



Rabbit Helper's Guide



Rabbit Project Group Activities

Name _____

County _____



Note to the Project Helper

Welcome to the National 4-H Curriculum "Skills for Life" Rabbit series. This set of four activity guides has been developed to provide you and the youth you support with ideas and activities to expand the rabbit project. As a helper, you are a key person in making the youths' experiences both fun and educational. How you choose to be involved will often determine the success the youth have developing important life skills while learning about rabbits. The youths' interest in rabbits is the vehicle leading to life skill development.

Rabbit Project Outcomes

Through participation in this curriculum youth will:

- Practice the life skills of
 - decision making
 - communicating with others
 - leading self and others
 - planning and organizing
 - learning to learn
- Identify and select quality rabbits
- Demonstrate good rabbit management and health practices
- Develop rabbit fitting and showing skills
- Improve their rabbit marketing skills
- Promote rabbit products and the rabbit industry

Your Role

- Become familiar with the materials in this series
- Support the youth in his/her efforts to set goals and complete each of the three Rabbit Achievement Programs
- Serve as a resource person to help connect youth with the community, resource materials and others knowledgeable about rabbits
- Provide a safe, supportive environment
- Guide, encourage and reward progress
- Evaluate to what extent the youth outcomes are achieved (see page 35)

The Rabbit "Skills for Life" Series

BU- 08080 Rabbit 1 – *What's Happening*
BU- 08081 Rabbit 2 – *Making Tracks*
BU- 08082 Rabbit 3 – *All Ears*
BU- 08083 *Rabbit Helper's Guide*

Youth Activity Guides

Each of the three youth activity guides is designed to be developmentally appropriate for grades 3–5, 6–8, 9–12 respectively, but may be used by youth in any grade based on their project skills and expertise.

The three Achievement Programs for youth to complete with your support are an important part of each guide. By striving to complete the programs, youth will be encouraged to learn more about rabbits and the rabbit industry while practicing and developing important life skills.

Rabbit Helper's Guide

The fourth piece in the series is written to assist you in your helper role with individual youth as well as work effectively with groups of youth interested in the rabbit project. The learn-by-doing activities, as well as most activities in the youth guides, can also be adapted to the family, the classroom or other groups. In this guide, you'll also find helpful hints about characteristics of youth, life skill development, teaching experientially, project meeting ideas as well as answers to many of the activities in the youth guides. The activities in this guide will help you help youth:

- Plan the rabbit project year
- Conduct a rabbit quiz bowl
- Take tours
- Participate in a rabbit skillathon
- Play rabbit word games
- Talk the language of rabbit enthusiasts
- Play rabbit pyramid
- Experience rabbit bingo
- Explore animal welfare issues
- Surf the rabbit web
- Have fun keeping records



**Have fun and thank you
for volunteering to work
with youth!**

Acknowledgements

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American Rabbit
Breeders Association**

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Level 1



BU-08080

Level 2



BU-08081

Level 3



BU-08082

For more on rabbits, look for these other guides in this set.

Rabbit 1 What's Hopping?

Chapter 1 Rabbit Selection and Handling

Hop On Board
Furry Future
Get a Grip
Parts Are Parts

Chapter 2 Rabbit Management

Caring for Rabbits
Gears, Goods and Gadgets
Hutch Sweet Hutch
Hidden Secrets

Chapter 3 Rabbit Health and Nutrition

Bug Off
Sanitation Situation
Chef Hare

Chapter 4 Rabbit Reproduction and Marketing

Rabbit Repro
Kits 'N' Kaboodle
Baby Boom
Off to Market

Rabbit 2 Making Tracks

Chapter 1 Rabbit Selection and Showing

You Be the Judge
Take One
Top Hat and Tails

Chapter 2 Rabbit Management

Tattoo Parlor
Homeward Bound
Dollars and Sense

Chapter 3 Rabbit Health and Reproduction

Administering Medicine
Tipping the Scales
Disease Detectives

Chapter 4 Marketing Rabbits

Going Public
Hare Harvest
We'd Love To Have You To Dinner
An Animal Career...Is It For Me?

Rabbit 3 All Ears

Chapter 1 Breeding and Selection

All in the Family
X's and Y's
Culling by the Numbers
Recognizing Rabbit Types
Determining Pregnancy

Chapter 2 Management and Disease Prevention

Designing a Rabbitry
What's Inside?
Dr. Jackyl and Mr. Hare

Chapter 3 Shows and Showmanship

On the Road Again
The Best of the Best
Registering a Rabbit

Chapter 4 Marketing and Project Expansion

Researching the Law
Rabbit Marketing 101
Broader Horizons



Youth Learning Characteristics

The 9–11 year olds

Active is the word for this group! Activities should encourage physical involvement because 9–11 year-old boys and girls are anything but still and quiet.

Hands-on involvement with objects is helpful. Children this age are still fairly concrete thinkers and will give adults more attention if they are both seeing and doing things. They also need many opportunities to share their thoughts and reactions to others.

Children at this stage are beginning to think logically and symbolically and are beginning to understand abstract ideas. As they consider an idea, they think it is right or wrong, great or disgusting, fun or boring. There is very little middle ground.

The role of the helper is crucial at this stage. These children look to adults for approval and follow rules primarily out of respect for adults. Individual evaluation by adults is preferred over group competition, where only one can be the best. Comparison with the success of others is difficult for these children. It erodes self-confidence. Instead of comparing children with each other, build positive self-concepts by comparing present to past performances for the individual.

This is also the age of the “**joiners**.” Boys and girls like to be in organized groups of others similar to themselves. They generally are concerned with immediate self reward. The satisfaction of completing a project often comes from pleasing the volunteer or parent rather than from the value of the activity itself. Often participation in community service projects are enjoyed because youth can see they are making a difference in another’s life.

These youngsters have a strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile. School and other pressures are demanding. Individual improvement should continue to be emphasized. Youngsters want to know how much they have improved and what they should do to be better next time. Individual evaluation and encouragement from an adult can have amazing results.

The 12–14 year olds

This developmental stage varies widely among young teens. **Growth spurts** beginning with adolescence occur at a wide range of ages, with girls usually maturing before boys. These rapid changes in physical appearance may make some teens uncomfortable. Faster-developing teens may feel thrust into a more adult world they didn’t choose. Slower-developing teens may be uneasy about their lack of changes.

Young teens move from concrete to more **abstract thinking**. Playing with ideas is as much fun as playing sports. Ready-made solutions from adults are often rejected by young teens in favor of **finding their own solutions**. Volunteers who provide supervision, support and minimal direction will do well with this group.

Small groups provide the best opportunity for young teens to **test ideas**. Justice and equality become important issues. Opinions of peers become more important than opinions of parents and other adults. Teens enjoy the social interaction and acceptance they receive in **groups**.

As puberty approaches, young teens begin a roller coaster ride of hormones and emotions. This time period seems to present the biggest challenge to a young person’s self-concept. These youngsters face so many changes that they hardly know who they are. Young teens begin to test values and seek adults who are accepting and willing to talk about values and morals. Adults can help by providing self-discovery activities leading teens to self-knowledge.

Continue to avoid comparing young people with each other and try not to embarrass them. They want to be part of something important and have opportunities to **develop responsibility** and **demonstrate leadership skills**.

The 15–18 year olds

Most teens of this age recognize their own special abilities and talents. In most cases, they have adjusted to the many post-puberty changes. By now teens tend to be wrapped up in themselves and their peer group rather than family, teachers and other adults. Relationship skills are usually more developed and dating increases. Acceptance by members of the opposite sex is of higher importance.

Mid-teens begin to think about their future and realistic plans. Their **vocational goals** influence the activities that they select. Teens set goals based on their personal needs and priorities. Any goals set by others are generally rejected. As they master abstract thinking, they can imagine new things in ways that sometimes challenge adults.

Older teens can generally initiate and carry out their own tasks **without supervision**. They can help younger members plan and complete their projects. They should be encouraged to take on this leadership role. An adult volunteer can be helpful by arranging new experiences in areas of interest to teens, but must be sure to allow for plenty of input from the youth. The volunteer should play the role of advisor/coach for independent workers.



Developing Life Skills

Life skills are defined in the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model (Hendricks, 1996) as "Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life." As a volunteer working with youth in this project, you have many opportunities to assist youth in developing life skills as they acquire project-related skills and knowledge.

TLS Model

The TLS Model identifies and divides the major life skills targeted by 4-H youth development by the four H's from the 4-H Clover that represent Head, Heart, Hands and Health. These four are further divided in categories of life skills and then into specific life skills as shown here. The TLS Model handbook further divides each general life skill into separate learning opportunities to develop the skill.

Experiential Model

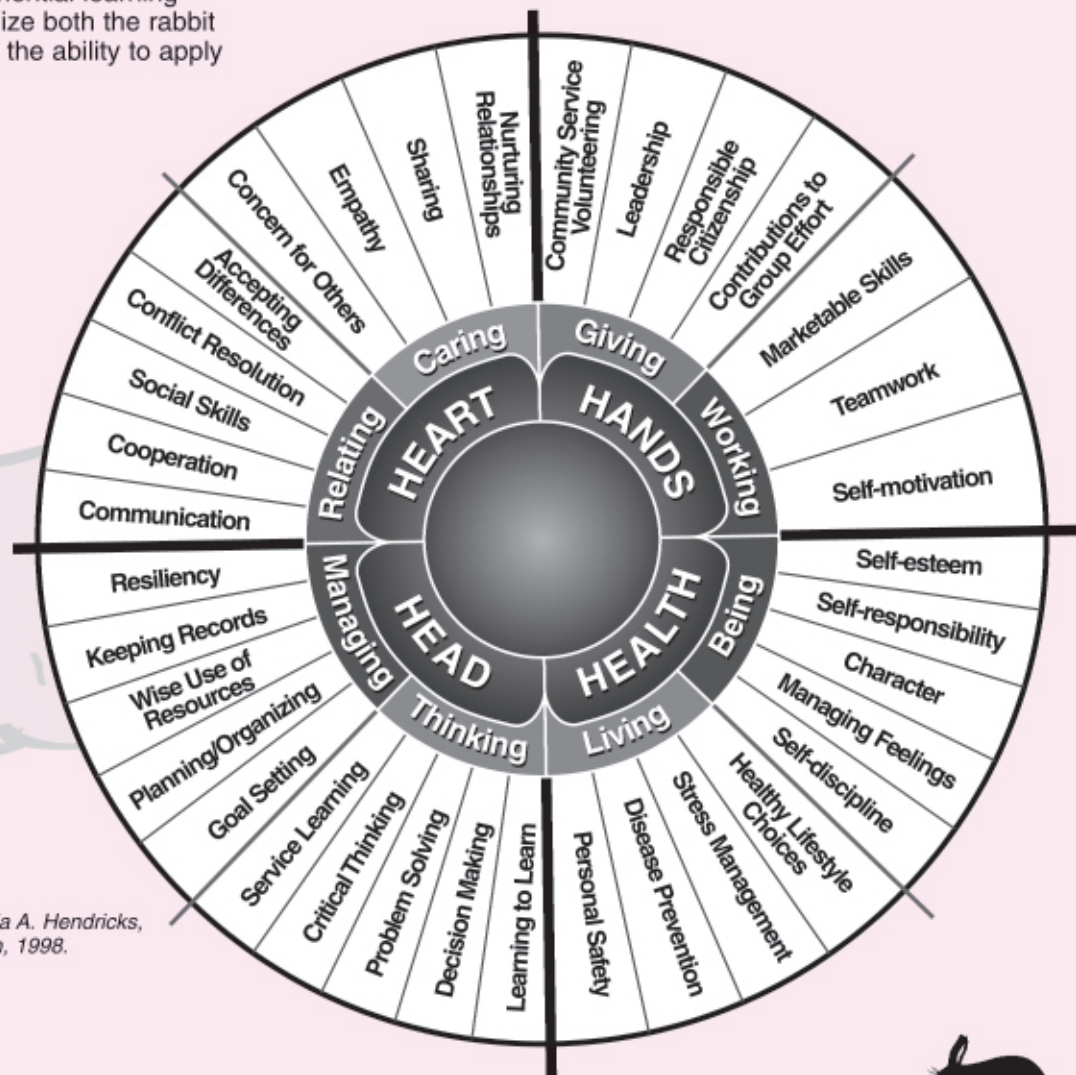
As you capitalize on the youth's interest in this project, your challenge is to provide age-appropriate opportunities for youth to experience and practice these skills until they are able to be used everyday. By using the experiential learning process to help youth fully internalize both the rabbit content and the life skill, they gain the ability to apply both types of skills appropriately.

Show of Success Indicator

Each activity in this series shows both the project skill and life skills youth will practice and develop. A well-designed activity will involve the youth in the practice of several life skills. In one activity youth may practice decision making, communicating and goal setting. Only one is targeted for each activity so you can specifically discuss it with the youth when the activity is completed. "Success Indicator" states what the youth would do to achieve the learner outcome for the activity. This indicator usually includes both the life skill and project skill. This is the goal for youth to achieve and for you to support their efforts to achieve.

Helping youth develop and understand important life skills while learning about their project is a challenge. However, the youth will appreciate your extra effort now and in the future when they look back on these experiences.

Targeting Life Skills Model



"Targeting Life Skills Model" by Patricia A. Hendricks, Ph.D., Iowa State University Extension, 1998.

Teaching and Learning Experientially

The 4-H Youth Development Program has promoted the five steps of the experiential learning model as an essential part of all educational experiences. You'll notice that each of the activities in this series, as well as those in all other curriculum products that have qualified for the National 4-H Collection, use this model.

There are several reasons the five specific and sequential steps of the model work well when the objective is to combine the development of project subject matter and personal life skills in a single activity or series of related activities. The experiential learning process engages the learners in the activity, encourages them to think more, work harder and ultimately learn more thoroughly than with traditional teaching methods such as telling or showing.



"Experiential learning takes place when a person is involved in an activity, looks back and evaluates it, determines what was useful or important to remember and uses this information to perform another activity."

John Dewey

Experiential Learning Model

5. Apply

What was really learned and can the youth express how they can use what they learned? Or better yet, can they actually show that they have mastered a skill by performing another activity that requires the new skill? Again the emphasis is placed on the life skill practiced rather than the subject matter skill.

4. Generalize

In this step the discussion becomes more personal. So what? is the question. What did the experience mean to me personally? To my everyday life? The subject matter alone could remain the focus of the discussion in all five steps of the model. However, because the major outcome is to help youth develop important life skills, a major part of the discussion is shifted to the life skill the youth practiced while doing the activity or experience. If the method employed required the youth to work in teams to complete the activity, then questions about teamwork would be appropriate. If the methodology asks the youth to communicate, then communications skills are discussed.

1. Experience

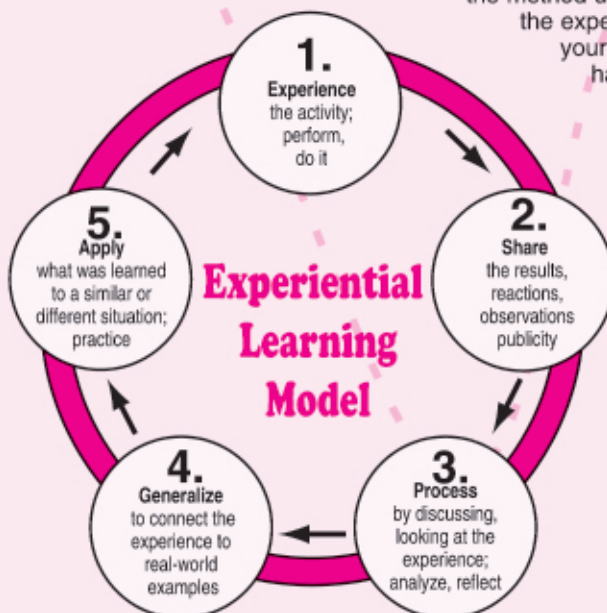
Note the model begins with an experience. Action! This immediately focuses the attention on the learner rather than the teacher. When the learner is encouraged to learn by doing before being told or shown how, opportunities are presented for a wide variety of life skills to be practiced depending on the method used to engage the youth in the experience. As the group leader your challenge is to "sit on your hands" as much as possible during the experience step. You and the youth involved will quickly learn what the skill or knowledge level is. Many times you will hear "We figured this out all by ourselves!"

2. Share

As the model shows, sharing is simply asking the group or individuals: What did you do? What happened? What did it feel like to do (whatever)? This step should generate lots of information to lead to the process step.

3. Process

The questions and discussion now become more focused on what was most important about the experience. Common themes that emerge from the sharing session are explored further. Often the key teaching points related to the subject matter are discussed.



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E., "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals" © 1983 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Chapter 1

Rabbit Observation and Selection

Tour Time

Throughout these rabbit activities, visits to rabbitries or visits with a local breeder, have been mentioned. One of the best learning experiences that youth can have is to actually visit or tour sites within the industry they are studying. Conducting a tour of a rabbitry will require much planning and organization by your members to make it educational, interesting and fun.

“Hop to it!”

Have your group develop a checklist of things to do before going on the tour. Break into teams and discuss information that will be needed for the tour to be a success. Ask each team to generate a list of items that should be considered. Then combine all the ideas on one checklist. The next step is to have each team take responsibility for playing a part in the tour. Have the group make a list of questions to ask during the tour. Areas for questions might include housing, management, equipment, breeding program, etc. Finally, actually tour a rabbitry or another enterprise related to the project. Follow the tour by asking individuals or each team to report on one aspect.

“Rabbit Rap”

Share What You Did

- What were the top five things to do before a tour?

Process What's Important

- How did you organize this activity?
- How did making a checklist of To Do's before you started your tour help?
- What did you like about planning as part of a team?

Generalize to Your Life

- What challenges did you face planning this activity?
- What did you learn about planning and organizing an activity?

Apply What You Learned

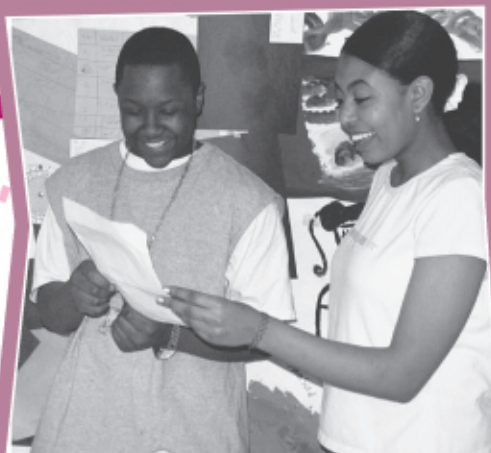
- How does making a checklist make it easier to get things done?

Rabbit Skill:
Life Skill:
Success Indicator:



Conducting tours
Planning and organizing
Plans and organizes
a tour of a rabbitry.
One hour to plan

Time Involved:
Suggested Group Size: 10–20



Rabbit Facts

Tour Checklist

- ___ Place
- ___ Contact Person
- ___ Date
- ___ Time
- ___ Transportation
- ___ Prepared questions to ask
- ___ Meals
- ___ Clothing
- ___ Video camera
- ___ Videographer
- ___ Processing the experience

“Bounding” Ahead

1. Plan and conduct your tour as you have started using your checklist.



Identifying Rabbit Breeds

One of the first interests of youth in the rabbit project is to be able to name each of the breeds and even the varieties within the breeds. As the project helper you can involve them in many fun activities to help them learn the breeds and varieties. Just some of the many ways are outlined in this activity. By involving them in fun activities you'll also be helping them learn how to learn.

Rabbit Skill:

Life Skill:

Success Indicator:

Time Involved:

Suggested Group Size: 5 to 15

Materials Needed:

Identify breeds of rabbits.

Learning to learn
Researches and identifies 15 rabbit breeds.

One hour

A chart of rabbit breeds.

Getting Started

A good supply of breed pictures is very helpful. Often youth enjoy looking for pictures of their favorite breeds. Prior to the meeting ask youth to collect breed pictures. Encourage some to write to the A.R.B.A. and breed associations to obtain pictures.

“Hop to it!”

Here are several ways for youth to learn the breeds.

Breed on the Back. Simply tape different names of a breed and perhaps pictures of a breed on the back of each youth. They then ask question of other youth until they have guessed the breed on their back. Encourage only yes/no answers at first.

Matching. Divide the group into teams of two to four youth. Give each team a set of 10 or so breed pictures on cards with breed names and cards with varieties listed. Have each team match the breed, pictures, breed names and breed varieties. When each group has completed its match pair the team with another and have one team check the other's match. This activity often stimulates excellent discussion about the breeds.

Barn Breed Scavenger Hunt. The rabbit barn at the fair or at a rabbit show is an excellent place for youth to discover breeds new to them. Have teams of two see how many different breeds and varieties they can find at the show. A notecard and pencil works well to record. In just 15-20 minutes youth will often be able to fill the notecard. After this introductory activity more in-depth discussion about certain breeds is appropriate.

Flash Cards. Again divide into teams and have each team see how many breeds they can identify.

Quiz Bowl. The quiz bowl format works well to learn

in-depth information about the breeds. Questions might relate to any of the following areas:

1. Breed origin
2. Mature weight
3. Varieties
4. Use
5. Popularity
6. Identifying features
7. Other

Breed Reports. Ask each youth to draw a breed name from a hat and either prepare a short report using resource materials available or perhaps give an impromptu speech about the breed. If you have a small group perhaps they can choose a breed. This is a good way to help youth develop communication skills as you quickly learn what they know.

Charades. One at a time have youth draw the name of a breed out of a hat and present a charade to the rest of the group until the group identifies it. Verbal charades where the youth give clues to the group works well for this activity.

Draw and Color. Many youth enjoy drawing their favorite breeds and coloring them. These can then be used for several of the activities previously described.



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

- What new breeds did you discover?
- What did you learn about a breed that you didn't know before?

Process What's Important

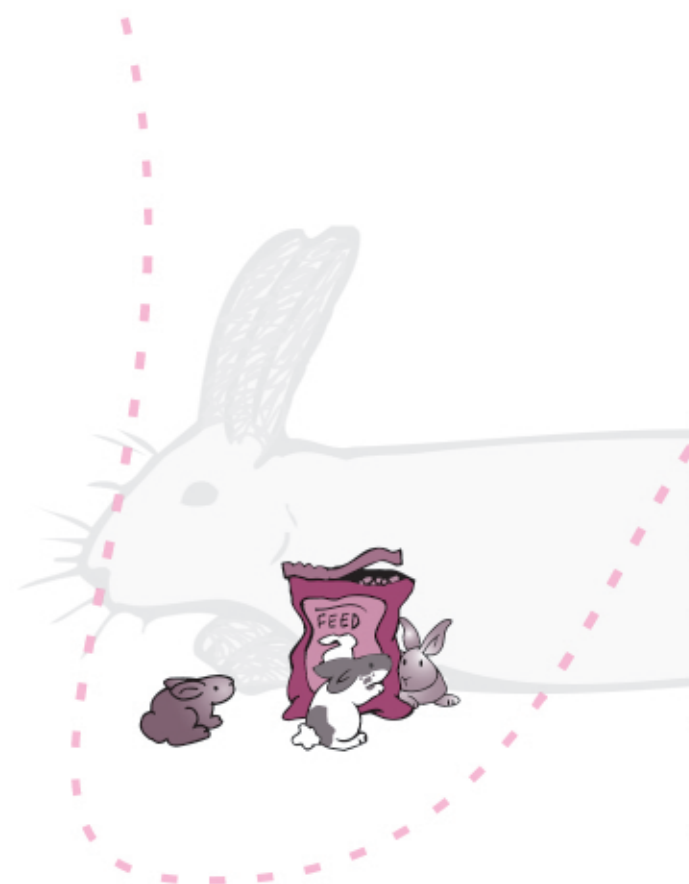
- Why are some breeds more popular than others?
- What breeds are primarily raised for show? Commercial production?

Generalize to Your Life

- How does knowing the correct names of items help you learn about them?

Apply What You Learned

- Which method of learning do you prefer? Why?



Fur and Wool



There are four different types of hair among rabbit breeds: normal fur, satin fur, rex fur and wool. **Normal fur** has a dense undercoat protected by longer guard hairs. **Satin fur** is finer than normal fur and has a glass-like, transparent hair shaft which reflects light and produces a bright luster or sheen. **Rex fur** is very dense. Its **guard hairs** are nearly the same length as the undercoat, and the fur stands at a 90 degree angle to the skin, giving a plush, velvet-like feeling. The **wool type** has long fibers that are collected and spun into yarn to make crafts and garments, or sold in a raw state. There are four distinct types of wool: **French wool**, **English wool**, **Giant wool** and **Satin wool**. They reflect the four distinct breeds of Angora rabbits. Examples of wool breeds are: American Fuzzy Lop; Jersey Woolly; along with English, French, Giant and Satin Angoras.

Run your hand lightly up the back from the tail. Normal fur should appear bright and alive. The fur should not be soft and downy. There are three points to check: texture, density, and balance and condition.

Texture. The feel of the fur when stroked from head to tail. The texture of the fur should not be harsh or wire like, nor do you want woolly fur. Look for fur that is coarse enough in guard hairs to offer some resistance when you stroke the fur. Guard hairs are heavier hairs that protrude above the undercoat and protect it. The undercoat should be fine and soft. The rabbit should also have the proper surface and undercoat color for the breed and fur or wool type.

Density. The amount of fur in a given area (number of hairs per square inch). Look for a good, thick coat of fur.

Balance and Condition. The even length and smoothness of the fur. Look for fur of a uniform length, not too long and not too short. A dense coat of short fur is better than a long, thin coat. Good texture and density along with uniform length make up proper balance. The hair should be set tight in the skin. There should be no breaks in the fur, no mats of fur and no stains. The guard hairs should be supple and glossy. The fur should look alive and brilliant.

Bounding Ahead

1. Help a youth select a breed to raise.
2. Make a scrapbook of rabbit breeds.
3. Make a display about your favorite rabbit breed.



The A.R.B.A. Standard of Perfection is an excellent source of breed information including pictures.



Explore more at

www.4-hcurriculum.org

National 4-H Curriculum



Checking For Disqualifications

What makes a flaw in a rabbit a disqualification?

Disqualifications are conditions that make a rabbit unsuitable for competition at a show on a given day. In these activities, the youth will learn to identify disqualifications in rabbits and determine whether or not a rabbit is fit to show.

Rabbit Skill:



Identifying rabbit show disqualifications.

Life Skill:

Making decisions

Success Indicator:

Decides which flaws in a rabbit are disqualifications.

Time Involved:

60 minutes

Suggested Group Size:

Six to ten

Materials Needed:

Paper, note cards, pens, model rabbits, ARBA Standard of Perfection, rabbit posters

Getting Started

Learning the disqualifications and where they are located on the rabbit is more fun if the group is active. One way to energize everyone is to play a game involving teams. First have your group make two sets of note cards for each team—one set with the parts of a rabbit and a second set listing disqualifications. Ideas of what to include are shown in Rabbit Facts. You may also want to add items that are not disqualifications to the note cards. If 3 x 5 note cards are used you can play other games with these. Post It Notes also work fine. You'll also need an outline of a rabbit drawn on a poster 2' x 3' for each team.

“Hop to it!”

Divide the group into teams of three to four youth. Tape the rabbit poster on a wall a few feet from each team. Put a set of cards next to each team. The rabbit parts cards should be face down and the disqualifications cards face-up. The game begins with one youth from each team turning over a rabbit parts card. The teams then search through their pile of disqualification and non disqualification cards to find a disqualification that relates to that part of the body. As soon as an appropriate card is found a team member runs and tapes that card on the outline of the rabbit where the disqualification is located.

After the person doing the taping has returned another body part card is turned over and a disqualification found and taped on the rabbit. The game ends when one team has gone through all the parts cards. Now each team checks the other team's rabbit to see how many disqualifications are identified and placed correctly. Any differences of opinion must be resolved by the teams. The team with the most correct answers wins the round.



Because there may be several disqualifications related to a given body part, the game may be repeated until all the disqualifications are used.



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

- What did you learn about disqualifications?
- What was the easiest part about deciding which flaws were disqualifications?
- Did everyone in your group agree what disqualification to select? What happened if they didn't agree?

Process What's Important

- How did you work together with your team? What did you do when you disagreed?
- Why does a rabbit breeder need to be able to identify disqualifications?

Generalize to Your Life

- When do you make decisions that require everyone in the group to agree? What do you do when you don't agree with the group?
- What kinds of decisions do you make with input from other people?
- What kinds of decisions do you make on your own?

Apply What You Learned

- Think about times when decisions must be made that eliminate a person from participation in an activity, such as a team sport that requires a limited number of players.
- How do you think you can best decide who is included? On your own? With input from others? By total group agreement?



ARBA Disqualifications from Competition

General

- Abscesses
- Tumor or abnormal swelling
- Rupture or hernia
- Overweight for breed
- Underweight for breed
- Dying, plucking, trimming to alter appearance

Ear

- Ear canker
- Illegible tattoo
- Tattoo not in left ear
- Ears carried below horizontal in regular eared breeds
- Torn ears

Belly

- Pot belly

Vent

- Vent disease

Eye

- Abnormal eye discharge
- Blindness in one or both eyes
- Off-colored eyes
- Unmatched eyes
- Spot or specks on eye
- Marbling

Skin

- Mange
- Fungus growth
- Scabby condition

Nose

- White purulent nasal discharge

Genitalia

- Split penis
- Only one testicle
- Wrong sex

Legs

- Crooked legs

Teeth

- Malocclusion (buck or wolf teeth)
- Missing or broken teeth

Breast

- Pigeon breast (a narrow chest with prominent "V" protruding breast bone)

Hocks

- Sore hocks showing infection or bleeding

Tail

- Tail set permanently out of line
- Screwtail or bobtail

Toenails

- Missing toenails including dewclaw
- Unmatched toenail on the same foot
- White toenails on colored breeds

Fur

- Foreign spots
- White spots in colored animal
- Wrong undercolor for variety
- Excessive white hairs in colored section

Bounding Ahead

1. Find out how you can help with a local Special Olympics...then go do it.
2. Attend a rabbit show. How do the judges make their decisions? Did you agree with all the decisions made? Why or why not?



A rabbit is the only animal that will produce 10 times its own weight in one year.

