



Rabbit Showmanship

The goal of Rabbit Showmanship is to show the nudges that you are confident and knowledgeable in the handling and examining of the animal. The following is a general explanation of the showmanship procedure. Be sure that you review the Michigan 4-H Showmanship Guidelines. You may also want to have someone in the rabbit area show you how showmanship is done.

Handling Rabbits

First you will need to turn the rabbit so that you may pick it up. Make sure that you lift the rabbit high enough so that the toenails will not catch the carpet. Now that the rabbit is turned, grasp the ears and back of the neck and slightly lift. Now with your other hand lift the rabbit under its hindquarters. Place the rabbit against your chest in a football hold with the head tucked into your armpit. Make sure that the rabbit is always supported.

Posing Rabbits

Place the rabbit on the table facing the judge. Place the front feet under the eyes and the back feet under the hips. Placing your hand over the rabbit's eyes will help to calm the rabbit. Make sure to set the ears and the tail. Once the rabbits posed, lower your arms to your sides and take a step back from the table.

Examination of Rabbits

In the examination the judge is looking for signs of illness, disease, and disqualification.

Check the rabbit in the following order:

1. Ears
2. Eyes
3. Now you need to check the underside. Turn the rabbit over using the techniques similar to handling the rabbit
4. Nose
5. Teeth
6. Throat
7. Front Legs
8. Front Toenails
9. Stomach
10. Back Legs
11. Hocks

To contact an expert in your area, visit msue.anr.msu.edu/experts or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464)

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12. Back Toenails
13. Sex
14. Tail
15. Turn the rabbit back onto its feet to finish the examination. Be sure to pose your rabbit again.
16. Tail carriage
17. Ear Carriage
18. Meat Quality
19. Fur Quality
20. Finish by re-posing the rabbit.

After the examination is complete the judge will ask you questions to test your knowledge of rabbits. Remember to review the Rabbit Showmanship Guidelines!

Showmanship Questions and Answers

Questions:

- What breed is your rabbit?
- What are the varieties/groups in your breed of rabbit?
- What is the gestation period of a rabbit?
- Tattoo goes in which ear?
- What is the single most important nutrient for a rabbit?
- How many teeth does a rabbit have?
- How many toenails does a rabbit have?
- How many different fur types are there? Name them.
- How many body types are there? Name them.
- How many breeds of rabbits are there?
- What percentage of a rabbit's body is bone?
- What side of a rabbit has the most fur?
- What is the misalignment of the upper and lower front teeth called?
- At what age does a rabbit become a senior?
- What is a sore or cracked foot called?
- What is coccidiosis?
- What is molt? What can bring it on?

Answers:

- Make sure you know the breed and variety of your rabbit. If not sure, ask!
- Check the Standard of Perfection for this information
- 28 to 32 days
- The rabbits left ear
- Water
- 28 teeth
- Front feet – 4 and dew claw. Back feet – 4.
- 4 fur types. Normal, satin, rex and wool.
- 5 body types. Compact, commercial, cylindrical, semi-arch, and full-arch.
- 49 recognized breeds
- 7 – 8 percent
- The outside
- Malocclusion. Also know as buck-teeth or wolf-teeth
- Depends on breed. 6 class rabbits are seniors at 8 months old. 4 class at 6 months.
- Sore hocks
- A disease in the liver or intestines
- When the rabbit sheds its fur. Weather changes, diet, disease, and stress.

