar.

**Step 8: Observe general body condition.** Is the animal too fat or too thin?

**Step 9: Skin and coat condition.** Is hair falling out? Is skin dry and flaky? Does coat shine?

**Step 10: Skin color.** Press gums. Pink color should come back rapidly. If area remains whitish, animal could be anemic.

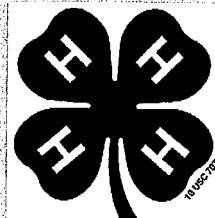
**Step 11: Examine mucous membranes.** Check eyelids, nostrils, mouth, anus, vulva opening. These tissues should be moist and pink. If these areas are not clean it may be because the animal is not feeling well and neglecting itself.

**Step 12: Examine discharges.** Feces and urine should be normal in color consistency when the animal is healthy. Vulva secretions may indicate infection or sexual activity (in heat).

**Step 13: Check body temperature, pulse and respiration rates.**

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If you need this material in another format, please contact the Department of 4-H Youth Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 431 Lowell Hall, 610 Langdon St., Madison, WI 53703; phone: 608-262-1223.

## THE NORMAL ANIMAL OBSERVATION CHART

Record observations of your project animal on this chart for one week. Use the health supplement to help you with normals and words to use. When complete, review your observations and note differences from day to day. Continue to observe your animal daily. You may see significant differences from month to month and season to season.

CHARACTERISTICS	OBSERVATIONS						
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
1. ATTITUDE							
2. STANCE							
3. MOVEMENT							
4. VOICE							
5. APPETITE/WEIGHT							
6. SKIN AND HAIR COAT							
7. MUCOUS MEMBRANES							
8. BODY WASTE AND DISCHARGES							
9. TEMPERATURE (Normal )							
10. PULSE RATE (Normal )							
11. RESPIRATION RATE (Normal )							
12. OTHER OBSERVATIONS							

## **I'm a 4-H Project Leader: Now What Do I Do?**

### **How do I know who is in my project?**

- Your club organizational leader will provide you with the names, addresses and phone numbers of the members enrolled in the project for which you are the leader.
- If you are working on the county level, contact the UCCE for the list of project members.
- The organizational leader may indicate to you if any of the youth have special needs. At your first project meeting, note any other youth that may have special needs.
- You may wish to consult with the parent or your 4-H Youth Development Agent as to how to work with a special needs child.

### **How often should I hold project meetings?**

It is recommended you hold 4-6 meetings that each last 1½ to 2 hours in length. Some projects require more meetings or a longer meeting time to accomplish your goals. Some projects, such as leathercraft, may lend themselves to individual project work as members progress on their projects. In this case, you should hold several introductory meetings for all members and then set up a schedule of time for them to sign up for individual help.

### **When do I start?**

Get started as soon as possible! Members' interest in a project is most keen when they are signing up for a project and when they get their project books.

### **How do I cover the cost of project meetings?**

- There is a wide variety of means for covering the cost of project meetings. Some methods used include:
- Each member pays for their share of the expenses or provides a portion of the supplies.
- The club agrees to cover expenses using funds from their treasury. Approval in advance is needed for this.
- Members and leaders can solicit donations/supplies from area businesses.
- Sometimes funds from sources outside your club may be available to cover your project meeting costs.

### **How do I establish a project meeting schedule?**

First, determine when you are available to work with project members. Then determine an initial project meeting date by consulting with your project members.

Publicize the date using one of the following means:

- County and/or club newsletter
- Club meeting or leader association meetings
- Postcards or phone calls to project members

You may not be able to schedule an initial meeting that everyone can attend. Establish a time to meet with those unable to attend before you hold your second project meeting.

### **Where do I hold project meetings?**

Typically project meetings are held at project leader homes, schools, or community buildings. For more information on facility adaptability and liability concerns contact your 4-H Youth Development Agent.

### **What safety precautions do we need to consider?**

Consider the type of safety issues your particular project involves. Request and secure necessary safety items such as ear protection, eye protection and head protection.

### **How do I let others in my club or other clubs know I am a project leader?**

Prior to enrollment ask for time on your club's meeting agenda to let families in your club know you're a project leader and to share some things the kids could do in the project if they enrolled in it. When the project materials are handed out, take the opportunity to inform or remind members that you are their project leader and set an initial meeting date with the group. If no one in your club is in your project, you may wish to offer your services to a neighboring club. Talk to your club organizational leader or county 4-H Youth Development agent about this opportunity.

### **How do I prepare for the first meeting?**

You may want to establish a 4-H resource box where you keep your project materials and any additional resources you will be using. Take time to become familiar with your project literature and talk to others who were project leaders for this project to find out what activities the members enjoyed.

### **What should I do at the initial project meeting?**

- At the initial project meeting, here are some ideas of what you might want to cover:
- Find out what the members want to learn and accomplish in the project. The project literature is an excellent source of ideas.
- Review the safety practices that members will need to follow.

- Do an introductory activity related to the project so the members get to know one another
- Have a small project the members can complete and take home
- Talk about how the project meeting supplies will be paid for. Experienced leaders have found it easiest to charge a small fee to cover the cost of the expenses.
- Assess when members are available for additional meetings. You may wish to ask the parents or members to bring along their calendars of family activities.
- Encourage parents to participate in project meetings, especially the initial meeting.

### **What does a typical project meeting look like after the initial orientation?**

Use the experiential learning model (found in the introductory pages of your Helper's Guide) to plan your project meeting. The project helper's guide will provide suggestions for designing a project meeting. Here are some suggestions for each section of the model:

#### **Do**

- Plan an activity to focus the project members on what they'll be doing today. Work on the project for that meeting.

#### **Reflect**

- Review the process completed
- Discuss what worked and didn't work.
- Talk about how any problems that arose were solved.
- Assist members in documenting their project work for inclusion in their record books/portfolios.

#### **Apply**

- Ask the project member the following questions:
- What else have you seen that is similar to this?
- How can you apply what you learned today to other situations?

### **What resources are available to help me?**

- 4-H Project Literature – You will receive project literature through your 4-H club or the UW-Extension office. Typically there is a helper's guide and member literature for three to four levels.
- Other People in my Club & County – There are a number of people in your county who would be willing to share project ideas and tips with you.

These include:

- Project leaders in other clubs
  - County Staff
  - Older youth who have been involved in the project
- 
- **Media Collection & Public Libraries** – Additional resources can be obtained from the Cooperative Extension Media Collection. They have videos, skillathons, displays and resource packages available to support a variety of projects. There is a user fee per item you or your club will be responsible for. You can view their catalog at their website <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/media/>. Check with your local public library to find out what resources they may have or that you can obtain through inter-library loan.
  - **4-H Website** – Wisconsin 4-H is continually adding more information and activities to their website. Visit this site at [www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/onlinepro/](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/onlinepro/). You may wish to check out websites from other state 4-H programs also.
  - **Volunteer Leaders Conferences** – Review each issue of your county's newsletter to learn about training sessions for project leaders offered by your county, district or at statewide events. Sessions focusing on new project literature are typically offered at the State 4-H Volunteer Leader Conference held every other year. Periodically statewide conferences focusing on specific project areas are offered in addition to sessions at the volunteer conferences. You can also exchange ideas with other leaders at statewide Field Day.
  - **Field Trips** – Youth always enjoy the opportunity to see firsthand how things are done and how they work. Consider taking your project group on a field trip or tour of a local business or company to enhance their project experience. An example would be taking your dairy members to a cheese factory or your foods group to a local bakery.
  - **Local Experts** – Bring in a local "expert" to share their ideas and experiences with your group. One example would be asking a Master Gardener to share information on choosing perennial or trimming shrubs at one of your project meetings.
  - **Magazines** – Many leaders have found creative ideas to supplement those in the project literature in magazines they have or those at the public library.

### **How can I incorporate activities not included in the project guide?**

We encourage you to use the ideas in the project literature as they have been successfully used with youth. If you have some additional activities you would like to incorporate, consider the following criteria:

- Of interest to kids
- Developmentally appropriate
- Incorporate the experiential learning model
- Youth and adults are involved in determining what will be done
- Enhances the development of member life and project skills
- Research based source of content utilized

### **What is the relationship between project work and the county fair?**

The County Fair is an opportunity for an independent evaluation of life and project skills a member learned through completing a project. County fair entries typically match the activities included in the project literature and may include other activities that are being emphasized in your county. One of your roles is to help maintain the focus of members and parents on the goal of 4-H, which is to develop blue ribbon kids. Talk with members about what they learned about each of their fair entries from the judging process. Help members celebrate their accomplishments regardless of the color of ribbon each project member received at the fair. This may be done through individual encouragement or at a meeting following the fair. While entering and displaying a project at the County Fair is the traditional method of public affirmation, there may be other means of exhibition such as a club tour, open house, community celebrations or others.

### **Who can I go to if I need someone to help me during the project meetings?**

If you are leading beginning level project meetings, ask older members in the project to help you. This is a great leadership experience for them! Parents are another excellent source of help. Don't hesitate to ask them to stay for the meeting and be actively involved in their child's project work.

### **Links to other helpful resources**

Texas Rabbit Project Reference Manual:

[http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/files/2011/12/publications\\_projects\\_rabbit\\_project\\_reference\\_manual.pdf](http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/files/2011/12/publications_projects_rabbit_project_reference_manual.pdf)

Florida 4-H Rabbit Project:

<http://florida4h.org/projects/rabbits/Intro.html>

Curriculum:

<http://www.4-hmall.org/Category/4-hcurriculum-rabbit.aspx>