

Kalamazoo County 4-H Rabbit Project Guidelines

Updated 2024

Project General Requirements

All Breed, Pet, Cloverbud, and Agility rabbits must be in the 4-H Member's possession by June 1st of the current year. Market Rabbits must be in the 4-H Member's possession at least four weeks prior to the beginning of fair. Breed Rabbits must be purebred and an ARBA recognized breed.

Each Rabbit may only be entered and shown in one class with the exception of Progeny. If more than one Rabbit is being exhibited, each individual rabbit must be entered separately on the fair entry form.

Rabbit entries will be limited by the number of cages available. If entries exceed cage space, the Superintendent(s) will determine the most fair and equitable way to reduce the number of entries.

Rabbit Fitting and Showmanship is **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** for all 4-H members including Cloverbuds.

All Rabbit trophy winners (breed, market, and fitting and showing) will be responsible for clean up of the show arena after the completion of Fitting and Showing. This includes; trash pick-up, and putting tables and chairs away. Youth who are selling rabbits in the auction are also responsible for helping to clean the show arena prior to the auction on Thursday and following the auction on Friday.

It is the responsibility of all 4-H Members to sign up for at least one 2-4 hour barn duty shift during fair week. Members under the age of 11 must always have a parent present. It is mandatory that each 4-H member and/or family help with the set up and tear down of the barn before and at the end of fair.

Project Animal Verification

Breed, Pet, Cloverbud, and Agility rabbits will be verified by tattoo at the MANDATORY Fit and Show/Picnic in June prior to fair. Those rabbits not verified by the Rabbit Superintendent will not be allowed to show at the Kalamazoo County Fair.

Market Rabbits will be weighed and verified by tattoo at the MANDATORY Market Rabbit check in 3 weeks prior to fair. Those Market Rabbits not verified by a Rabbit Superintendent will not be allowed to show or go to auction at the Kalamazoo County Fair. Rabbits that have not met the above tattooing requirements may not be exhibited at the fair.

All Project Rabbits must be permanently and legibly tattooed in the left ear. It is the responsibility of the 4-H member to tattoo their project animals or make a request to a Rabbit Superintendent for their rabbits to be tattooed prior to the Mandatory Fit and Show/Picnic.

Show attire:

The show attire for rabbits in all classes (showmanship, market, breed, show jumping, and agility) is black pants (preferably jeans), any clean shoes, and a white long sleeved shirt (preferably button down and tucked in). Long hair should be pulled away from the face and the appearance of the 4-Her overall should be clean, neat, and tidy. Exhibitors may also choose to wear a white show (lab) coat, but it is not required. Black jeans and white button-up shirts can typically be found at a great price at local resale shops if they aren't something you have on hand and don't want to buy new to wear once or twice.

Rabbit Educational and Notebook Requirements

All 4-H members must complete either a notebook or an educational poster (if you show market animals, this is in addition to your market notebook).

Educational Posters

Educational posters can cover anything related to rabbits and rabbit husbandry. This is your chance to teach the public about rabbits. You should be increasing your knowledge yearly. Some good topics to consider are:

- Breeds
- Basic Care (housing, nutrition, equipment, grooming and handling)
- Anatomy of a rabbit
- Body types (arched, semi-arched, compact, commercial, cylindrical/snaky)
- Fur types (normal, rex, satin, wool)
- Market carcass parts (nothing graphic please)
- Nutrition
- Diseases & ailments
- Behaviors
- Showmanship
- Breeding basics

Yearly Rabbit Science Notebook Requirements

Notebook guidelines (non market):

- Notebooks may be typed or handwritten and should include the following materials **in order** in a 3-ring binder.
- Your notebook should have a cover page that contains all relevant information about you as a 4-H member (name, age, years in project, community club, etc.)
- All the pages should be numbered, and you should have a corresponding table of contents.
- The most current year should be in the front, followed by the prior years in reserve, separated by labeled tabs. Only the current year will be judged, but the others may be looked at to show that the youth has increased in their knowledge.
- Your notebook should reflect a descriptive (illustrations and photos), detailed, complete best effort.
- For the purpose of this guide, “years” refers to years completing the notebook, not in the project.

1st year:

- Your 4-H story: how did you come to be in the rabbit project area?
- What is your rabbitry like?
 - Your breed of rabbit (include the Standard of Perfection for your breed of rabbit if applicable)
 - Housing & Equipment
 - Feed & water
 - Handling
- What is your favorite part about raising rabbits? The most difficult part?
- What is something that you learned about raising rabbits this year?
- What is one goal that you have for the future of your rabbit project?

2nd year:

- How has your project grown or changed since last year?
- Describe and tell the important characteristics of three breeds of rabbits. Start with your own and add two others. Include origin, breed standard, and uses.
- Using a diagram, locate and identify the parts of the rabbit.
- What is something that you learned about raising rabbits this year?
- What is one goal that you have for the future of your rabbit project?

3rd year:

- How has your project grown or changed since last year?

- Describe the cause, symptoms, treatment, and prevention for three common rabbit ailments.
- Describe the difference between a disqualification and a fault and provide examples of each.
- What is something that you learned about raising rabbits this year?
- What is one goal that you have for the future of your rabbit project?

4th year:

- How has your project grown or changed since last year?
- What is ARBA? Explain their goals and describe how they help you as a 4-H rabbit raiser.
- What is a rabbit show like? Describe the process, order, experience, describe showmanship, etc.
- What is something that you learned about raising rabbits this year?
- What is one goal that you have for the future of your rabbit project?

5th year

- How has your project grown or changed since last year?
- What is a pedigree and why is important? Create a sample pedigree and label the parts / explain what each shows and why it is important.
- Describe the rabbit reproductive cycle from conception through weaning.
- What is something that you learned about raising rabbits this year?
- What is one goal that you have for the future of your rabbit project?

6th year and beyond

- How has your project grown or changed since last year?
- Add knowledge of two of the following per year (in any order):
 - Body types
 - Fur types
 - Infectious diseases
 - Zoonotic diseases
 - Parasitic diseases
 - Tattooing and tattoo systems
 - ARBA Registration / Grand Champion
 - Rabbits breeds other than your own
 - Sanitation
 - Genetics
 - Illustrate a class of four rabbits of a single breed (or market class). Place the class in order and then write a sample of reasons as to why you placed the class the way you did. Use correct terms.
- What is something that you learned about raising rabbits this year?
- What is one goal that you have for the future of your rabbit project?

Breeding Rabbits

Rabbits will be exhibited by breed, sex, and age (Senior bucks, Senior Does, Intermediate Bucks, Intermediate Does, Junior Bucks, Junior Does) as designated by the ARBA Standard of Perfection. Rabbits exhibiting a disqualification will receive a B rating.

Market Rabbits

Market Rabbit Records are required to be completed for the market project. Market Pens will consist of three (3) fryer rabbits of the same breed (or crossbreed) and variety to be sold at the 4-H livestock auction.

Fryer Rabbits must weigh between 3.5 – 5.5 lbs and be 12 weeks old or less by the week of fair. Roaster Rabbits must weigh between 5.5 – 9.0 lbs and be less than 6 months old. Market classes include: Market Pen (3 fryer rabbits), Single Fryer, and Single Roaster.

Market animals exhibiting a disqualification will receive a B rating but may still sell at auction. Disqualifications affecting the meat quality will receive a C rating and may not be sold in the 4-H livestock auction.

4-H Members must be 8 years old by January 1st of the current year to sell in the 4-H Livestock auction. Grand Champions and Reserve Champions are exempt from this count to ensure that all Champions will be included in the sale.

Members selling in the 4-H Livestock auction are expected to assist on the sale day to transport animals, serve buyer refreshments, etc. Members must be present at the 4-H Livestock auction to sell their project(s). The only exception to this rule would be members that are participating in the 4-H horse show or other 4-H animal project that requires their presence. Please see the Rabbit Project Superintendent if you will not be able to be at the sale.

A 4" x 6" photo of you and your project animal(s) is needed for each sale. The photo is to be turned into the Rabbit Superintendent no later than Fair check in. Please dress neatly, SMILE, and print on photo paper. Put your name and rabbit's tattoo ID on the back of each photo. These photos are often displayed in the buyer's place of business, so they need to look good!

Pet Rabbits

There is a limit of one pet rabbit per member and 2 per family. The member's family may not own or raise any other rabbits. The Pet Rabbit Project is designed for members that cannot breed or improve the quality of their project animals but still want to participate in 4-H Rabbits.

Cloverbud Rabbit Project

Open to ALL Cloverbuds 5-7 years of age by January 1st of the current year. Cloverbuds may choose any rabbit project but cannot sell market animals in the 4-H Livestock Sale. Cloverbuds may choose a Rabbit Science Notebook, Poster, or Still Exhibit to satisfy their rabbit science requirement.

Progeny

Progeny class entries must consist of a purebred Senior buck or Senior Doe AND a Junior Buck or Junior Doe that is an offspring of the senior animal. The senior animal must be shown in its appropriate breed class. The junior animal must be shown in its appropriate breed or market class. The object of the class is to show the members' progress in improving the quality of their project. The junior rabbit must show improvement over the senior rabbit.

Rabbit Agility

Each 4-H member will be allowed to bring either one pet or breed rabbit to the fair to participate in rabbit agility. Each rabbit will need to be verified with a tattoo and follow all other requirements within the Rabbit Project guidelines. Each rabbit will need to be entered in the appropriate class on the fair entry form.