

Rabbit Project Leader Guide

Level 1



4-H 

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

EM076E



Rabbit Project

Level 1 Activities

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Identifying Parts of a Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 1

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to identify body parts of the rabbit

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Corresponding human body parts

Materials Needed:

- Large drawing of rabbit with parts numbered
- Key of numbered rabbit parts
- Rabbit drawing for each member with list of parts to match
- Live rabbit (optional)

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Let us see how well you know parts of a rabbit.

Can you identify the parts of a rabbit?

Parts of a Rabbit—Definitions—Key for Leaders

BELLY—The lower part of the body—abdomen. From the bottom of the last rib to the pelvis. Contains the intestines.

CHEST—The front portion of the body between the forelegs and neck—the breast.

CHEEKS—The sides of the face below the eyes.

FOREHEAD—The front part of the head between the eyes and the base of the ears.

HIND (Rear) LEG—Consists of the foot, hock, stifle (knee), and hip joint; that portion behind the attachment of the hind leg to the pelvis.

HINDQUARTERS—The rear portion or section of the body; composed of the loin, hips, hind legs and rump. From the last rib posterior.

HIP—The joint that attaches the hind legs to the trunk of the body.

Divide the group into teams. Using the large picture of a rabbit, point out the various parts. Take turns asking teams to give correct answers.

Give each 4-H'er a drawing of a rabbit and a list of the parts. Ask the members to match the parts of a rabbit.

Use a live rabbit if available to show parts.

Leader Notes

HOCK—The joint in rabbits that corresponds to the ankle in humans. The joint below the stifle.

KNEE—The second joint of the hind leg—connects the thigh to the leg. Also known as the stifle.

LOIN—That portion of the back on each side of the vertebrae from the last rib posterior to the hip joint.

NECK—That part of the rabbit connecting the head to the body.

NOSTRILS—The two openings of the nose leading to the internal structures of the head.

RIBS—The curved portions of the sides immediately back and under the shoulders and above the belly.

RUMP—The upper, rounded part of the hindquarters.

SHOULDERS—The upper joint of the foreleg, connecting it to the body.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: In what ways are rabbits and humans similar?

A: Corresponding body parts, warm blooded, live birth, milk for the young, fur/hair, etc.

Q: In what way are rabbits different from humans?

Q: Rabbits are important to those who raise them for meat or fur, etc. Why are rabbits in the wild also important? How do they fit in the ecology of the natural world? Can you think of any animals that are not important in nature? (Discuss importance of each animal named.)

GOING FURTHER:

Attend a rabbit show.

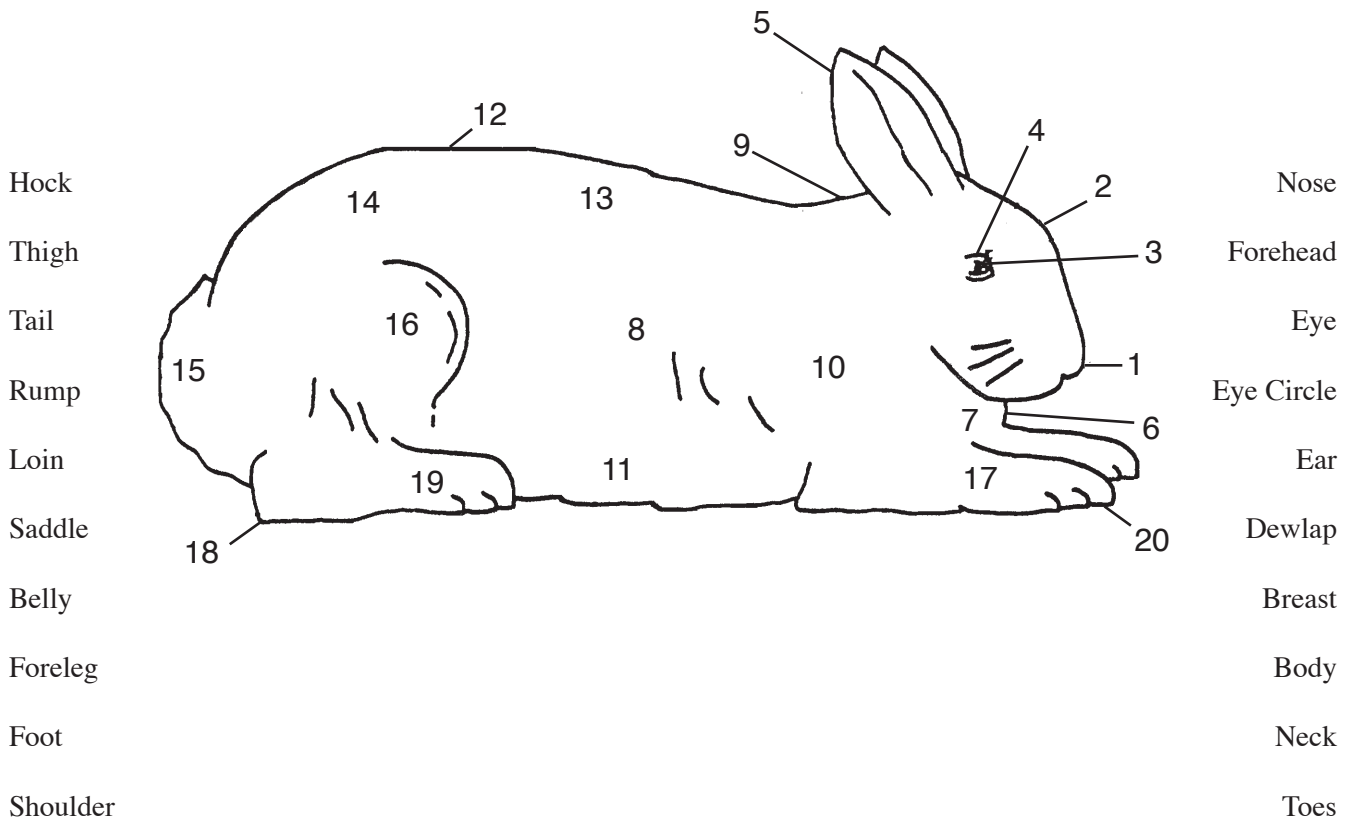
REFERENCES:

Standard of Perfection, American Rabbit Breeders Assoc.
Box 426, Bloomington, IL 61702

IDENTIFYING PARTS OF A RABBIT

Activity Sheet

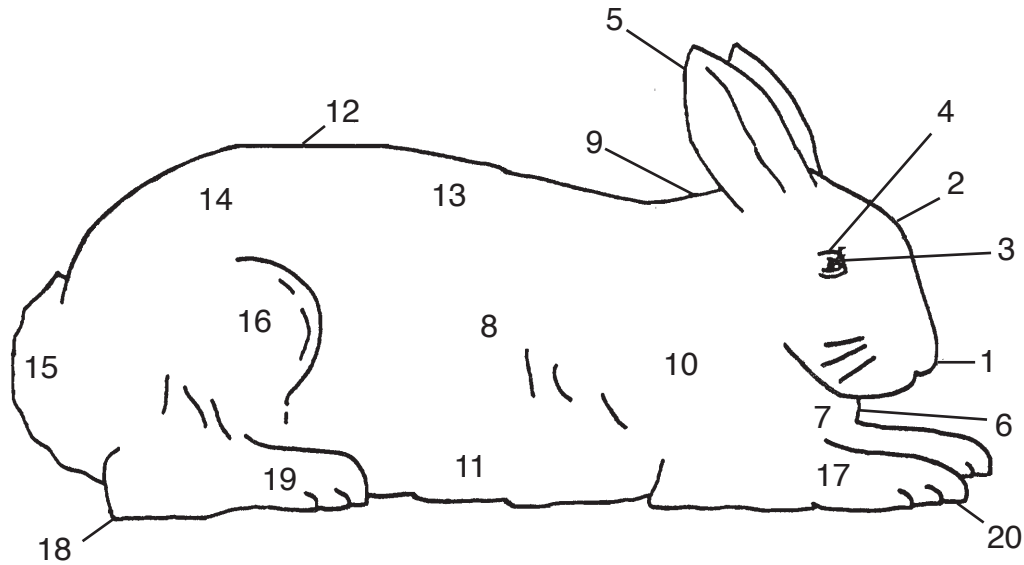
Draw a line from each term to the correct number on the rabbit outline or write the correct number beside each term.



IDENTIFYING PARTS OF A RABBIT

Activity Sheet

Leader's Key



Hock

Thigh

Tail

Rump

Loin

Saddle

Belly

Foreleg

Foot

Shoulder

Nose

Forehead

Eye

Eye Circle

Ear

Dewlap

Breast

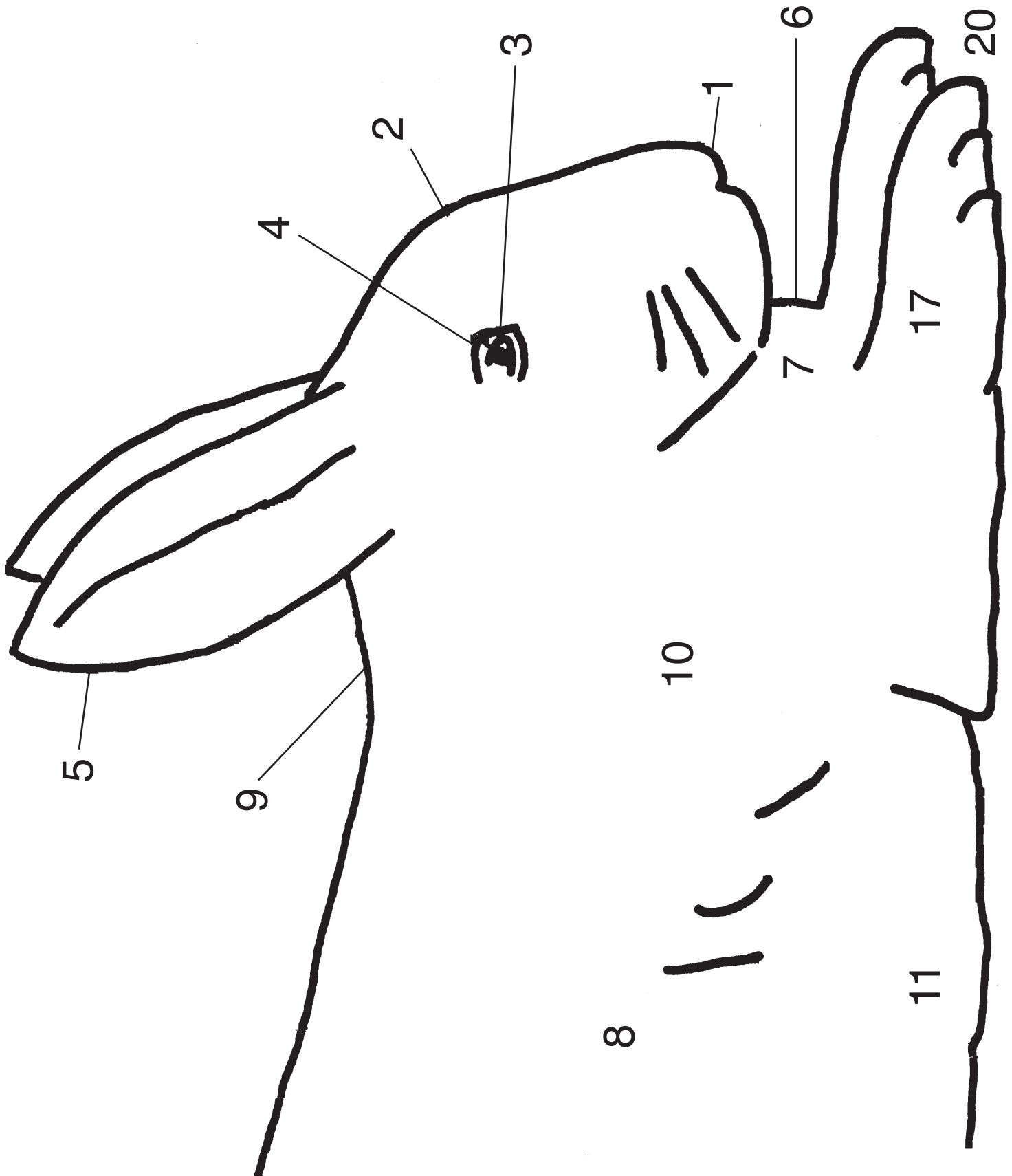
Body

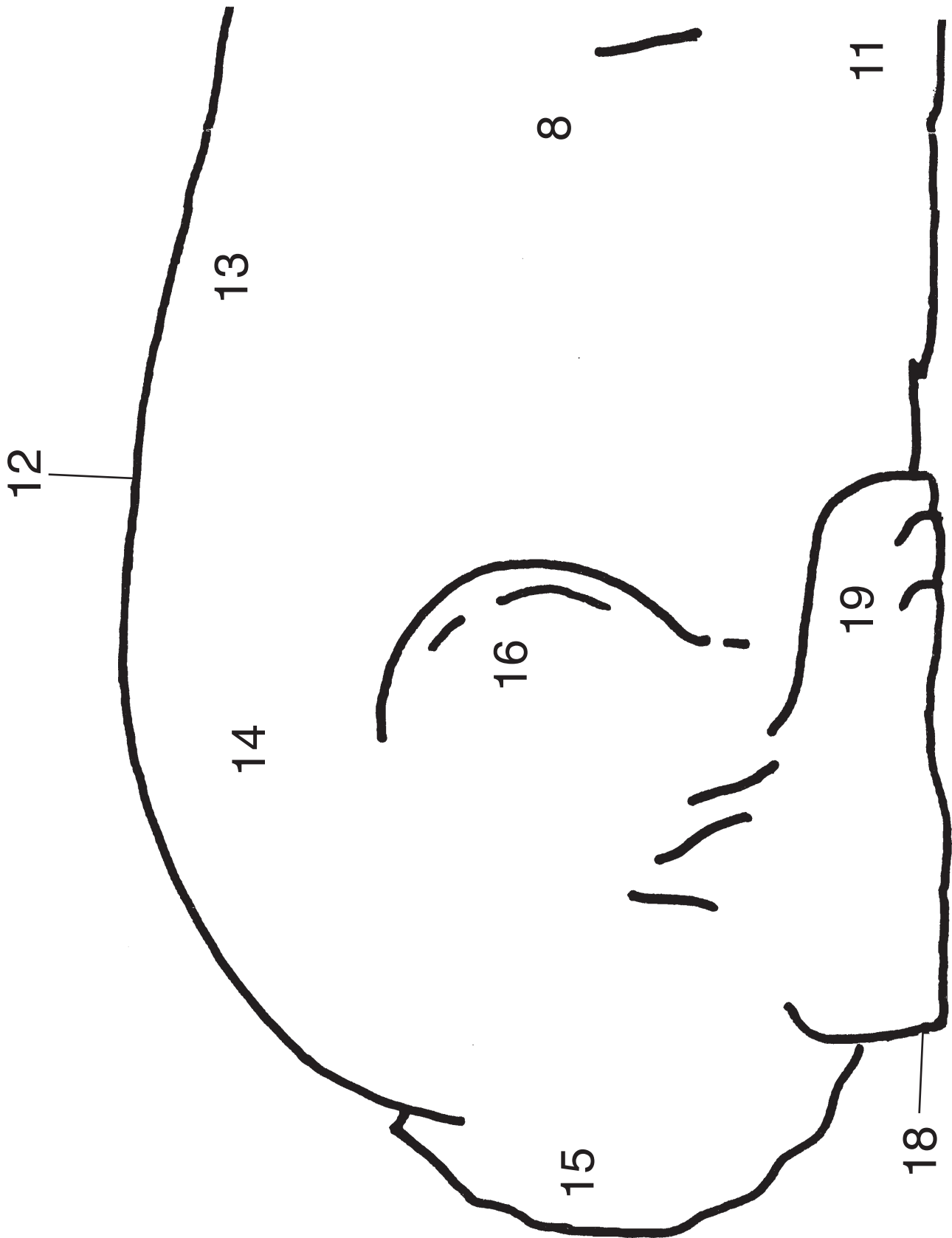
Neck

Toes

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Nose | 11 Belly |
| 2 Forehead | 12 Saddle |
| 3 Eye | 13 Loin |
| 4 Eye Circle | 14 Rump |
| 5 Ear | 15 Tail |
| 6 Dewlap | 16 Thigh |
| 7 Breast | 17 Foreleg |
| 8 Body | 18 Hock |
| 9 Neck | 19 Foot |
| 10 Shoulder | 20 Toes |

Trim edge and overlap pages to make rabbit poster for use in front of group.





IDENTIFYING PARTS OF A RABBIT

1 NOSE

2 FOREHEAD

3 EYE

4 EYE CIRCLE

5 EAR

6 DEWLAP

7 BREAST

8 BODY

9 NECK

10 SHOULDER

11 BELLY

12 SADDLE

13 LOIN

14 RUMP

15 TAIL

16 THIGH

17 FORELEG

18 HOCK

19 FOOT

20 TOES

Leader Notes



Identifying Breeds of Rabbits

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 2

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to identify 10 breeds of rabbits
- How to select a breed to raise for the project according to one's purpose for raising rabbits

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Differences between people can be an advantage
- How to work together

Materials Needed:

- Pictures of various breeds of rabbits
- A short description of each breed
- ARBA *Standard of Perfection* or a reference book on rabbit breeds
- Large cardboard, paper or chalkboard
- Live rabbits, if possible
- Carpet for the table

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30–45 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

The choice of a breed of rabbit is often determined by the purpose for which one wishes to raise rabbits—for, meat, fancy, show or solely pets. The American Rabbit Breeders Association recognizes more than 40 breeds. Some breeds have over 20 varieties. With a little understanding of some of the more common breeds, you will be able to wisely select a breed of rabbit to raise.

Leader Notes

See how many breeds the group can name in two minutes. Keep a list of the names on a large sheet of paper.

Select 10 breeds of rabbits to discuss. Show picture of breed and discuss purpose (fur, meat, fancy); weights; general description.

Divide the group into 3 or 4 members. Provide each group with pictures, names and descriptions of at least 10 breeds. Descriptions should be separate from picture. Have the teams match picture and descriptions. Allow 5 minutes for the teams to complete this task.

After teams have matched pictures with descriptions, discuss the breeds as you check the groups' placings for correctness.

Leader Notes

Give each team pictures and names of at least 10 breeds and have them identify breeds for primary use (meat, fur, fancy). After the teams have categorized the breeds into meat, fur, or fancy breeds, discuss as you check the group's classification. (Note that all rabbits can be classified as show rabbits and some are used for both fur and meat.)

Ask each 4-H'er to select a breed that he or she would be interested in raising.

Each 4-H'er will tell the breed of rabbit selected and why.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Like rabbits, people also vary in terms of skin color, hair color, size, and other physical characteristics. People sometimes also have different customs and ways of living. What problems might be caused because people are different from each other? For what reasons might we be glad that people are different from each other?

Q: If you could meet someone who lives in another country, what questions would you want to ask them about where and how they live?

Q: In this lesson you were in a group of people who are different from each other, but you were asked to cooperate and solve problems together. What helped you be successful in trying to work together?

GOING FURTHER:

Visit a rabbit show to view different breeds of rabbits.

Have 4-H'ers categorize breeds based on weight, color, etc.



Advancing Through Your 4-H Project

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 3

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to set project goals

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- The importance of setting goals

Materials Needed:

- Chalkboard and chalk

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Each year you should set goals to accomplish during the project year. If this is your first year in the rabbit project, you might want to have as one of your goals to select your project animals. Make a list of goals on the chalkboard. For example, a first year member's goals might be:

1. To decide what breed of rabbit to raise.
2. To select my first rabbits.
3. To raise at least one litter.
4. To learn to tattoo a rabbit.
5. To exhibit at the county fair.

Before you can set goals, you should decide for what purpose you will raise rabbits (meat, fur, show, or a combination).

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: It is important that you set goals for yourself that are realistic. You should be able to achieve your goals. What might be an unrealistic goal for your rabbit project? What might be an unrealistic goal for your school work?

Q: Do you think it is always a failure when you set a goal you do not achieve? Explain.

Q: Why do you think it is good to write your goals down?

Leader Notes

Have the group divide into teams and make a list of how many different things a 4-H'er can do in the rabbit project.

After 3 to 4 minutes list the ideas on the board.

Make sure each member has a piece of paper and a pencil; then ask 4-H'ers to list their goals for the year.

Have the 4-H'ers share their goals with the group.

Explain to the members that they have started preparing their 4-H records by listing their goals.

Leader Notes

Have the members think about goals they would like to set for themselves and write them down at home. Ask them to bring their list of goals to the following meeting; then monitor their progress in subsequent meetings.

Q: What goals would you like to set for yourself apart from your project?



Handling a Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 4

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to pick up a rabbit properly
- How to handle a rabbit

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- There are rules for touching or being touched by other people

Materials Needed:

- Stuffed rabbit
- Rabbits (Have each 4-H'er bring a rabbit if possible)
- Carpet for the table

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 15 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Steps to pick up and carry a rabbit:

1. Grasp the loose skin over the shoulders, enclosing the ears with one hand. Put your other hand under the rabbit's rump.
2. Lift the animal and pull it toward you so its body rests on your forearm and against your body.
3. Tuck the rabbit's head under your arm, while still grasping the neck skin for security.

Many people who show rabbits prefer not to pick a rabbit up by the back of the neck as this can break the fur. You can gently place a hand under the belly of the rabbit, lift up and at the same time place the other hand under the hindquarters to support the rabbit. This method should only be used on a gentle rabbit. You don't have as much control of the rabbit and it can easily scratch you. You may want to try this method when you become more experienced.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Why tuck the rabbit's head under your arm?

A: To prevent the rabbit from getting scared

Leader Notes

Let youth practice or try different methods with a stuffed animal (rabbit) or model. Ask the 4-H'ers how they would move a rabbit from one hutch to another?

After members have handled a stuffed rabbit, demonstrate with live rabbit how to pick up a rabbit and carry it.

Have the members practice picking up a rabbit and carrying it.

Demonstrate how to pick up a rabbit without grasping the fur in back of the neck.

Leader Notes

Q: Have you ever held a baby? Is there a special way to hold a baby like there is for rabbits? What things do you have to remember when you pick up a baby?

GOING FURTHER:

Attend a rabbit show.



Selecting Your Project Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 5

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- The qualities of the ideal rabbit
- How to select a project rabbit

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- A person's inner qualities are more important than appearance

Material Needed:

- “Selecting Animals for Replacement or Show” activity sheet, for each member
- Live rabbits
- Carpet for the table

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Steps in selecting a rabbit:

1. Decide for what purpose you will raise rabbits—pet, show, meat, fur, or a combination.
2. Select a breed to suit your interest, financial means, and one you feel you will enjoy.
3. Check with your club leader, county extension agent, Washington State Rabbit Breeders Association, or a local rabbit breeder about where to find the breed you want.
4. Buy from a good rabbit breeder near your home, if possible.
5. Buy a rabbit free of defects and disease.

Hand out activity sheet “Selecting Animals for Replacement or Show” to members and discuss.

Have each member tell what breed he or she plans to raise and why.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: You select a rabbit for a pet, to show, or to sell for meat. When we choose people, however, usually we choose them to be friends. What qualities do you like in a friend? What qualities do you think are important in a person?

Q: Why might it be foolish to choose or not choose people because of how they dress, or their skin or hair color, or other outer characteristics?

Leader Notes

GOING FURTHER:

Attend a rabbit judging contest or school.

SELECTING ANIMALS FOR REPLACEMENT OR SHOW

Activity Sheet

What to Look For in a Rabbit

You can spot potential problems by taking a careful look at breeding stock before you buy or keep a rabbit. If a rabbit has weak characteristics, such as low shoulders or narrow head and body, those traits can be transmitted to the young. Eliminate potential problems at the beginning. The American Rabbit Breeders Association has a standard of perfection for each breed, which is available for purchase. Senior rabbit raisers can give you the address of the ARBA.

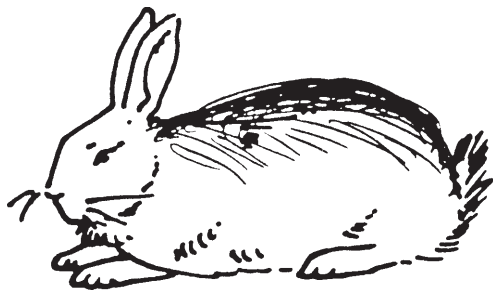
Your rabbits should be free from defects or diseases. Do not buy or keep a rabbit with a twisted tail, rupture, buck teeth, flop ears, crooked legs or bad eyes. These defects can be inherited by the young.

Conditions such as ear canker, "snuffles," sore hock, scours (diarrhea), vent disease and others can be due to harmful bacteria. If these diseases are brought into your rabbitry, they can spread and harm your other rabbits. Meat rabbits should be well developed in the hind legs, hips, and loin. The accompanying drawings show what to look for when you make a visual inspection.

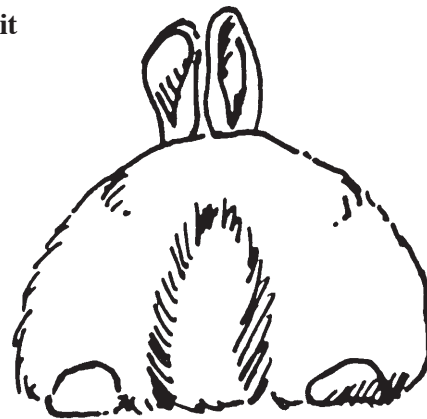
In addition, a wise breeder selects his or her breeding stock from animals that have a history of being vigorous and healthy.

Points to Check When Selecting Breeders

The Ideal Rabbit



Well-balanced rabbit throughout, good head, well-carried ears, good bone, good type.



Good depth or rise to hips, very smooth.



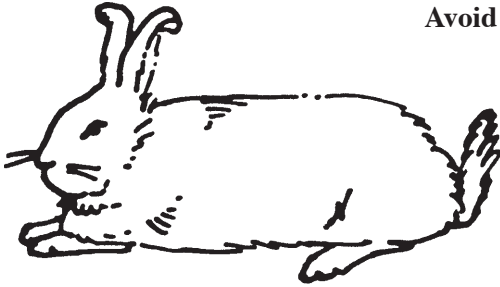
Strong, straight limbs.



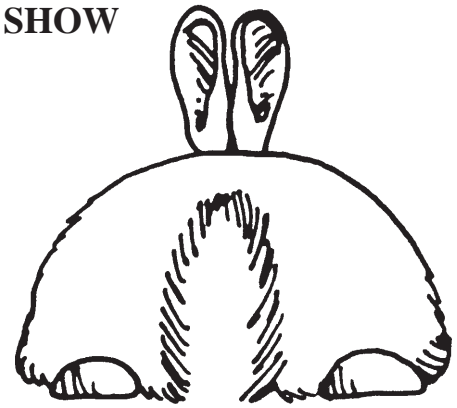
Correct tail carriage.

SELECTING ANIMALS FOR REPLACEMENT OR SHOW
Activity Sheet

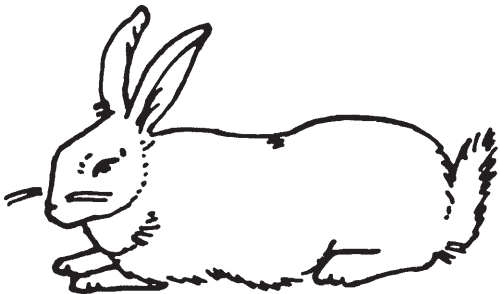
Avoid These Problems



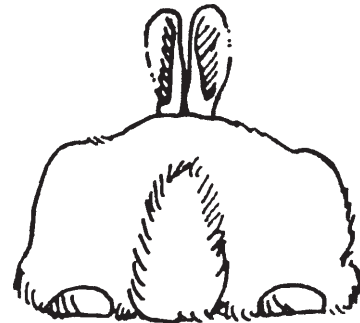
Belled ears, pear-shaped head, double dewlap, back too flat and straight, sloped rump, cow-hocked.



Broad hips but a little flat and not enough rise.



Narrow head, open-carried ears, dip in back, cut-off hips, pot-bellied, side-carried dewlap.



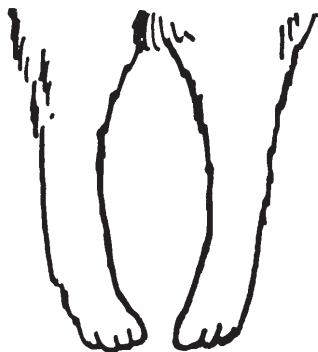
Protruding hip bones or rough hips.



Screw tail.



Side-carried tail.



Inward-bowed legs.



Outward-bowed legs.



Feeding Your Project Animal

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 6

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What kind of feed to use
- When to feed rabbits

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- What food does for us
- The importance of quality as well as quantity of food
- The four food groups

Materials Needed:

- Samples of rabbit pellets
- Samples of rabbit supplements (oats, sunflower seeds)
- Good quality hay
- Cup, etc., to measure feed

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 15 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Good quality feed should be fed in the proper amounts at regular hours each day for best results. Since rabbits eat in the late evening and night, it is best to feed your rabbit its ration in the evening. Feed a commercially prepared complete feed rather than a mixture of grains and hay. This ensures that your rabbits are getting the proper nutrients. Most feeds contain the correct amount of salt for your rabbit, and generally you should not add salt unless it is recommended by the feed manufacturer.

As a treat, you may feed your rabbit apples, carrots, or bread. However, you should not feed it grass or leafy vegetables because this could cause diarrhea.

Generally it is not necessary to feed hay; however, some breeders feed hay regularly. Other breeders give their rabbits hay if the rabbits refuse to eat their regular feed.

Four to six ounces of feed is enough. You will have to adjust this according to the size of your rabbit breed. Netherland Dwarfs will need about three ounces or less, while a Giant Chinchilla will need about nine ounces of feed. Resting does, all bucks, and young over four months of age must not be overfed or they will become fat. These rabbits should clean up their feed within 12 hours. If they don't, you are probably feeding them too much.

Discuss ounces as a unit of weight.

Explain the difference between ounces and fluid ounces. Provide various objects and have the members guess whether the objects weigh more than, less than, or the same as a given weight in ounces (one, or four, etc.) Have the 4-H'ers examine the various feeds and practice measuring a certain amount (4 oz., for instance).

Leader Notes

Hand out activity sheet “Good Rabbit Food/ Good People Food.”

Does with litters and young rabbits under four months need to have as much feed as they will eat.

You can easily make some type of measure for feeding your rabbits. A frozen orange juice can (6-fluid ounce size) will hold about four ounces of rabbit pellets. A small tuna can also makes a good measure. The amount of feed a rabbit needs depends on several factors. Experiment with your rabbits to see what is best for them.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Why is it important for us to eat enough of the right kinds of food?

A: Growth, repair of damaged tissue, functioning of body organs and systems, heat and energy, chemical balance, etc.

Q: What happens to the food in our digestive system?

Q: How much food do you think you eat each day? Can you estimate in ounces?

Q: What about your diet is important besides making sure you have enough to eat each day?

A: Making sure you eat the right things.

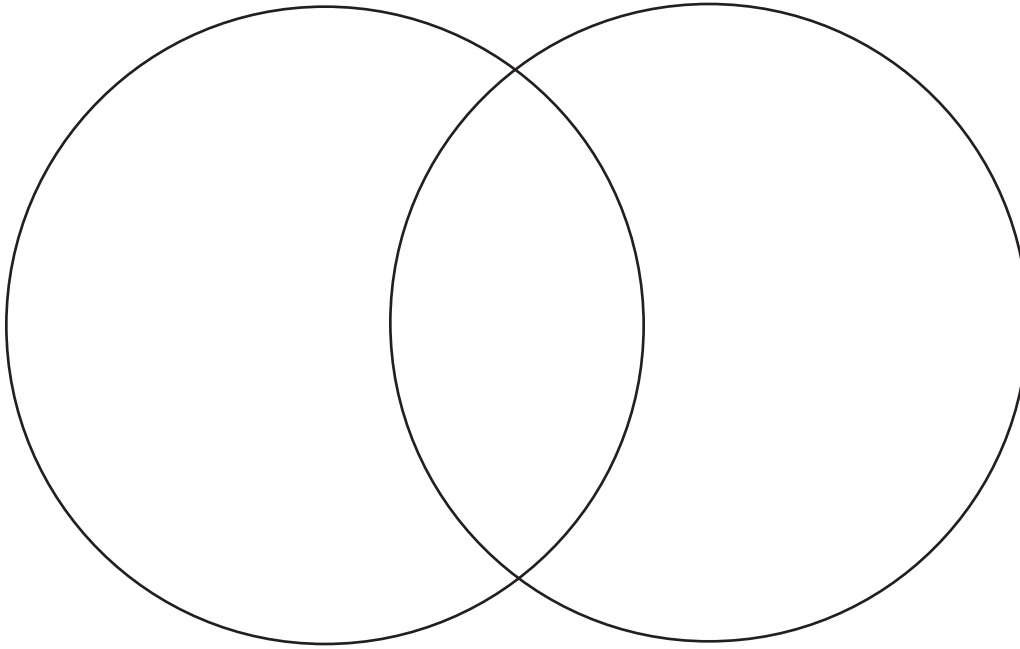
Q: How can you make sure you are eating the right things?

A: Eat the right amounts from the four food groups—dairy, fruits, and vegetables, meat, and grain.

GOING FURTHER:

Visit a local feed store to find out what types of rabbit pellets are available in your area.

GOOD RABBIT FOOD/GOOD PEOPLE FOOD Activity Sheet



Good for Rabbits

Good for People

Write the following foods where they belong in the diagram. If a food is good for both rabbits and people, write it in the space that belongs to both circles. If it is not good for either, write it outside both circles.

cheese

grain and hay mixture

lettuce

nuts

spinach

water

soda pop

bread

rabbit pellets

hamburger

carrot

potato chips

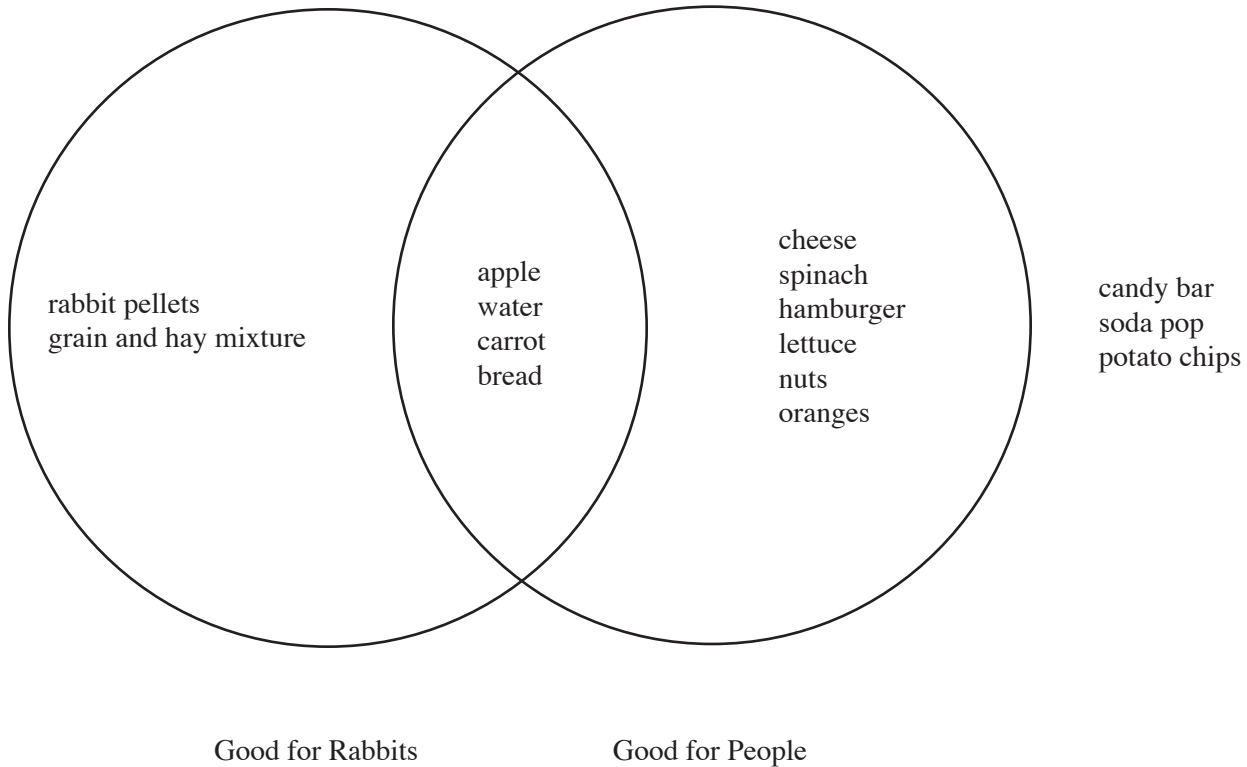
apple

candy bar

orange

GOOD RABBIT FOOD/GOOD PEOPLE FOOD

Activity Sheet



Write the following foods where they belong in the diagram. If a food is good for both rabbits and people, write it in the space that belongs to both circles. If it is not good for either, write it outside both circles.

cheese	grain and hay mixture	lettuce	nuts
spinach	water	soda pop	bread
rabbit pellets	hamburger	carrot	potato chips
apple	candy bar	orange	



Choosing Watering Devices

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 7

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What equipment is used to water rabbits
- How to decide which watering method is best for their project

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- The importance of water to our bodies
- Where our water comes from
- How we use water and how much we use
- The importance of water conservation

Materials Needed:

- Water crocks of various sizes
- Water bottles

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Rabbits need a lot of clean water all year—winter and summer. For the 4-H'er, water crocks or water bottles are the best equipment. If you develop a large rabbit operation you may wish to invest in an automatic watering system. However, since most 4-H'ers will not have this many rabbits we will look at the two best choices. Water bottles are excellent except when the temperature falls to freezing or below. Crocks can be used throughout the year. The size of rabbit will determine the size of crock you will need. Use larger crocks with the larger breeds. Use a half-gallon or a gallon crock for commercial does and litters.

Have the 4-H'ers look at the crocks and water bottles and decide which would be best for their rabbitry.

Rabbits need a constant supply of water. Usually it is sufficient to water in the morning and again during the evening, however, if the rabbits are drinking more water, you will need to use larger watering devices or water more often.

In the winter you can have two sets of crocks. While one set is in the cages, the other set can be thawing out where it is warm. This way you will always have ice free crocks to put water into. Some breeders have plastic crocks that you can pop the ice out of easily. This way rabbits can drink from ice free crocks and you won't have to carry them into the house each day.

Leader Notes

Show a gallon container.

The amount of water a rabbit drinks will vary. However, those animals which drink the most are usually in better condition. A doe and litter may consume as much as a gallon of water per day.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Why do you think you get thirsty? Why does your body need water?

A: To produce blood, so organs can operate, to remove wastes, etc.

Q: How does your family use water other than for drinking? How much water do you think you use? (The group can examine a water bill from a city water department. This will provide an opportunity to discuss how much a cubic foot of water is). Where does your water come from? Go beyond the water department or well to discuss local water resources. How does the water get there? Do you think it is possible to use too much water? What could happen?

Q: How can you conserve water at home?

GOING FURTHER:

Visit a rabbitry with an automatic watering system.

WATER USE

Activity Sheet

Use an empty gallon milk jug to find out or estimate the following at home. Ask a parent to help you.

1. How long does it take to fill the jug from the kitchen faucet? from the bathtub faucet?
How many gallon containers could you fill in one minute?
How many gallons are used if the water runs for 5 minutes?
2. Empty the toilet by filling it quickly with a bucket and then letting it drain. Then refill it with water from the gallon container.
How many gallons are used each time the toilet is flushed?
About how many times is your toilet flushed each day?
How much water does your family use each day flushing the toilet?
3. How long does it take to fill the gallon jug using the garden hose?
How many gallons can you fill in 1 minute?
About how many gallons would be used if water ran from the hose for 30 minutes?

Leader Notes



Selecting Rabbitry Equipment

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 8

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What size and type of cage is necessary
- What types of feed equipment are best

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Measurement skills
- How much space they need to live in
- How life is different for people with different amounts of space to live in

Materials Needed:

- Different size cages
- Feed crocks
- Metal feeders
- Sheet of 1/2-inch graph paper for each member

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 60 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

First you need to decide where your rabbits are to be housed. Will they be in a building or will they be outdoors? If the rabbits will be inside, all-metal cages are best. However, if the rabbits are to be outside, a combination of wood and wire is needed to build a proper hutch.

You will need a cage 30 inches deep, 36 inches long, and 18 inches high for a doe and litter of a medium-sized breed. Small breeds can use smaller cages and larger breeds will need a bigger cage. Bucks and young show rabbits will do fine in cages 18 inches wide, 30 inches deep and 18 inches high.

Automatic metal feeders are best for does and litters. The feed is kept clean and the feeder will hold a day's supply of feed. Crocks are fine for feeding individual rabbits.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: How would life be different for your family if you had much more or less space than you have now; for instance, a large ranch or a small apartment in the middle of a crowded city? Do you think it is possible for people to have too little space? If so, what might happen when

Leader Notes

Have the members pretend they are rabbits, and decide what size cage they will need. Not all will need the same size cage. Ask them how they would feel if they were in too small a cage.

Use a tape measure to demonstrate how to measure things. Have members measure the lengths of various objects in inches.

Discuss the cages which are present.

Demonstrate the take-home activity using a ruler or yardstick and a room of appropriate size.

Leader Notes

people don't have enough space? How would it affect the way they behave or think or live? Do you think everyone needs the same amount of space? Explain your answer.

GOING FURTHER:

Visit one outside and one inside rabbitry.

SELECTING RABBIT EQUIPMENT

Activity Sheet

Your Floor Plan

1. Measure the floor space of your bedroom using inches. Do it again using feet. Each time, measure how long it is and how wide it is.
2. Use the graph paper provided and your room's measurement in feet to draw a floor plan of your room. Let each line stand for 1 foot. Draw the walls. Ask for help if you need it. You can use your floor plan to help you rearrange your room or decide how much carpet you might need, etc.

Leader Notes



Caring for Rabbits During Extreme Weather

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 9

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to care for rabbits during winter and summer
- How to recognize a rabbit in distress

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- How we respond to environmental stress
- How people have learned to create artificial environments

Materials Needed:

- Red pens or pencils
- 2-liter plastic soda bottles
- Carpet

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Every animal must adjust to changes in the environment. It pants or sweats if the temperature is too high, and shivers if it's too cold. The animal's heartbeat increases and it breathes faster when it runs or is under stress.

If the change in the environment or the amount of stress isn't too severe, an animal usually adapts quite well. However, if the changes or stresses are too great, it won't be able to adjust. Animals that are healthy can endure short-term or minor stresses, but long-term or severe stresses are dangerous.

As summer temperatures rise your rabbit's fur coat becomes a problem. Wild rabbits can seek the comfort of their burrows in the cool earth during hot weather, but tame rabbits in hutches don't have that option. They rely on us to provide relief from the heat. Domestic rabbits need more protection from the direct sunlight, radiating heat and high temperatures of the summer months than they do from the cold wind and snow of winter.

The rabbit's normal body temperature is 102–103°F. Its "comfort zone" (the outside temperatures at which rabbits process feed most efficiently and gain weight the easiest) is 60–65°F. When temperatures rise above

Divide the group into teams. Ask one team what they would want if they were rabbits in a cage and the temperature was very hot. Have the other team decide what they would want if they were rabbits in a cage in very cold weather. Have each team share their answers with the group.

Ask members how a rabbit can help cool itself when it is hot.

Leader Notes

Ask members:

1. Why is it important for rabbits to have large ears?

80°F, rabbits use more energy to remove heat from their bodies. Since rabbits don't perspire, they lose body heat through their breath and from air movement across their bodies.

A rabbit's ears also help control its body temperature. As its body temperature rises, the blood vessels in the rabbit's ears expand and the blood flow through the ears increases. Rabbit ears are large and have very short fur on the outside and almost no fur on the inside. This combination of increased blood flow and the lack of fur means that more body heat can escape from the ears than from any other part of a rabbit's body.

When the temperature is above 90°F for four or five days in a row, it is too hot to try to breed rabbits.

If the weather becomes too hot, rabbits may suffer from heat prostration. Fat, lop-eared, or excited rabbits and does that are about to kindle are most likely to develop heat prostration. Rabbits with heat prostration have blue lips, tongue and ears; increased heart and breathing rates; wet nose and mouths; frothy, blood-tinged discharge from the mouth; and they pant heavily.

If a rabbit is suffering from heat prostration, lower its body temperature quickly or it may die. Put the rabbit in cool (not cold) water for a few seconds. (Be sure to hold the rabbit's head out of the water. A seriously ill rabbit may not be able to hold its own head up.)

2. How can you keep rabbits cool in the summer? Encourage group discussion.

There are several ways you can keep your rabbits cool in the summer. Use a sprinkler system to water the roof to keep the rabbitry cool. Use fans to move the air without creating drafts. You may set up awnings over outdoor hutches for shade. If it is extremely hot, put large plastic bottles (i.e. plastic popbottles) filled with ice in the hutches. Put pieces of carpet or rags which have been soaked in cool water into the cages. Nursing bunnies can be put into wire nest boxes. If your rabbit is showing signs of stress put it in an all-wire carrier and put in a dry, cool place. In the summertime, handle your rabbits in the cooler morning or evening hours.

3. How can you keep rabbits warm in the winter? See how many ways each team can list.

There are several ways you can help keep your rabbit warm in the winter. You must protect the rabbits from direct contact with cold winds, snow, and rain. Face your hutches to the south or east. Setting the rabbitry next to a building, solid fence or woodlot, or covering the hutches with lightweight plastic sheeting will also provide a barrier against winter weather. Does and newly kindled kits, or does that are about to kindle, need extra attention in winter. Save clean, dry fur to help cover bunnies whose mother hasn't pulled enough fur to cover them. If the nest material becomes wet, replace it. Cold temperatures increase the energy needs of rabbits. This means you will need to provide plenty of proper feed

and water for your rabbits to help them replace the body heat they lose. You must water your rabbits two or three times per day when the temperature is below freezing.

Ventilation is important all year, though you should avoid drafts.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: What happens when you get too hot? What happens when you get too cold? About what temperatures are our comfort zone? How much hot or cold do you think our bodies can stand before it is dangerous? What can you do to protect yourself when you are outside on a very hot day? On a very cold day?

Hand out “Temperature” activity sheet to do, discuss, and take home.

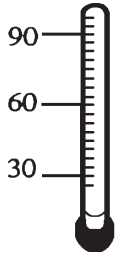
Q: How have we learned to control the environment in our homes? What are some different ways of keeping our homes cool in the summer or warm in the winter? What are some advantages or disadvantages of each way?

Q: Where in the world do people live in houses that are very different from ours? How do their homes help protect them from uncomfortable or stressful environmental conditions?

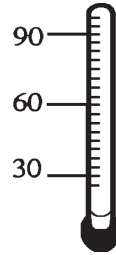
TEMPERATURE

Activity Sheet

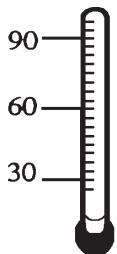
For each item below, use a red pencil or pen to show what the temperature might be when you would do the activity listed. Summer days can be around 95°F and winter days around 35°F.



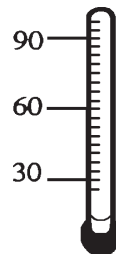
1. Sprinkle water on the roof of the hutch.



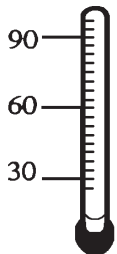
6. Place hutch next to a solid fence.



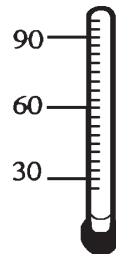
2. Turn fans on hutch.



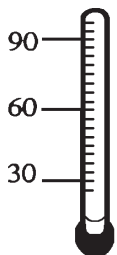
7. Cover the hutch with plastic.



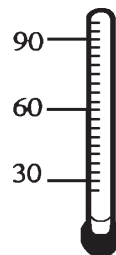
3. Face the hutch south.



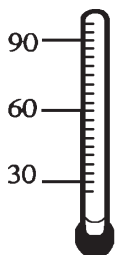
8. Cover bunnies with clean, dry fur.



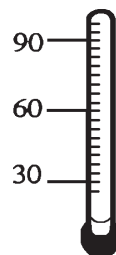
4. Put the hutch in shade.



9. Place water-soaked rags in the hutch.



5. Use a wire nest box.



10. Put large plastic bottles filled with ice in hutch.



Sanitizing Your Rabbits’ Quarters and Equipment

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 10

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What items to use to sanitize equipment
- How to sanitize the cage and equipment

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- The importance of personal cleanliness

Materials Needed:

- Rabbit cage
- Wire brush
- Soft brush
- Bucket
- Chlorine bleach
- Rabbit crocks
- Rabbit feeder
- Spray bottle

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 15 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Clean cages and equipment help prevent diseases in rabbits.

Sanitize rabbit equipment every month or whenever a rabbit has had a disease.

Put one cup of chlorine bleach in a gallon of water. Use this solution to wash the crocks and feeders.

After you have removed fur and manure from the cage using a wire brush, put some of the chlorine bleach in a spray bottle and spray the entire cage. Let it dry before you return the rabbits to the cage. If the cage has a wooden floor, clean it out every day and bleach it every week. You may use other disinfectants, but first make sure they do not irritate rabbits.

Ask the members to speculate how to clean a cage. Then tell them the recommended procedure.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: What areas in your house are most important to keep clean? How do you help keep these areas clean?

Leader Notes

Q: Why is it important to keep the rabbit cage clean? Why is it important to clean yourself and bathe regularly?

Q: What jobs around the house are easy for you to remember to do without being asked? Do you think cleaning the rabbit cage will be a job you will remember to do without being asked? Why or why not? Why is it important to learn to do some jobs without being asked?

GOING FURTHER:

Have the 4-H'ers go home and sanitize their cages and rabbit equipment.



Attending a Rabbit Show

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 11

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to prepare for a show
- How to enter a show
- Proper conduct at a show
- What to expect at a show

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Why we have rules and the importance of following rules
- Losing can be a positive experience

Materials Needed:

- Entry blanks for each member (State, local or ARBA)
- Comment cards for each member (State, local or ARBA)
- Show catalogs

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Rabbit shows in the United States began in the late 1800s. More people enjoy the competition and fellowship of these events every day. Rabbit shows give you a chance to display your rabbits and have them rated against those of other exhibitors. You can have fun and learn more about your rabbits at a rabbit show.

Every exhibitor wants his or her rabbit to win. However, you must remember that only one rabbit in each class will win. Always be a good sport, even if your rabbit doesn't place as you think it should have. Congratulate the winning exhibitors.

When you enter rabbits in a show, you agree to follow the rules of that show. The rules govern not only show procedures but proper conduct for show officials, exhibitors and visitors as well. Show rules will vary but the following "do's and don'ts" apply to most rabbit shows.

DO

. . . fill out your entry form neatly and completely, and send the form and entry fee to the show secretary **BEFORE THE ENTRY DEADLINE.**

. . . prepare your rabbits for the show by handling and posing them often.

Hand out entry blanks and let the members practice filling them out neatly and completely.

Leader Notes

. . . be sure your rabbits are the proper breed, variety, age, sex and weight for the class or classes you've entered them in.

. . . bring your rabbits to the show in carrying cages that are the proper size and construction for your rabbits. Leakproof bottoms are a must on carrying cages.

. . . tattoo your rabbits in the left ear to identify them. The label should be easy to read and permanent.

. . . if the show provides cages, accept the feed and water provided at the show or bring your own.

. . . have your rabbit on the judging table promptly when its class is called.

. . . stay with your rabbit at the judging table while it is being judged.

. . . pay attention to the comments given by the judge. You can learn valuable tips on how to improve your rabbit or keep it in top form.

. . . respect the judge and his or her opinion. You asked for the judge's opinion when you entered the show.

. . . groom your rabbits often before coming to the show.

. . . pick up any award you have won at the show.

. . . be courteous and understanding when problems occur. Avoid negative comments.

. . . compliment the judge and show committee on jobs well done.

DON'T

. . . hesitate to show your rabbits because you're a beginner. Everyone has to start sometime.

. . . expect the show secretary to accept late entries. (Some shows allow the late entries, but not all. Be sure to read the show catalog.)

. . . bring diseased or injured animals to a show.

. . . bring animals other than rabbits into the showroom.

. . . handle exhibits other than your own unless you are a show official or you have the owner's permission.

. . . attempt to breed rabbits in the showroom.

Pass out the comment cards and discuss how to fill them out and what the comment taker will put on the cards.

. . . stand behind the judge's table when judging is in progress unless you are a show official.

. . . try to take your entries from the showroom if you enter rabbits in a show and don't exhibit them.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Q: Why do you think shows have rules? Why is it important that everybody follow the rules? Where else are there rules and why is it important for everybody to follow them?

Q: Only one rabbit in each class can win. If your rabbit does not win, what are some possible ways you might react? Which of those ways are positive? How might a positive reaction to losing help you later on?

Let members take turns pretending to be the judge and the exhibitors to learn about rules, sporting conduct, and how it feels to win, lose, or be a judge.

Leader Notes



Grooming Your Show Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 12

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to groom their rabbits
- Why they should groom their rabbits

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- The importance of good grooming

Materials Needed:

- Rabbits (have each 4-H'er bring a rabbit)
- Carpet for table
- Rags
- Water
- Cornstarch

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 15 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

You can remove the loose hair from your show rabbit by using either a damp rag or damp hands to go over the fur. Combs and brushes will break the skin and cause sores, spread infection and break down the fur shafts that give the animal its beautiful shine.

To remove minor stains on a white rabbit dampen with vinegar and rub cornstarch into the stain and then brush it out. Peroxide or similar bleaching agents can also be used but only very carefully. All cornstarch must be removed before showing.

You can help your rabbit stay clean by keeping the cage clean. If cages get rusty, rabbits will become stained. Rusty wire should be replaced.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Q: What do we do to groom ourselves?

A: Caring for hair, bathing, brushing teeth, wearing clean clothes, etc.

Q: What happens when we do not groom ourselves often enough or completely?

Leader Notes

Demonstrate how to groom a rabbit for show.

1. Remove loose fur by running a damp rag over the fur, then using your hands go over the fur. The loose fur will stick to your hands. Rub your hands together to remove the fur from your hands. Be sure to rub the rabbit's fur from head to tail.

Demonstrate how cornstarch can be used to remove minor stains.

Have the 4-H'ers groom their rabbits.

Leader Notes

Q: What are the benefits of good grooming?

Q: For what occasions would you groom differently? School, church, etc. Why?



Showing Your Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 13

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to handle a rabbit
- The disqualifications and eliminations for the breed of rabbits raised
- How to examine a rabbit like a judge

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- What confidence is
- How confidence can be developed
- To accept delayed gratification

Materials Needed:

- Rabbits (have each 4-H'er bring a rabbit)
- Carpet
- ARBA *Standards of Perfection*

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

The purpose of showing rabbits is to help 4-H'ers become better acquainted with their animals and learn to handle their stock. In fact, when you participate in a show and demonstrate how to handle your animal, you are attempting to display your animal's physical characteristics at their best. From this knowledge you will learn what to look for and how to check over an animal when selecting future stock.

The time and practice that you spend with the animal before you get to the show table will be of great value, not only for you but for your rabbit. Practice with your animal in the same position that you expect it to perform in on the show table. Do not allow the rabbit to stretch out when you want it to pose, or run around the table when you want it to remain in a posed position. Your animal should be clean—free from stains, and loose hair (called moult). The animal's coat should be well groomed. Your animal's condition will also relate to the firmness of flesh, which you control to a great extent by the feeding habit you develop. This condition cannot be obtained in a few weeks. Many weeks of routine good management are needed for good firm condition. Like your rabbit, you should be well groomed. You should wear either a white coat or a long-sleeved white shirt. This will protect your arms as well as present a neat appearance. You should exhibit a courteous attitude towards other showpeople and be prepared to follow the instructions that the judge gives on the first command.

Leader Notes

Explain and demonstrate how to handle a rabbit during a show. (If an older 4-H'er is available, have him or her do the demonstration.) Distribute copies of the Showmanship Card and ask the members to follow along as you demonstrate.

Have each 4-H'er practice showmanship and then prepare to be the judge. Help members who are having problems. Use Showmanship Cards for practice.

Showing your rabbit starts the minute you pick it up. Carry the rabbit to the table and set it on the table. With the rabbit in the sitting position, check it for ear canker and blemishes over the body. Check the front legs for crooked bones and check the tail to be sure it is carried properly. Then turn the rabbit over on its back and check its eyes and teeth. Look for blemishes on its belly and sores around the neck. Check the hind legs for straightness, and check the toenails. Check the sex. Return the animal to the sitting position and pose the rabbit in its correct position. Be sure to help the animal to show off its proper body type by grooming the fur, posing the ears, and being sure that the tail is erect and carried straight. At this time you will want to pose the rabbit so that it will maintain the pose while you step away from the judging table. Then listen to the judge for any further commands that might be given. For instance, you will probably be asked to move the rabbit into different poses. The judge might ask you to show where the loin, shoulders or any other part of the body is located. The judge may quiz you on your knowledge of the rabbit breed that you are exhibiting as well as general knowledge of all breeds. You should be well informed on general disqualifications, eliminations and faults. Showing your rabbit is an opportunity for you to exhibit the knowledge that you have acquired both from reading and handling.

A judge may ask the following questions:

1. What breed of rabbit are you exhibiting?
2. What sex is your rabbit?
3. In what class would you enter your rabbit?
4. Is your rabbit a four-class or six-class rabbit? (Four-class rabbits are smaller with the ideal weight for a senior being under nine pounds.)

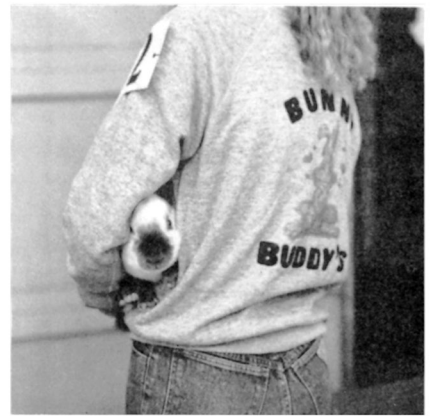
DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: What is confidence? How do you develop confidence at something? What can you do to appear confident even if you are anxious or nervous?

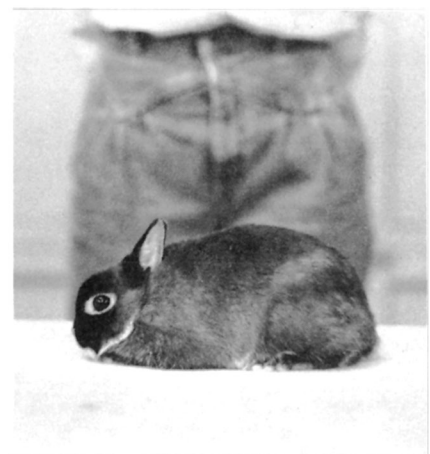
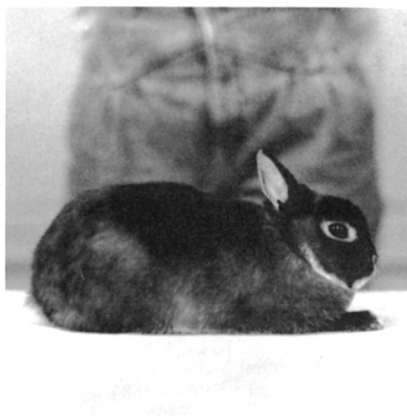
Q: This lesson encourages you to practice. Why is practice important? What might happen if you do not practice regularly or if you wait too late to begin practicing? What other activities will you get better at with practice?

Q: Sometimes you must work hard over a long period of time before you get rewarded for your work. What makes this hard? How can learning to do this now help you later in life? Are there other instances now when the reward for hard work comes long after the work?

SHOWING YOUR RABBIT



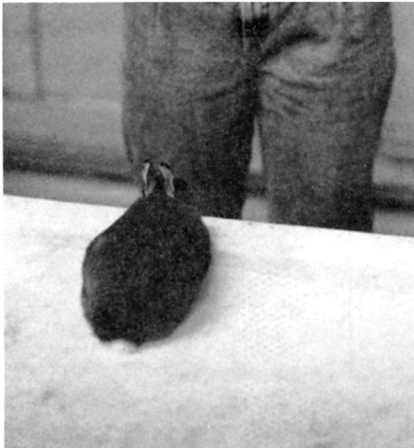
Carrying rabbit to show table: Grasp the loose skin over the shoulders with one hand and place the other hand under the rump (above). Lift it and tuck its head under your arm while placing your forearm around its legs, still grasping its ears for security.



Front view: Pose your rabbit facing forward in a comfortable, balanced position (left).

Side view: The rabbit's feet should be under it so that the loin is arched, but not "chopped off" in the rump. You may be asked to turn your rabbit so it is facing left or right (above).

SHOWING YOUR RABBIT



Rear view: Pose your rabbit facing you in a comfortable, balanced position (above).



Showing teeth: Lift rabbit as for underarm carrying. Then turn the rabbit completely around and upside down, supporting its weight on your hand until you lay it on your arm (left). Then, with your other hand under the rabbit's head, reach around with your thumb and fingers (so it cannot bite you) and pull its lips back to expose the teeth (above).



Straightness of rear legs: Place rabbit on its rump (still retaining hands on ears for security) facing forward and extend the legs by pressing on the stifle joints (left). A second method which can be used is to suspend the rabbit to show straightness.

Straightness of front legs: With rabbit on its rump, straighten rabbit's leg with free hand by sliding hand from shoulder of rabbit to the toe nails (far left).



Showing of hocks: Place rabbit in same position as for straightness of legs. Then, with free hand, grasp hind leg and turn upward to expose bottom part of hock (far left). A second method is to pose your rabbit toward you and with both hands turn the hocks out (near left).

SHOWING YOUR RABBIT



Sexing rabbits: Place rabbit on rump on show table but retain hold of ears with one hand (left). With other hand, place first two fingers on either side of sexual organs and apply light pressure to determine sex. Closeups show male (buck), center, and female (doe), right.



Ear identification: Place rabbit in side view so that *left* ear is closest to the judge. Then expose inner top part of left ear, with both hands, to reveal tattoo identification.

Checking for rupture or abscess: Place rabbit on its rump facing forward and examine belly with free hand. You may also run your hand under the rabbit feeling the neck and belly.



Rabbit Showmanship Card

Contestant Number _____

Name _____

County _____

SCORE

POSSIBLE	CONTESTANT
----------	------------

10 _____

I. Carrying rabbit to and from the table.

10 _____

II. Examination of rabbit

- A. With rabbit in sitting position.
1. Check ears for canker and ear mark.
 2. Run hand over body to check for blemishes.
 3. Check front legs for crooked bone.
 4. Check toenails (If you prefer, you may wait to check the toenails after you have turned the rabbit on its back).
 5. Check tail for defects and proper carriage.

20 _____

B. Turn rabbit over on back.

1. Check eyes.
2. Check teeth.
3. Run hand over body to check for blemishes.
4. Check sex.
5. Check rear legs for straightness.

10 _____

C. Return to sitting position.

1. Groom by brushing with hands.

20 _____

D. Pose rabbit.

1. Show ear marks to judge.
2. Place animal in natural position.
3. Show body type.
 - a. Brush down fur with hands.
 - b. Be sure tail is carried properly.
 - c. Straighten ears to give rabbit an alert appearance.
4. Maintain pose position keeping animal as still as possible.

SCORE

POSSIBLE	CONTESTANT
----------	------------

10 _____

III. Condition of animal.

- A. Appearance – clean.
- B. Free from moult.
- C. Lack of defects.
- D. Body type.
- E. Healthy appearance.

20 _____

IV. Appearance of showman.

- A. Neatness.
 1. Neatly dressed.
 2. Well groomed.
 3. Clean.
- B. Actions.
 1. Natural.
 2. Graceful.
 3. Confident.
 4. Polite.

TOTAL SCORE

100 _____

Top three individuals may be called back for an interview.

30 _____

Interview:

- A. Background and experience.
- B. Achievements.
- C. Ability to thoroughly answer questions and give information.
- D. Attitude.
 1. Polite.
 2. Confident.
- E. Appearance.

30 _____

30 _____

30 _____

30 _____

TOTAL SCORE

150 _____



Keeping 4-H Rabbit Records

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 14

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- The importance of record-keeping
- How to use the 4-H Rabbit Record

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- The usefulness of record-keeping

Materials Needed:

- Copies of C0832, *Rabbit Record*, for each member

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 20 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

Record-keeping begins the minute you start your project. You should keep track of the cost of your cages, crocks, feeders, rabbits and feed. Record anything you buy or sell.

Pass out copies of C0832, *Rabbit Record*. Discuss how to fill out the record.

You need to keep a record of how well your does are producing. Using the doe breeding record, keep track of the date bred, the date kindled, the buck bred to, number of live young, number of dead young, date weaned, and number weaned.

Remind members that they need to keep track of all presentations given and exhibits shown.

At the first of the year set some goals for the project. The goals for a first-year member might be to learn how to tattoo a rabbit, how to show at the county fair, and to make one rabbit presentation.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Why do you think keeping records about your project is important? What could happen if you fail to keep records? How might you have an advantage over someone who doesn't keep records?

Q: What other records are kept at your home? What records are kept at school? Elsewhere? You might ask your parents what records they keep and how this helps them.

Leader Notes



Preparing Your Rabbit For Kindling

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 15

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to feed a pregnant doe
- How to prepare the nest box for kindling

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Humans' diet needs vary according to age

Materials Needed:

- Nest box
- Nesting material (straw, hay, etc.)

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Guide

A pregnant doe needs more feed than a resting doe. After you are sure the doe is pregnant, gradually increase her feed a little. However, you do not want to overfeed because a fat doe has trouble kindling (giving birth).

Put a nest box in the doe's cage on the 28th day. Use clean straw or other nesting materials. During the winter put four to six inches of bedding in the nest box. Also, a sheet of styrofoam can be placed between the bottom of the nest box and a solid floor to help keep the box warm in the winter. During the summer, one to two inches of bedding is sufficient. The nest box should not have a top on it. If it does, the doe might sit on top of the box, allowing urine to collect in the box. If the doe fails to have a litter, remove the nest box on the 34th day after mating.

Discuss the size of nest box needed. Small breeds will need smaller boxes than larger breeds.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Q: This lesson teaches that pregnant does need more feed than others.

Do you think that pregnant women have different food needs than ones who are not pregnant? Are there other times when people's food needs change according to their age or activity?

A: Milk to solid food in infants, increased amount during puberty, athletes in training, etc.

Q: What preparations might a family make for an expected baby? How are these preparations like those made for a litter of rabbits?

Hand out "Pregnancy Conditions Quiz" activity sheet. Correct combinations are numbers 4 and 7.

PREPARING YOUR RABBIT FOR KINDLING
RABBITS, LEVEL I
Activity Sheet 1

Pregnancy Conditions Quiz

Which of the following pregnant does is being properly cared for? Circle the sets of conditions that are correct:

<u>Size of Breed</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Amount of Bedding</u>	<u>Amount of Food</u>	<u>Size of Box</u>
1. large breed	winter	2" hay	normal ration	small nest box
2. small breed	winter	2" hay	normal ration	small nest box
3. small breed	summer	6" hay	extra ration	small nest box
4. large breed	summer	2" hay	extra ration	large nest box
5. large breed	summer	2" hay	extra ration	small nest box
6. large breed	summer	6" hay	extra ration	large nest box
7. small breed	winter	6" hay	extra ration	small nest box
8. large breed	winter	6" hay	normal ration	large nest box



Caring for the New Rabbit Litter

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 16

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What to do after the litter has been kindled

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Maturation is a process of increasing independence
- With increasing independence comes increasing responsibility

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- If possible, visit a rabbitry where young have recently been born so the 4-H'ers can actually see how to care for the newly born litter.

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES PLUS
RABBITRY VISIT

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

When a mother rabbit gives birth to her litter, we say she has kindled. The babies are called kits.

As soon as the doe has kindled, you should check the nest box and remove any bloody masses and dead kits. Check the nest every day during the summer months. During the winter, check it often but not during days when the temperature is very cold (near 0°F). The nest box should never be allowed to get damp.

During the summer you may need to put the kits in a wire nest box in order to keep them from getting too warm. Sometimes you may need to remove fur from the nest box in order to prevent the young kits from becoming too warm. In the winter, be sure to cover the kits with the fur after you have checked them. If necessary, you may handle the kits. The doe will not neglect her kits because they have been handled.

Cut down on the feed to the doe for a couple days, then gradually increase it until about the tenth day, when she should get all the feed she wants. This way the doe will produce more milk when the kits are ready to consume it.

If your doe has twelve kits but can only feed six, you must foster off six of the kits. If there are no does available to foster the kits, it is better to kill six of them instead of leaving all twelve with the doe. This will assure that at least six of the kits will survive. Usually, many kits die if the doe has too many kits to nurse.

Leader Notes

Remove the nest box when the young are three weeks old. If they start coming out of the nest earlier than three weeks, remove the nest box so all the kits will get a chance to nurse. During extremely cold weather, you should leave the nest box in for four weeks.

Hand out “Independence and Responsibility Time Line” Activity sheet to do now or take home and bring back for discussion.

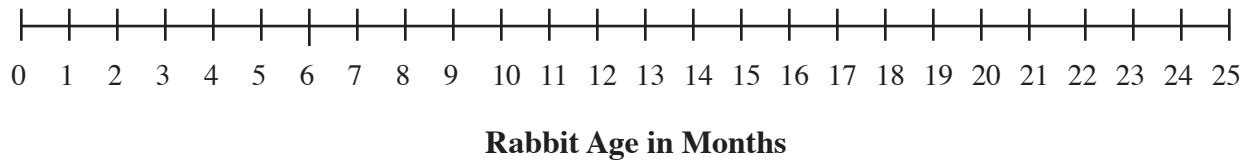
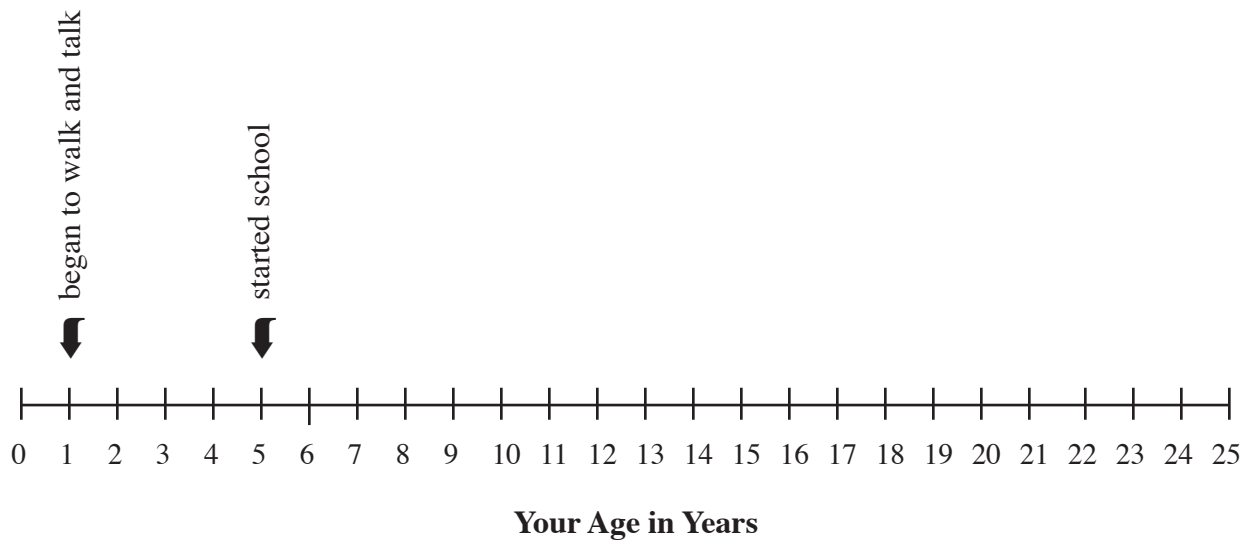
DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: As animals grow up, we say they mature. The kits are born helpless, but as they mature they become more independent. How will you know that the kits are becoming more independent? Can you think of examples to show that this is true of people, too? How are you more independent than you were five years ago? In ten years how will you be more independent than you are now?

Q: When you mature and become more independent, you also have more responsibilities. What responsibilities do you have now that you didn't have five years ago? What responsibilities will you have ten years from now that you don't have now?

INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY TIME LINE

1. The following is a time line of your life from birth to age 25. Find where you are now on it. Find on it important events that show increasing independence or increasing responsibility, like began to walk and talk, or started school. Think about events that have happened or ones you expect to happen some day.
2. On the second time line, list when rabbits mature or gain levels of independence (grew fur, opened eyes, left nest, weaned, etc.).







Determining the Sex of a Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 17

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to hold the rabbit in order to determine the sex
- How to determine the sex of 4- to 6-week-old rabbits

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Boys have anatomy and functions similar to bucks
- Girls have anatomy and functions similar to does

Material Needed:

- You will need 4- to 6-week-old rabbits of both sexes

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 20 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

It is important to be able to determine the sex of rabbits for the following reasons:

1. In order to know what sex of rabbit you are raising.
2. In order to mate rabbits.
3. In order to prevent unwanted breeding from occurring.
4. In order to be able to enter rabbits in the proper classes at the shows.

Before sexing your rabbit, be sure you are wearing a long-sleeved shirt to avoid being scratched.

Q: How would you hold a rabbit to determine its sex?

A: With one hand hold the rabbit in a sitting position on the table. Using the other hand, place the thumb behind the right hind leg and use the index and forefinger to demonstrate how to depress the tail backwards and downwards. Then use the thumb to gently depress the area in front of the sex organs to expose the reddish membrane.

Q: How do you tell the difference between a buck and a doe?

A: On the buck the organ will protrude as a well rounded tip (penis), while on the doe the membrane will protrude to form a slit (vulva) with a depression at the end next to the anus.

Divide the group into teams of 2 to 3 members. Before you have told and shown the members how to determine the sex, have the teams see if they can determine the sex of the rabbits. Each team will need one or two rabbits.

Discuss how to determine the sex of a rabbit. Have the members try to determine the sex of several rabbits. If a member is having problems, have another 4-H'er help.

Demonstrate how to sex a rabbit.

Leader Notes

Q: Is it important to separate littermates into individual cages?

A: Yes. If you do not, the rabbits will fight, destroying their fur. Sometimes the rabbits will injure themselves; often the rabbits are unfit for showing. The rabbits may breed if not separated since some rabbits are fertile at eight weeks. If a doe becomes pregnant at this age her growth will be stunted.

GOING FURTHER:

Visit a commercial rabbitry and see how they use records to cull.



Tattooing a Rabbit

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 18

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What equipment is needed to tattoo a rabbit
- How to tattoo a rabbit

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Advantages of working together
- Ways people are identified

Materials Needed:

- Tattoo pliers
- Tattoo numbers and letters
- Tattoo ink
- Petroleum jelly
- Paper towels
- Tattoo box
- Cardboard
- Rabbits
- Carpet

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30–45 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Learning to tattoo a 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.

If you plan to show your rabbit at the county fair, it must be tattooed in order to be shown.

A tattoo can have up to five letters or numbers which are used to identify your rabbit.

The best time to tattoo a rabbit is when it is about 8 weeks old and ready to be weaned. Steps to follow when tattooing are:

1. Put numbers and/or letters in the tattoo pliers.
2. Tattoo a piece of cardboard or paper first to make sure it will say what you want it to.

Leader Notes

You may wish to divide the group into teams and ask them to demonstrate how they would tattoo a rabbit. Give the teams a few minutes to work out the task. Using cardboard instead of a live rabbit have the teams demonstrate how to tattoo a rabbit.

Demonstrate how to tattoo a rabbit using the tattoo box.

Leader Notes

3. Put rabbit in tattoo box. If you don't have a tattoo box, have someone hold your rabbit while you tattoo it.
4. With the tattoo pliers puncture the left ear.
5. Rub tattoo ink into the puncture holes. Roll-on ink bottles are easy to use. If ink gets on the fur it is usually best to just let it wear off.
6. Apply a small amount of petroleum jelly and wipe the ear clean with a paper towel.

If the tattoo is not satisfactory, you may either make a second tattoo or repuncture the holes with a sharp needle and repeat the inking process.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Without a tattoo box, this is a job that is easier to do with someone to help you. What are some other jobs you do that are easier when you have help? What are some other advantages to working with someone else? Is there ever a time when it is better to work alone?

Q: How many ways can you think of that people are identified? Why don't we just use names?

DETERMINING OWNERSHIP

Activity Sheet

Use all the following clues to help you decide which rabbit tattoo below belongs to which child:

1. Pat uses only odd numerals (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) and letters on his tattoos.
2. Nancy always puts her initial in the middle of her rabbit's tattoo.
3. Joey's tattoo always begins with an M if his rabbit is a male.
4. Joey's rabbit is a female.
5. Rosa put a 3 on the end of her rabbit's tattoo since it was her third rabbit.

Young children will need help with this activity.

M5A93

M2NY3

F7X73

M6N18

DETERMINING OWNERSHIP

Activity Sheet

Leader's Key

Use all the following clues to help you decide which rabbit below belongs to which child.

1. Pat uses only odd numerals (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) and letters on his tattoos.
2. Nancy always puts her initial in the middle of her rabbit's tattoo.
3. Joey's tattoo always begins with an M if his rabbit is a male.
4. Joey's rabbit is a female.
5. Rosa put a 3 on the end of her rabbit's tattoo since it was her third rabbit.

M5A93

Pat

M2NY3

Rosa

F7X73

Joey

M6N18

Nancy



Weaning the Rabbit Litter

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 19

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- When to wean rabbits
- How and why to cull rabbits from a litter

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Strategies to use in making decisions

Materials Needed:

- ARBA *Standard of Perfection*
- Three or more rabbits (weaning age)
- Carpet

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Leader Notes

When a young rabbit is separated from its mother, it is called weaning the rabbit. It is sort of like the time babies begin eating solid food, at about the age of 1 or 2 years old.

Lessons on sexing, culling, judging and tattooing should be done before or in conjunction with this lesson.

The best time to wean a rabbit litter is when they are 8 to 10 weeks old. At this time, you must decide what you will use each rabbit for. Rabbits may be raised as pets, or for breeding, show or meat. A list of disqualifications and eliminations will help you decide if you want to raise a rabbit for show.

Most 4-H'ers have room for only a few rabbits. Some members of a litter will be culled out, or separated from the others, and raised for meat. These can be put together in a pen and kept until they are butchered, when they weigh 4 to 6 pounds.

The others should be put into individual pens. Then they cannot fight, injure, or pull fur from each other. This will also keep them from breeding at too early an age.

Before you can decide which rabbits are good and which will be culled out, you must determine the breed type, the fur quality, and breed markings. You need to know the standard for the breed.

Leader Notes

Demonstrate the steps needed to wean a litter.

When you wean the litter, follow these steps:

1. Sex
2. Cull
3. Tattoo
4. Place showing or breeding rabbits in separate cages.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: It can be a difficult decision to decide which rabbits in a litter are kept and which are not. What other hard decisions have you had to make? How do you go about making hard decisions? What things do you consider? What makes decision making easier?



Giving a 4-H Presentation

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 20

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- What information should be included in a project presentation

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Each person reacts differently to being “on-stage.”
- That mental preparation is as important as practice in giving a presentation

Materials Needed:

- Have each 4-H'er bring a rabbit
- Carpet

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 30 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Tell the members that they are going to give a project talk about their rabbit project. One at a time, have 4-H'ers take their rabbit to the table. Then ask the following questions:

1. What breed of rabbit do you have?
2. How old is your rabbit?
3. What sex is your rabbit?
4. What do you feed your rabbit?
5. How often do you feed your rabbits?
6. How many rabbits do you have?
7. What is the best thing about having a rabbit?
8. For what purposes do people raise rabbits?

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Q: When you see someone give a presentation, what makes the difference between an interesting presentation and one that is not interesting?

Leader Notes

As each member arrives, pin a rabbit term on his or her back. Have the members try to guess what the term is on their backs. Members may ask questions that can be answered Yes or No. After the group has had a chance to guess the term on their backs, take off the terms and see how many guessed the correct one.

After each 4-H'er has answered all the questions, tell the group that he/she has given a project talk. Members may need some help answering the questions. Continue until all members have had a chance to give their presentations.

Explain that there are a lot of other questions that can be answered in a project talk. For example, how many varieties does your breed have? What type of fur does your rabbit have?

Leader Notes

Q: How can a speaker make a presentation more interesting?

Q: How does it feel to be in front of a group? Does it feel the same for everyone?

Q: If you were going to make a presentation for a 4-H club or other group, how could you prepare for it?

A: Plan, practice, mental preparation, etc.

GOOD SPEAKER TIPS

Activity Sheet

If the statement is something a good speaker does, circle the first letter. If the statement is not something a good speaker does, circle the second letter. Then put the circled letters in the blanks to find out what every speaker enjoys.

- M A 1. Reads everything so he/she doesn't make a mistake.
- S P 2. Speaks quietly to get done earlier.
- P E 3. Speaks loudly and clearly.
- O L 4. Leans back against the wall.
- A N 5. Looks at the audience.
- U B 6. Stands up straight.
- W S 7. Chews gum during the presentation.
- E A 8. Has prepared the presentation ahead of time.

What every speaker enjoys:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

GOOD SPEAKING TIPS

ACTIVITY SHEET

Leader's Key

If the statement is something a good speaker does, circle the first letter. If the statement is not something a good speaker does, circle the second letter. Then put the circled letters in the blanks to find out what every speaker enjoys.

- M (A) 1. Reads everything so he/she doesn't make a mistake.
S (P) 2. Speaks quietly to get done earlier.
(P) E 3. Speaks loudly and clearly.
O (L) 4. Leans back against the wall.
(A) N 5. Looks at the audience.
(U) B 6. Stands up straight.
W (S) 7. Chews gum during the presentation.
(E) A 8. Has prepared the presentation ahead of time.

What every speaker enjoys: $\frac{A}{1}$ $\frac{P}{2}$ $\frac{P}{3}$ $\frac{L}{4}$ $\frac{A}{5}$ $\frac{U}{6}$ $\frac{S}{7}$ $\frac{E}{8}$



Conducting Tours and Field Trips

Rabbits, Level 1, Activity 21

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

- How to prepare for a tour and field trip

ABOUT THEMSELVES:

- Their feelings about the importance of proper manners
- Their thoughts about the first impression they make when meeting people

Materials Needed:

- Calendar
- Chalkboard or flip chart

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED: 45 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

We are going to plan a field trip to some rabbitries in this area. First we need to decide which rabbitries we would like to visit.

Select a date and time when your group would like to make this tour.

After you have selected the rabbitries you wish to visit, contact each of the rabbitries to see if you could tour the rabbitry and if it would be convenient to have the group visit on the selected date. If the selected date isn't convenient for the rabbitry, ask for a date that would be convenient.

Now decide on transportation. Will cars be used or will a bus be available? The group needs to be sure that sufficient transportation is available to transport everyone.

At this time have the group make a list of questions that they would like to ask when the group visits each rabbitry.

After the group have completed their assignments, they will need to meet to make final plans. After the field trip is planned each rabbitry should be contacted and given an approximate time when to expect the group.

Leader Notes

Ask the group for suggestions.

The ARBA Yearbook is a good place to find rabbitries in your area.

Appoint a member to make these contacts.

Have member check on and set up transportation.

Use chalkboard.

Leader Notes

Date of the Field Trip:

1. Meet at central location to carpool.
2. Arrive at the first rabbitry on time. The other times are only approximate.
3. Introduce the host to the group. Let the host conduct the tour. The group should ask questions as they are touring the rabbitry.
4. The group should be polite and not touch any of the equipment or rabbits unless given permission to do so.
5. Thank the breeders for showing you their rabbit operation.

After the tour:

The members should write thank you notes to the breeders for the tours.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING:

Q: Manners and social etiquette are a part of getting along with people. As you get older it is easy to become more lax about good manners. As a group, discuss the importance of exhibiting good manners. What benefits do you receive by being polite. Discuss manners in relation to school, jobs, employment opportunities and in simply getting along with other people, peers and adults.

Consider the first impression you might make with future employers. This field trip might be your first contact with a future employers. This field trip might be your first contact with a future employer for you. Discuss the importance of a first impression.

GOING FURTHER

1. Make plans to discuss the field trip in detail after you return.
2. Discuss how field trips can be used to preview possible part-time jobs or careers.

Adapted from a Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service publication written by Clarence W. Linsey, Kansas State Rabbit Breeders Association, and reviewed by James P. Adams, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Programs, Kansas State University.

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4-H 

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