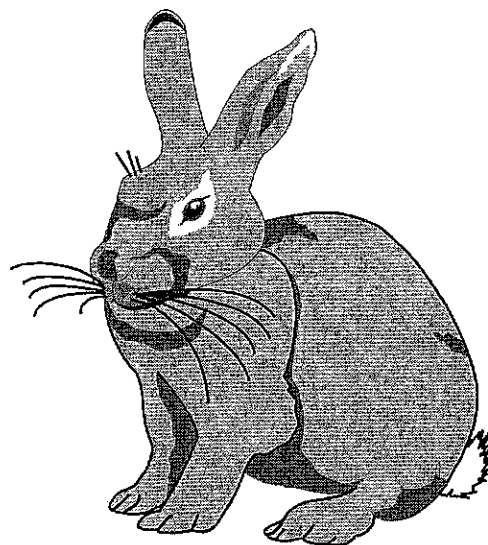
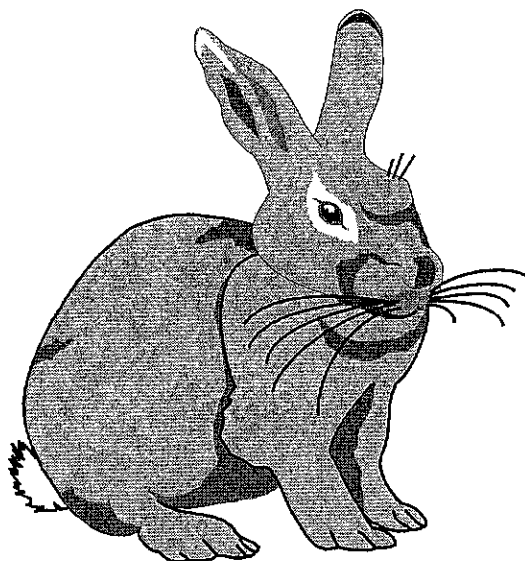


MINI 4-H RABBITS

EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS: A 14x22 inch poster about rabbits



**Purdue University, Indiana Counties and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating
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MINI 4-H RABBITS

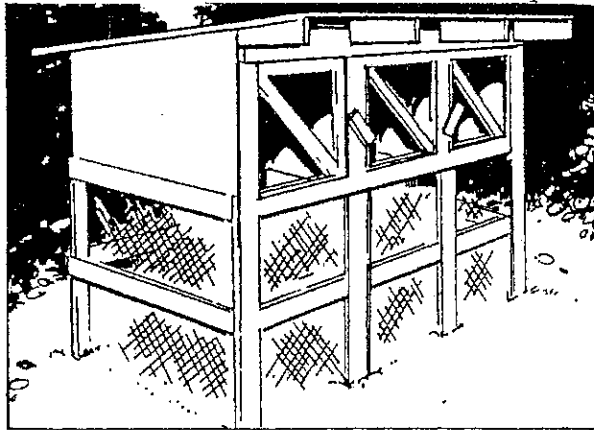
Welcome to the Mini 4-H Rabbit Project. Your requirements for the project are: read this booklet carefully, care for a rabbit at your home and complete a 14x22 inch poster about rabbits.

Rabbits are not very hard to take care of. They are small and clean and love to be loved. But you must take good care of them. You need to have a place for them that is safe and can be kept clean. They need plenty of fresh water every day and feed too.

Rabbits usually are kept in "hutches". If you build a rabbit hutch, be sure to keep it as simple as possible. See the picture below for an example of what a hutch should look like. In this booklet are some plans if you and your parents want to build one for your rabbits.

Rabbits need lots of fresh air. In hot weather, you need to provide your rabbits with shaded areas where any cool breezes may be available. If the weather is cold, protect your rabbits by putting them in buildings that open to the south. During storms, use curtains or panels to close off these buildings.

You can make an inexpensive two or three compartment hutch out of wood with roofing materials and wire floors. Do not use metal roofs because they build up too much heat. Be sure to use wire on the floors of the hutches. Rabbits can have some health problems if not raised on wire floors.



Three-hole hutch built from 8' material. Use turn button and spring-loaded latches to fasten doors closed.

When you buy or raise your own rabbits, be sure to check the fur to see if it is tight. There should be no breaks in the fur, no mats of fur and no stains. The fur should look alive and brilliant. Look for a good thick coat of fur all over the back, sides, chest and flanks. The feel of the coat should not be harsh or wire-like, nor do you want a silky coat or wooliness. Look for fur 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 fur should be a good length, not too long and not too short. A dense coat of fur is better than a short thin coat.

The male rabbit is called a **buck**, the female is called a **doe** and the young are called **kits**. It takes 28 to 32 days from the time the doe is **pregnant** until she gives birth. A **nesting box** filled with straw is placed in the doe's **hutch** so she can make a nest prior to giving birth (called **kindling**). The number of young in a litter may vary from 4 to 10 kits. They are without hair and with their eyes closed they depend on the mother for survival. Young rabbits are left with the doe until they are four to eight weeks old. They are then mature enough to leave their mother and be put into their own hutch or sent to market.

Adult rabbits need to be housed individually in a strong wire hutch with an enclosed box attached to protect them from the weather. It should allow for good ventilation in the summer and be enclosed during the winter.

Rabbits need to be fed a balanced diet and fresh water every day. Water bottles and feed containers are available at pet and farm supply stores. The pellets rabbits eat are made from **alfalfa** and **grain**.

Rabbits can be excitable when being handled. They can bite and scratch with their toe nails. It is best to wear long sleeves when handling rabbits. Pick up a mature rabbit by grasping the hide over the shoulders while placing the other hand under the rabbit's hindquarters.

FEEDING

When you have your hutches and rabbits, you must now decide about feeding and caring for your rabbit. A well-balanced feed will meet the needs of a rabbit and it must taste good to him too. Rabbits like to have feed that contains plant material. They do not like feed with any animal products.

A good rabbit ration will contain corn and soybean oil meal. These provide a good balance of protein and energy foods. If you buy rabbit feed, be sure it contains at least 16 percent protein for each day of feed. This will keep him in good shape.

You can feed good, clean, cured, leafy hay to rabbits, too. But **DO NOT** feed young rabbits cabbage or lettuce. It will cause them to get very sick. Be sure to measure feed for you rabbit. About four ounces of feed each day is a good amount. Most of the feed companies have booklets on feeding rabbits at different weights and ages. Feed your rabbit every day at the same time. This is important. Rabbits learn quickly when feeding times comes.

HEALTH

Rabbits are normally healthy. If your rabbit becomes sick it is usually because of two things. (1) The animal cannot fight off mites, bacteria or viruses or (2) an infection was brought into the hutch. To prevent this, always use good feed, be very clean with your feeding and water dishes or bottles and clean the rabbit hutch frequently.

It is better not to use old hutches from someone else, because of the possibility of disease. Young rabbits can get sick easier than older rabbits, so be sure they don't get wet or too cold. However, rabbits can tolerate low temperature. Don't worry if the weather suddenly becomes cool.

The best way to protect against disease in rabbits is to have a careful sanitation program. It takes less money to prevent your rabbit from getting sick than it does to make him better. Ask your veterinarian for any help if your rabbit does get sick.

KEEPING RECORDS

You need to keep a record with your rabbit project. It will tell you how much you are spending on your project. Also, if you sell any of your rabbits, you can easily see if you will make any money with the project.

HANDLING YOUR RABBIT

When you handle your rabbit, hold small rabbits with your hand around his middle and between the lower rib and the hip joint. Be very careful! For holding older rabbits, grasp a fold of skin over the shoulder, placing your other hand under the rump. When you carry a rabbit, it is best to support him in your arm. NEVER, NEVER HOLD A RABBIT BY IT'S EARS!! You will hurt the rabbit very badly if you do.

You must also remember that rabbits, especially bigger ones, can jump when you are picking them up and can scratch with their powerful back legs. It is best if your parents are with you when you are first learning to pick up your rabbit. They can help you until you are used to doing it.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about the raising of rabbits, call the Extension Office and ask for 4-H-288, The 4-H Rabbit Manual. Price of this Manual is \$3.50.

Have a nice summer and enjoy taking care of your rabbit in the Mini 4-H Rabbit project.

COMMON RABBIT DISEASES

Caked Teats or Caked Udder - Inflamed and feverish condition of the teats caused by a superabundant milk supply in a doe. Teats become distended with hardened milk.

Coccidiosis - Organisms which infect the intestinal tract resulting in poor growth. These may lead to secondary diseases.

Cold - A respiratory infection characterized by sneezing, a thin watery nasal discharge and slightly matted fur on the inside front feed.

Conjunctivitis - Bacterial infection of eyelids causing a discharge.

Ear Canker - An inflamed, swollen, scabby condition of the lower inside ear, caused by colonies of rabbit earmites.

Enteritis - Disease considered to be of bacterial origin. Stomach and intestines may fill up with water. Droppings are poorly formed and appear soft and jelly-like.

Eye Infection - Pus under eyelids in baby rabbits. Eyes may stick shut.

Fur Block - Rabbits (especially developing does) pull fur and eat it in large quantities. Then they go off their feed and blockage may occur in the intestine.

Heat Prostration - Heat stroke with rapid rate of breathing. Mouth open due to extremely high environmental temperature.

Ketosis - A condition associated with kindling time when overfat does go off feed and may starve to death.

Mastitis - Bacterial infection causing red to purplish and/or black nipples.

Metritis - Bacterial infection of the uterus causing a white sticky discharge. Infected does become sterile.

Parasites - Rabbits occasionally harbor mange, lice or fleas. This is not common.

Pasteurellosis - Bacterial infection coupled with stress factors causing loss of appetite and a nasal discharge. Followed by pneumonia.

Pneumonia - Congestion in the lungs caused by infectious bacterial organisms leads to labored breathing.

Pot Belly - A distended condition of the stomach and intestines usually found in young rabbits.

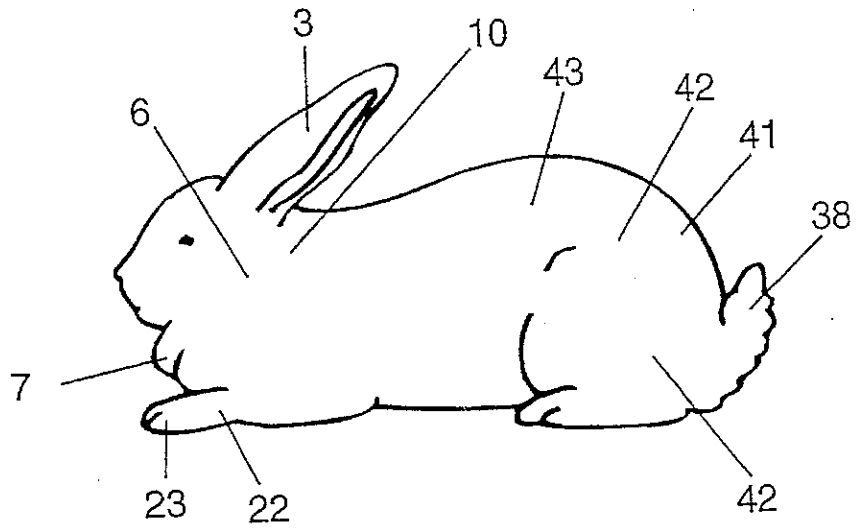
Ringworm - A fungus causing a loss of fur usually in circular patches on the head with red, scaly skin showing.

Snuffles - A contagious infection of the nasal passages and respiratory organs, usually ending in chronic illness. Symptoms are fever, heavy breathing, sneezing and discharge of thick creamy pus from the nostrils.

Sore Hocks - An ulcerated condition of the foot pads or soles of either fore or hind feet.

Urine or Hutch Burn - Infection of external sex organs and anus. Avoid by using all wire cages.

Vent Disease - Venereal diseases in rabbits of both sexes, indicated by scabby, reddened male or female organs, usually pus.



Try and name the body parts of the rabbit. Write the name of the part next to the corresponding number. If you have trouble, turn over this page and check the answers!

- 3. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 10. _____
- 22. _____
- 23. _____
- 38. _____
- 41. _____
- 42. _____
- 43. _____

RABBIT BODY PARTS

- 3. Ear
- 6. Neck
- 7. Dewlap
- 10. Shoulder
- 22. Foot
- 23. Toe
- 38. Tail
- 41. Rump
- 42. Hip
- 43. Lion

MINI 4-H RABBIT RECORD SHEET

NAME _____ GRADE _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP CODE _____

TELEPHONE _____

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR RABBIT

MY RABBIT'S NAME IS _____

ANIMAL'S AGE _____ SEX _____

OWNER'S NAME _____

I HAVE REVIEWED THIS RECORD AND BELIEVE IT TO BE CORRECT.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT _____

DATE _____