



Showroom Tips

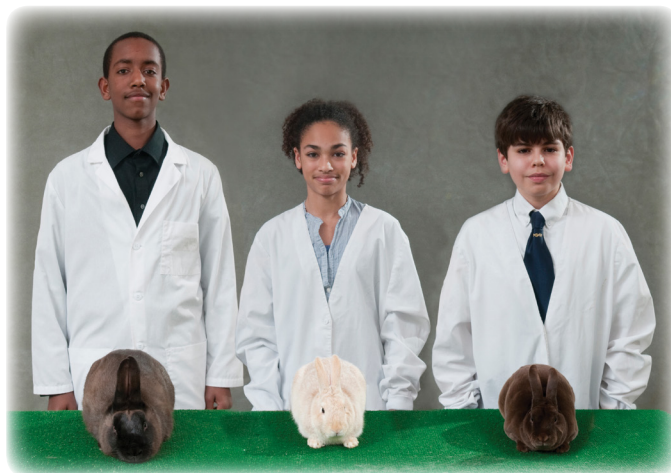
Introduction

Rabbit shows made their debut in the United States in the late 1800s and have become quite popular over the years. Every day, the number of individuals engaged in the hobby grows substantially. All breeds and varieties of rabbits that have been recognized by the American Rabbit Breeders Association can be shown. Shows range from small 4-H club shows and county fairs to huge state and national events. This variety in location and competition allows each show to have a different atmosphere and environment. Rabbit shows in Michigan have the same concept as rabbit shows in California but their atmospheres might feel different.

Rabbit shows give exhibitors a chance to display their rabbits in a public setting and have their animals rated against those of other exhibitors. Shows also allow you to test your own fitting and showing skills as well as earn recognition and awards. They are also informative opportunities to have your rabbits evaluated and to compare them with others of the same type. These events also provide opportunities to create relationships with individuals who have the same interest as you. In short, you can have fun and learn more about your peers, 4-H project animals and the species in general.

Keep in mind everyone at a judging table wants his or her rabbit to win. This spirit of competition can be exhilarating. You must remember, however, that only one rabbit from each class will earn the highest award. Even though finishing “up the track” can be hard to handle, always remember to exhibit good sportsmanship. Thank the judge for his or her opinion and remember to congratulate the other people in your class, too. They will appreciate a good word from you no matter how their rabbits placed.

By entering animals in a show, you are agreeing to follow the rules of that show. The rules govern not only the show procedures but also proper conduct for show officials, exhibitors and visitors as well. Show rules vary, but the following list of “do’s and don’ts” apply to most rabbit shows.



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Rabbit Showroom Do's:

- ▶ Fill out your entry form neatly and completely, and send the form and entry fees to the show secretary before the entry deadline. Some shows involve a pre-entry system in which forms are due before show day, while some take entries the day of the show. Some shows also accept online entries, so make sure you are aware of when and how your entries are due. Be sure your rabbits are the proper breed, group, variety, age, sex and weight for the class or classes you've entered them in. The *American Rabbit Breeders Association Standard of Perfection* can help answer most questions about which class to enter. However, other breeders will also be more than happy to help determine the correct classes for you to enter. You just have to ask.
- ▶ Allow yourself enough time to arrive and get situated at the show. This helps to make sure you are not too late for entries, your classes or important information.
- ▶ Volunteer to help the show committee if you have time and energy. Committee members are often accepting of anyone willing to lend a hand.
- ▶ Prepare your rabbits for show by handling and posing them often. Begin their training well before the show. By working with your animal ahead of time, you are making it easier for the judge to evaluate your animal. An unruly animal may not show as well as one that has been worked with.
- ▶ Bring your rabbits to the show in carrying cages that are the proper size and construction for your rabbits. The larger the animal, the more space it will need to travel in. Be aware of your breed's specific needs when packing for the show. Cages with leak-proof bottoms are also a must.
- ▶ Legibly and permanently earmark or tattoo your rabbits in the left ear. This must be done with special tattoo ink. Permanent marker within the ear may cause your animal to be disqualified. Plan to have tattoos done before show day, but if this is not possible, there may be individuals who tattoo rabbits at the shows for a small fee.
- ▶ Accept the feed and water provided at the show or bring your own. It is often better to bring your own for your animals may not be used to what is provided at the show and may choose to not consume it. Also, if you will be gone an extended time to attend the show, make sure you pack the adequate feed and water supplies.
- ▶ Have your rabbits on the judging table promptly when their class is called. Listen carefully, and remain attentive so you do not miss your class.
- ▶ Stay with your rabbits at the judging table when they are being judged. Pay attention to the comment card as well as listen to the judge speak. You can pick up valuable tips on how to improve your rabbits or keep them in top form. Respect the judge and his or her opinions. You may be permitted to discuss your exhibit with him or her during a break or after the show.
- ▶ Pick up your awards at the show. Do not expect the show committee to mail or deliver them to you.
- ▶ Be courteous and understanding when problems occur. Avoid making negative comments about the show, show staff or other participants. Always practice good sportsmanship.
- ▶ Compliment the judge and show committee on jobs well done. They will appreciate your kind words.

Rabbit Show Room Don'ts:

- ▶ Expect the show secretary to accept late entries.
- ▶ Bring diseased or injured animals to a show.
- ▶ Bring animals other than rabbits (except perhaps cavy and service animals) into the showroom.
- ▶ Hesitate to show your rabbits because you are a novice. Everyone has to start sometime. If your rabbits are healthy and have been worked with, you have a great chance of being competitive within your classes.
- ▶ Get upset if you do not win your class. This does not mean your animal is not competitive, but is simply not what the judge is looking for that particular day. Remember, it is not about how well you place but how much you enjoy your experience and learn.
- ▶ Handle exhibits other than your own unless you are a show official acting in an official capacity or you have the owner's permission.
- ▶ Hang on the show table, or distract the judge while they are evaluating. To prevent bias, judges must not connect rabbits with their owners. However, do make sure your animal stays where it should.
- ▶ Stand behind the judge's table while judging is in progress unless you are a show official acting in an official capacity. Do not interfere with or attempt to influence the judge.
- ▶ Expect your entry fees to be refunded if you enter rabbits in a show but do not exhibit them.
- ▶ Hesitate to ask questions! Even experienced breeders have questions, and you should not be afraid to ask them.



Conclusion

Overall, your experience at a rabbit show should be a positive learning experience that helps you build your knowledge and skill in your ability to handle and show your rabbits. No matter how your animals place, always aim to practice good sportsmanship, learn and have fun at shows.

Acknowledgments

This fact sheet is an update of the original bulletin that was written by members of the 1985-87 State 4-H Rabbit Developmental Committee. It was revised in 2017 with the assistance of the following individuals:

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