

# Mini 4-H Rabbit



**Grades K, 1st and 2nd**

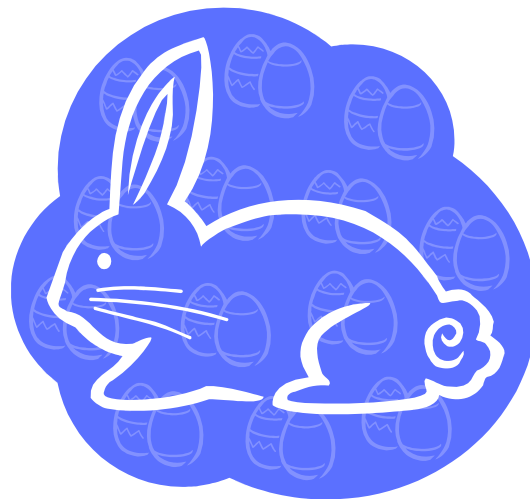
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Dear Parent:

As a Mini 4-H parent, your job will be to guide and encourage your child through the activity. It is highly suggested that you do not complete the activities for them. Instead, help them, guide them, work with them, and let them do all that they possibly can. The 4-H motto is “Learn by doing”... and is the best educational tool that we can provide for youth.

Parents are encouraged to attend the Mini 4-H rabbit club meetings to see and understand the activities of this project. By doing so, you should be able to instruct the 4-Her and to encourage the 4-Her to practice outside of the club meetings.

It is the policy of the Purdue Extension Service that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to its programs and facilities without regard to race, color, age, sex, religion, handicap, or national origin.



Welcome to Mini 4-H! You are now a member of the 4-H family. Mini 4-H'ers has a lot of fun. There are many activities for you to explore. You can try new things. You can share it with your friends and family.

Mom, Dad or another adult can help you with your project, and you can bring your project to the 4-H fair. Many people will be able to see what you have done. You will receive a ribbon made just for Mini 4-H.

Things to learn –

**The 4-H Symbol:** A four leaf clover with an H in each leaf

**4-H Colors:** Green and white

**The 4-H Motto:** To make the best, better.

**The 4-H Pledge:** I pledge my *Head* for clearer thinking;  
my *Heart* for greater loyalty;  
my *Hands* for larger service;  
and my *Health* for better living  
in my club, my community,  
my country and my world.



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## **Mini 4-H Rabbit**

Welcome to the Mini 4-H Rabbit project! You are going to learn a lot of exciting things about rabbits! Do you know what a rabbit eats? Do you know how to handle a rabbit? Do you know why a rabbit twitches its whiskers? You will learn the answers to all of these questions in the Mini 4-H Rabbit project. Rabbits are a great project for young people to exhibit. Here are a few reasons to raise and show rabbits.

1. Rabbits are easy to handle.
2. Rabbits are gentle animals.
3. Rabbits are smart.
4. Rabbits are fun to watch!
5. They need very little space in which to live.
6. Rabbits do not need very much equipment.

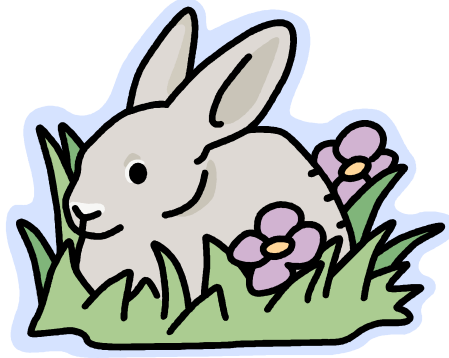




## **What Will I Do?**

To complete the project, you will exhibit a rabbit at the Hancock County 4-H Fair. The rabbit must belong to you or a 4-Her that is enrolled in the traditional 4-H Rabbit project. If you don't own a rabbit and know a 4-Her that has a rabbit at the fair, ask them if it is okay for you to exhibit their rabbit in the Mini 4-H Rabbit Show. If you need assistance in finding a rabbit to exhibit, the 4-H Rabbit Superintendent can assist you. All Mini 4-H owned rabbits will be released to go home after the Rabbit Show. Rabbit exhibited in Mini 4-H do not have to be purebred rabbits. You may show your pet rabbit.

You will be divided into classes by your grade. There will be no more than six Mini 4-Hers in a class. When your class number is called, you will bring your rabbit to the judging table. There will be adults or older 4-Hers available to help you get your rabbit to the table. The judge may ask a question or two about the Rabbit project. Do not get scared if you don't know the answer. The judge will tell you the answer. Learning is what Mini 4-H is all about!



## **Buck or Doe?**

A female rabbit is called a doe. After a doe is bred, it can give birth in 28 to 32 days. The average number of young that she may have in a litter is four to ten rabbits. A female rabbit can have four to five litters in a year. The doe pulls fur from her body to build a nest for her babies.

A buck is a male rabbit. It is the father of the young rabbits.

Bunnies are born almost hairless. They will start to grow their fur by the tenth day of age. They are born with their eyes closed. Their eyes will open by the tenth or eleventh day.

Rabbits may live as long as ten years!

Rabbits have long ears so they can hear sounds from far away. They have long, muscular hind legs so they can run fast to get away from enemies. They have a good sense of smell. Their nostrils twitch constantly so that they can catch every scent in the air. Smell helps them sense danger and find food.



## **What Do Rabbits Eat?**

Rabbits eat a pelleted feed that is available at feed stores. The pellet of feed contains protein, fiber, minerals and vitamins, all items a rabbit needs. You will need to keep your rabbit's feed in an air-tight container so that the feed remains in a hard pellet and does not get soft and mushy. Your rabbit will not eat a pellet that is soft and mushy. Do not feed your rabbit cabbage, lettuce, or green grass. Some fruits and vegetables may make your domestic rabbit very ill. You should feed your rabbit every day and it is best to feed in the evening.

Always provide clean, fresh water to your rabbit. Do you like to drink water that has been setting out in a glass all day? Neither does your rabbit!

Rabbits may be fed and watered using heavy bowls called crocks. The crocks need to be heavy so that the rabbit does not flip them over and spill the feed and water.

## **How do I care for my rabbit?**

A rabbit's cage needs cleaned out at least every second or third day for hygiene reasons. Rabbits themselves do not stink; it is their un-cleaned litter that causes an odor. If a rabbit is kept healthy, the rabbit can remain outdoors all year. A rabbit's fur will become thicker during the winter to keep it warm and will molt or shed during the spring to allow it to be comfortable during the summer.

A rabbit's cage is called a hutch. The hutch may have a wood floor or a wire floor. Wire floor hutches are easier to clean. For the hutch to be outdoors it will need a sturdy roof to keep the rain and sun off the rabbit and it should be lifted off of the ground to keep other animals like dogs away from the rabbit. Many hutches have a front area that is like a patio where the rabbit can get fresh air and a closed back end that is like a warm, quiet house. If you need help building a hutch, your parents may ask the 4-H leader for ideas on how to build one.

Rabbits may also be kept indoors as a pet. Indoor rabbits may also be litter box trained. Even if you keep your rabbit inside, you will want to have a cage for the rabbit for when you are gone from home.

Rabbits enjoy socializing with people. They love to be stroked and patted. Your rabbit should become tamer to you if you gently handle it every day. When you handle your rabbit you should always remain calm and keep a quiet tone to your voice so that you do not frighten your rabbit.



## **At the Judging Table**

The 4-H Rabbit Superintendent will announce which class is to bring their rabbits to the judging table. You will need to pick your rabbit up out of its cage. The proper way to pick up a rabbit is to follow the following steps:

1. Place one hand under the rabbit's hindquarters or rump and the other hand will grasp the loose skin over the shoulders.
2. As you lift the rabbit from the cage the hand under the rabbit will support the weight of the rabbit.
3. Tuck the head of the rabbit under your arm that is holding the hindquarters of the rabbit and hold the rabbit against you.
4. Walk calmly to the judges table and set the rabbit on the table always supporting the rabbit with you hand under the rabbit.

The 4-H mini judge will ask you one or two questions about your rabbit. The judge may ask if it is your rabbit or if you borrowed it and what breed it is. The judge may also ask you about how you cared for your rabbit.

After the judge has completed the class, the Rabbit Superintendent will ask you to carry your rabbit back to the cage.

The Rabbit Superintendent and other 4-H member will be there to provide direction and to assist you for your safety and the safety of the rabbit you exhibit. All participants will receive a special ribbon for participating in the show.

## **At the Mini 4-H rabbit meetings**

There is so much to learn about raising rabbits and showing them! The 4-H rabbit leaders will have club meetings to help you to learn more about this project.

At the club meetings, you will have a chance to practice handling your rabbit and learning to carry it the proper way. You will also have a chance to “practice” for the rabbit show.

The 4-H rabbit leader and the other rabbit club members will be there to answer questions and to teach you many of the things that they have learned in 4-H.

