

Rabbit Project Leader Guide

Introduction, Glossary, and References



4-H 

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

EM075E



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Introduction

This notebook will help you make the rabbit project a fun, interesting, and valuable experience for the 4-H youth you teach. The rabbit project is a vehicle through which we can teach profitable rabbit production practices and necessary life skills to young people.

Objectives

1. Learn and apply recommended principles of rabbit production.
2. Demonstrate a knowledge of sound breeding, feeding, and management practices.
3. Identify types and varieties of rabbits and employ efficient marketing methods.
4. Develop integrity, sportsmanship, decision-making capability, and public speaking skills through participation in demonstrations, tours, judging, and exhibits.
5. Appreciate the value of rabbits in scientific research.
6. Practice leadership skills and roles, take part in community affairs, and demonstrate citizenship responsibility.
7. Explore career, job, and productive leisure opportunities.
8. Develop life-long skills, knowledge, and attitudes.
9. Learn to use accepted practices for mental, physical, and emotional health, and to respect oneself and others.

Major Concepts

To help meet the above objectives, ten general 4-H rabbit project concepts or topics have been identified. Each lesson plan falls under one of these major concepts—Feeds and Feeding, Health Practices, Kindling Practices, Records and Recognition, Selection and Judging, Fitting and Showing, Management and Practices, Reproduction and Genetics, Meats and Marketing, and Careers.

In addition, life skills are incorporated throughout the lesson plans and in the educational design of the project meetings. It is the goal of 4-H to develop youth who are contributing, productive members of society. Youth may achieve this goal when these life skills are developed and applied.

1. Positive self-concept
2. Sound decision-making
3. Positive interpersonal relationships
4. Desire for lifelong learning
5. Concern for community

Ages and Stages

Each child is unique, yet some generalities about certain age groups exist. They help us plan programming more effectively.

These lesson plans target four general age groups:

-
- Unit I — ages 7 and 8
 - Unit II — ages 9, 10, 11
 - Unit III — ages 12, 13, 14
 - Unit IV — ages 15 and older

Review this information about the physical, mental, social, and emotional characteristics of these age groups to prepare you for a successful project experience. The units are also based on corresponding skill levels of youth. Thus, a 12-year-old child enrolling in rabbits for the first time should probably begin with lessons in Unit I, and not take Unit III until he or she has mastered basic knowledge and skills.

Ages 7 and 8

Physical growth is slow and steady. Mastering physical skills is important to self-concept. This includes everything from printing with a pencil to large muscle skills like catching a ball. Activities need to be just that—active! Provide opportunities to practice skills, but use projects that can be completed successfully and quickly by beginners.

Typical second or third graders think in concrete terms. If they have never seen it, heard it, felt it, tasted it, or smelled it, they have a hard time thinking of it. Leaders should show and tell, rather than giving instructions verbally. Early elementary children are learning to sort things into categories. This makes collecting things important and fun at this age. Most are more interested in the process—what? why? how?—than in the resulting product.

As children move away from dependence on parents at this age, they need to transfer that dependence to another adult, so you may become very important to them. Building friendships occurs easily and generally by the end of this period, boys prefer playing with boys and girls with girls. Peer opinion becomes very important. Small group activities are effective, but children still need an adult to share approval.

Seven and eight-year-olds seek the approval of adults, because they are not yet confident enough to set their own standards. Play or pretending is one way they increase their ability to imagine what other people think and feel. Rules and rituals are important. Children this age do not like to lose. Emphasize success, even small ones. Minimize failures. Cooperative games and activities are especially enjoyable. When an activity fails, help children interpret the reasons behind the failure; this teaches that failing is not always bad. Learning to cope with problems is a skill you can teach your members. **Do not award competitive ribbons at this age.**

Ages 9, 10, 11

Physically, most children at this age are in a holding pattern, although puberty may be starting for some early-maturing girls. Activities should encourage physical involvement, because 9- to 11-year-olds are not still and quiet.

Hands-on involvement with objects is helpful. Children this age like field trips, but only if they are not expected to stay confined or to do one thing for a long period of time. They are still fairly concrete thinkers and will pay more attention if they are seeing and doing things. These children need opportunities to share their thoughts and reactions with others.

Children at this stage are beginning to think logically and symbolically and to understand abstract ideas. They will consider ideas either right or wrong, great or disgusting, fun or boring. There is little middle ground.

Your role is most crucial at this stage; children look to the adult for approval and follow rules primarily out of respect for the adult. Individual evaluation by adults is preferable to group competition where only one can be the best. They want to know how much they have improved and what they should do better next time. Your encouragement can spark remarkable accomplishments.

Kids this age like to be in organized groups of others similar to themselves. If you have both boys and girls of this age in your project groups, organize small, same-sex work groups. They generally are concerned with immediate self-reward; however, the satisfaction of completing a project comes from pleasing the leader or parent rather than from the value of the activity itself.

Toward the end of this age range, children are ready to take responsibility for their own actions. Encourage these youth to make decisions. Move from dictating directions to giving reassurance and support for members' decisions.

These kids have a strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile. School and other pressures become demanding. Continue to emphasize success. Comparing children with each other erodes self-confidence. Instead, build positive self-concepts by comparing present to past performance for each child.

Ages 12, 13, 14

This is a time of developmental variety among peers. Growth spurts beginning with adolescence occur at a wide range of ages, with girls maturing before boys. These rapid changes in physical appearance may make teens uncomfortable. Slower developing teens may also be uneasy because they aren't changing.

Young teens move from concrete to more abstract thinking. Playing with ideas is as much fun as playing sports. Ready-made solutions from adults often are rejected in favor of finding their own solutions. Leaders who provide supervision without interference will have a great influence on these 4-H'ers.

Small groups provide the best opportunity for young teens to test ideas. Justice and equality become important issues. Judging of projects is now

viewed in terms of what is fair, as well as a reflection of the self-worth of the individual.

These youth enjoy participating in activities away from home as they begin to develop independence. Opinions of peers become more important than opinions of parents or other adults. Close friendships begin to develop, and group experiences provide opportunity for social acceptance.

As puberty approaches, emotions begin a roller coaster ride. Young teens begin to test values and seek adults who are accepting and willing to talk about values and morals. These youngsters face so many changes that their self-concepts may suffer. Help by providing self-knowledge and self-discovery activities such as the “dialog for critical thinking” portion of these lesson plans.

Avoid comparing young people with each other, being careful not to embarrass them. They want to be a part of something important that provides the opportunity to develop responsibility.

Ages 15, 16, 17

Most teens of this age know their own abilities and talents. In most cases, they have adjusted to body changes. Many develop athletic talent and devote hours to training and competition. Learning to drive a car further moves teens from the family into the community as independent people.

Mid-teens begin to think about their future and make realistic plans. Their vocational goals influence the activities they select. Teens set goals based on feelings of personal need and priorities. **Goals set by others are often rejected.** As they master abstract thinking, they can imagine new things in ways that sometimes challenge adults.

These teens can initiate and carry out their own tasks without supervision. Help them arrange new experiences in areas of interest, but let them do most of the planning. Leader/member relations should change from director/follower to advisor/independent worker.

Mid-teens tend to be wrapped up in themselves. Relationship skills are usually well-developed. Dating increases and acceptance by members of the opposite sex is now of high importance. Sports and clubs are important, but teens now want to be recognized as unique individuals within groups.

Two important emotional goals of the middle-teen years are independence and identity. Time is precious. If activities are perceived as busy-work, teens soon will lose patience and interest. Middle teens are learning to cooperate with others on an adult level. They will pride themselves on increased ability to be responsible in the eyes of themselves, peers, and adults.

Ages 18, 19, 20

These young adults are completing their 4-H careers and moving on to college, jobs, marriage, and other adult responsibilities. If continuing involvement at the local level, they will be self-directed learners or assume adult leadership roles.

“Ages and Stages of Child and Youth Development: A Guide for 4-H Leaders,” written by Jeanne Karns, graduate assistant and Judith Myers-Walls, Extension Specialist, Human Development, Purdue University, North Central Regional Extension Publication No. 292.

Youth at Risk

Some child development specialists and educators think that every child of the 90s is “at risk” because of the complex social forces affecting our country since the early 1950s. H. Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelsen document these changes in their book, *Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World*. Four major factors necessary for the development of capable young people have been identified that are generally missing from our culture—networks, meaningful roles, on-the-job training and parenting resources. 4-H project meetings can help restore these vital missing pieces.

Glenn and Nelsen's definition of a network, in the simplest sense, defines the 4-H project meeting: “two or more individuals who engage in dialogue about the world and the life they are living and who occasionally collaborate to achieve some mutually desirable end.” Dialogue for the critical thinking portion of these lesson plans fits this definition exactly.

Many youth grow up today in families and communities without any significant role to play. They don't feel needed until they are adults. Research indicates that a primary cause of decline in motivation, discipline, and achievement is this perceived lack of need or value. **We must treat youth as contributors and assets rather than passive objects to be done for or to.** Listen to members, we must take them seriously and treat them as significant, we will begin to restore the dialogue and collaboration necessary to link youth with the larger society.

On-the job training with “hands-on” involvement is the cornerstone of 4-H project work. This is one way youths can learn patience, personal initiative, hard work, and deferred gratification. If they don't learn about life this way, they may think that real life is what they see on television.

Learning by doing is important for children. Don't do their work for them. “The best way to destroy self-esteem and a sense of worth in young people is to do too much for them. This robs them of a sense of personal capability. The greatest gift of all is to help them validate themselves as agents in their own lives” (Glenn and Nelsen, pg. 47).

Today's parents need all the help they can get. Seldom do parents have the extended family of grandparents, aunts, and uncles close to give support and advice when needed. In fact, many children have only one parent. As

a 4-H project leader, you become a parent resource, both to the child and the child's parent.

Today's parents are concerned about and fearful for their children. Dr. Bruce Baldwin, nationally known psychologist and author says, "They wonder if their kids have what it takes to succeed as they have. Parents know that in the future even menial positions will require well-developed cognitive skills: reading, writing, math, computer literacy, and the ability to process information quickly and efficiently." (TEAM, The Early Adolescence Magazine, Vol. IV, No. 5, May-June 1990)

The same magazine noted that a large metropolitan education trust reported the types of requirements for employees, comparing the past with the future:

PAST	FUTURE
Doers	Thinkers
Single repetitive functions	Quality circle approach
Individual piecework	Team centered
Autocratic	Participatory
Single job in lifetime	Flexible learners
Familiar with simple machines	Knowledgeable about technology
Single task orientation	Information processors

Three Steps in the Experiential Learning Model

DO/EXPLORE REFLECT APPLY

1. Do/Explore: This is the actual doing part of an activity—throwing a ball, making a puppet, feeding a pet, playing a game. This first step is not the most important in this model. Too often, leaders in a teaching role devote most of their energies to planning a creative learning experience, but fail to devote enough time and energy to the remaining two steps. Take time to cover all three steps thoroughly when you teach.

2. Reflect: Have your 4-H kids share their observations, experiences, and feelings. Your role as teacher is to draw out information from the kids. Ask them questions like: "Tell me what you did. What happened in your group or to you? What were you thinking and feeling during the activity? What was new or different in this activity?" Then have the members identify common patterns of behavior, or things that they have noticed or experienced before. For example, you might ask: "What happened in this activity that's like things you've noticed or done at home or school? How was today's activity like things you've done before, or how was it different?"

3. Apply: Ask the kids how what they did, saw, or learned can be used in other places—at home or school, with friends or family. Good questions to use here are: "What did you learn today that can help

you or that you can use in school, at home, or with your family?” or “What difference can what you learned make at home, school, 4-H, or other places?”

The best way to be sure that the members understand and can use what they learned is through planned application. Have the members share how they will use the new information and then record it. You may write it down for everyone to see or the children can draw pictures of what they plan to do. Check a week or day later to see if they accomplished their goals. You can strengthen your members’ individual commitments by having them record their plans for how they will use what they learned.

Lesson Plan Format

The project lesson plans contained in this leader’s notebook incorporate components critical to developing capable, contributing young people. These plans will also help you quickly and easily prepare for lessons, conduct activities, and encourage group discussion.

Each lesson plan in this notebook follows the same general outline which includes:

TITLE—describes the skill to be learned.

UNIT LEVEL—tells which age level it is written for.

What Members Will Learn...

ABOUT THE PROJECT—indicates what rabbit subject matter will be learned.

ABOUT THEMSELVES—indicates what personal or life skills will be learned. Use these specific objectives to see if the members learned the information or skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED—tells the leader what equipment, supplies, visuals, or handouts will be needed.

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED—gives the approximate time needed to complete the activity. Most lessons can be completed in 30 to 60 minutes.

ACTIVITY—tells what you need to know to teach the activity; you may also use it as a script.

LEADER NOTES—directions for you that go with the “Activity” information. You may write your own notes in the space provided. Photocopy the member activity pages or handouts and give them to members to work on at the meeting or take home so that parents can reinforce the learning.

DIALOG FOR CRITICAL THINKING—questions that help you en-

hance life skill development and relate the subject information to the kids' world.

GOING FURTHER—gives ideas such as tours, demonstrations, hand-outs, things to do at home.

Rabbit Project Format

Holding meetings is the best way to teach these lessons. These meetings work best with an adult or teen leader working with a small group of members. If members are unable to meet as a group, parents may serve as leaders to children by ordering this manual from the extension office and completing the lessons at home.

The rabbit project features a series of sequential learning experiences based on members' age and skill level, which will challenge them with new skills each year they remain in the project. Our goal is to make them knowledgeable in the total area of rabbit production, not to specialize in one type of project exhibit. In fact, owning an animal and exhibiting at a show is not required. It is possible for a child to participate in the group lessons without owning an animal. Owning, caring for, and exhibiting an animal are special bonuses to the total project experience.

The project exhibit should be decided on by the member, parent, and leader, based on member's age, skill level, facility and financial resources, and available local exhibit opportunities. Most counties provide county fair classes for meat pens, and breeding classes for does and bucks. Others may have fur classes. This way, counties can establish exhibits that meet the needs of their 4-H rabbit members. Rabbit shows across the state offer all three exhibit opportunities.

Ideally, members will progress through all units in order, but it is not necessary. If project members vary in age within several units and the group is large enough, split it into age groups and use additional leaders. Older members can be assistant leaders with beginning units; this allows teens to be self-directed learners for advanced skills. Teens might also meet together as multi-club or countywide groups.

Your Role

Your major roles are those of teacher, facilitator, and encourager. Your classroom is wherever the member must be in order to learn— in the home, meeting room, barn, or on a field trip. Your discipline, what you teach, is rabbit production and child development.

You have eight basic responsibilities:

1. Help children select projects and set goals.
2. Share your knowledge of the project with members through meetings during the 4-H year. Develop a schedule and method for notifying members of meetings.
3. Invite and involve other adult and teen leaders when appropriate.
4. Keep your skills current through trainings, consultation, and

-
-
- reading.
5. Maintain sensitivity and respond to individual members' needs.
 6. Help members find additional learning experiences and resources.
 7. Relate project experiences to everyday life and career possibilities.
 8. Recognize personal growth of your kids and celebrate their success.

The First Meeting

The first meeting is usually an organizational one to plan for the project year. Have parents attend this first meeting with the members. Encourage parents to take part in all activities.

As members arrive, plan for something for them to do. Perhaps a teen leader can be prepared with a get-acquainted game or activity. Introduce all the kids to each other. One idea related to the rabbit project might be to have feed ingredients or pictures of rabbit breeds on display for members to identify. Taking time now to build group trust will have payoffs later in commitment, discipline, and lively discussions.

Have the group share the broad objectives they have for the rabbit project. Explain the different exhibit opportunities 4-H'ers might consider in their county. Set dates with members and parents for future meetings. Schedule any demonstrations with members and discuss other special activities for the entire year.

Member Achievement Plan

A map helps give us direction, keeps us on track and lets us know when we've reached our destination. We've designed a MAP—Member Achievement Plan—to help you and your 4-H members plan what they want to learn, make, and do in this project. This is called goal-setting. It also teaches decision-making.

Step 1—The group chooses four to six lessons they would like to learn about. There will be many different topics within the same unit if the same members enroll next year. As members get older, they will become skilled at identifying and writing their own learning goals.

Goals may be divided into short-term and long-term goals. Short-term goals can be accomplished during the project year, while long-term goals take one or more years. Members need both types; however, a base for success and confidence will be established quickly with short-term goals.

Short-term goals:

Must be specific and attainable
Have a measurable outcome
Specify time of completion
Often related to long-term goals

Examples:

- A. By the end of summer, I will know how to do rabbit showmanship.
- B. By May 1, I will know how to carry a rabbit without getting scratched.

Long-term goals:

Must be believable

Examples:

- A. To be the champion rabbit

Give direction and motivation

showperson at the county fair.

Describe conditions one hopes to achieve

B. To expand my rabbitry to include five different breeds.

It is easy for a member to list long-term goals: “I want to learn how to show a rabbit, own 20 does, sell rabbit furs.” If your youngsters tend to think of only long-term goals, simply ask them, “What will you need to learn or do, in order to accomplish this goal?” “How will you make this happen?” Answering these questions will provide many short-term goals. You can help identify which goals are realistic for this year and which might be long-term goals.

After setting goals, review them periodically with members to see what progress is being made or what needs to be altered to reflect current situations. Children need to hear genuine praise or concern from interested adults to help them attain their goals.

STEP 2—Do

At the project meeting, or at home with their family, members add their own personal goals to their MAP, including the dates they plan to do the activities.

STEP 3—Measure

The kids keep records of their progress through the project.

STEP 4—Evaluate

At the end of the project year, evaluate the original goals. How did the goals work? What was learned? What needs to be accomplished next? Members may not have accomplished what they set out to do, but they may have learned many things in the process.

STEP 5—Share, and Celebrate

All members who complete Step 5 should be given immediate recognition for their project accomplishments.

Proper incentives encourage good project work and enhance children’s personal development. One of the strongest human incentives is the inner feeling of accomplishment and achievement.

Public recognition in news articles or at meetings, a word of praise, or pat on the back from leaders help kids feel good about themselves.

Use group recognition at the end of the project to recognize the accomplishments of each member who completed the project, attended a certain number of meetings, demonstrated certain acquired skills, etc. Recognize not only the member who won the championship, but use your imagination to recognize the most improved showperson, best group participation, best records, most improved rabbit judge, etc.

Project Leader Meeting Record

(name of project)

(project leader)

PROJECT MEMBERS		ATTENDANCE AT PROJECT MEETINGS										PRESENTATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS	
Name	Phone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			Demonstrations	Talks
1.													
2.													
3.													
4.													
5.													
6.													
7.													
8.													
9.													
10.													
11.													
12.													
13.													
14.													
15.													
16.													
17.													
18.													
19.													
20.													

List Of Members And Their Goals

1. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

2. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

3. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

4. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

5. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

6. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

7. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

8. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

9. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

10. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

11. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

12. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

13. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

14. **NAME:** _____

Plans or wants to do: _____

Assistance, resources, or materials needed: _____

Parent Volunteer Support Form

Parent's Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Home Phone _____

Business Phone _____

Names of Children in 4-H

Ages

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP THE 4-H PROGRAM BY:

- Helping 4-H'ers with demonstrations.*
 - Helping 4-H'ers with project talks or public speaking.*
 - Providing transportation to project meetings.*
 - Assisting members with project records.*
 - Providing transportation for project tours or field trips.*
 - Helping with project meetings. Special skills I have: _____*
 - Bringing refreshments.*
 - Developing a "calling tree" for meeting reminders.*
 - Making my home available for a project meeting.*
 - Providing special supplies.*
 - Others, please explain: _____*
-

Project Meeting Evaluation

After each project meeting, consider each of the following questions. This checklist will help remind you about ideas for future project meetings.

	MEETINGS HELD					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Were the objectives of the meeting clear to members?						
2. Did I give each member a chance to actively participate? (sharing ideas, assisting, presentations)						
3. Did I commend or encourage each youth in some way?						
4. Did I plan for differences in ages, abilities, and interests of members?						
5. Did I observe progress of individual 4-H'ers?						
6. Did I involve a parent or parents in some way? (planning, leadership assistance, transportation, refreshments)						
7. Did I give members a chance to assume responsibility when it was appropriate?						
8. Did I incorporate some fun activity or game into the project meeting?						
9. Did I summarize the new information shared and skills learned at the close of the meeting?						
10. Did I enjoy working with the young people involved?						

Glossary of Rabbit Terms

This is a glossary of words and terms peculiar to rabbits and rabbit keeping. These are not necessarily the dictionary definitions.

Adult — Mature rabbit. The terms Senior Buck and Doe are preferred.

Agouti — As applied to fur color. A hair shaft possessing three or more bands of color, usually slate blue at base, alternating with two or more light and dark rings, then lighter; for example, steel or gray Flemish, Chinchilla, and Belgian hares.

Albino — A pink-eyed, white-furred rabbit. Since they are recessive concerning color, albinos will always breed true when bred together.

Arch (arc) — A gentle curvature of the spine; extending from the neck (or shoulders in some breeds) to the rear of the rabbit, best observed by viewing the animal in profile.

Artificial insemination — Artificial introduction of semen into the generative track of the female.

Back — The top portion of the rabbit's shoulders, loin and rump.

Balance — Type—shape or conformation, an orderly and pleasing arrangement of physical characteristics so as to present a harmonious appearance. Markings—equal distribution of corresponding markings, such as color divisions of the Harlequin, equal amounts of color on the cheeks of the Dutch. Equal distribution of color in the pattern and side markings in Checkered Giants, English Spots, and Rhinelanders.

Balanced ration — A diet consisting of a proper proportion of individual ingredients to provide for growth, production, and reproduction.

Bare spots — A portion of the rabbit's body that lacks fur due to moult or any other cause.

Barred — Elongated spots as in side markings in English spots. Also, off-colored streaks (bars) on front legs.

Barren period — Period during which rabbit does not conceive.

Base color — The fur color next to the skin.

Bell ears — Ears that have large, heavy tips with a distinct fall or lop to them.

Belly — The lower part of the body—the abdomen, from the bottom of the last rib to the pelvis. Contains the intestines.

Belly color — The color underneath a rabbit, extending from the forelegs to the crotch area.

Blaze — The white markings found on the head of the Dutch rabbit. It covers the nose and whisker bed and runs along the jawline. The shape is that of a wedge which tapers from the nose area to the base of the ears.

Bloom — The sheen or luster of a coat in good condition.

Boil or abscess — A hard swelling or isolated collection of pus or purulent matter occurring in the rabbit's skin, accompanied by localized fever and heat.

Boots — The colored markings on the rear feet of pointed animals, as in Himalayan-marked rabbits.

Bowed legs — May be applied to the front and hind legs. Bent like a bow, legs curved outwardly from the middle, involving radius and ulna in front legs; tibia and fibula in hind legs.

Breed — A class of domestic rabbits that reproduces stock with distinctive characteristics, such as fur, markings, shape, and size. A breed may be divided into varieties, such as the color differences within a breed. A further subdivision of the breeds lists several varieties into different groups, as in Netherland Dwarfs and Harlequins.

Breeder — One who breeds or raises a special variety or varieties of rabbits in conformity with accepted standards of perfection or for the purpose of improving their commercial value.

Breeding certificate — A written certificate by the owner of a stud buck, showing its pedigree in full and the date of breeding to a particular doe; given as proof of the ancestry of the young.

Brindle — Intermixture of colored hairs, usually black and red.

Broken coat — Fur with guard hairs missing or broken in spots, which exposes the undercoat; areas where coat is affected by moult which exposes the undercoat.

Broken ear — A distinct break in the cartilage of the ear, which prevents erect ear carriage.

Buck — An unaltered male rabbit.

Buff — A rich, golden orange with a creamy cast.

Bulldog — As applied to the head, a short, broad, bold head with a definite masculine appearance.

Butterfly — A nose marking found on many breeds of rabbits. The wing portions cover the whisker bed from lip to lip, with the body extending up the center of the face.

Butting — A form of malocclusion (disqualification); the incisors meet together evenly without the upper incisors overlapping the lower incisors in proper fusion (also called "pegged" teeth).

Caked teats or caked udder — Inflamed and feverish condition of the teats arising from superabundant milk supply in a doe rabbit. Easily noted by the teats distended with hardened milk.

Cannibalism — Doe eating her own young.

Carcass yield — Dressing percentage. Obtained by dividing the weight of the dressed carcass by the weight of the live rabbit.

Carriage — The manner in which a rabbit carries itself; the style or characteristic pose of a rabbit.

Carrier — The animal heterozygous with respect to some recessive genetic character. The animal may carry a gene for a specific characteristic that may be transmitted to the offspring without being visible for one or more generations.

Charlie — Lightly marked English spots, checkered Giants and Rhinelanders with a “Charlie Chaplin” mustache instead of a full distinct butterfly marking. Genetic recessive.

Cheeks — The sides of the face below the eyes.

Chest — The front portion of the body between the forelegs and the neck—the breast.

Chopped — As it applies to type, a condition in which there is an abrupt and sharp, vertical fall of the rump to the tail, not well filled out and rounded.

Cobby — Short and stocky, close-coupled; very compact.

Coccidiosis — a group of protozoan diseases which infect the rabbit’s liver or intestinal tract. Coccidiosis can be controlled by use of sulfur drugs. Rabbits do not catch coccidiosis from other species of animals or birds.

Cold — a respiratory infection in rabbits characterized by sneezing, a thin watery nasal discharge, and slightly matted fur on the inside of the front feet.

Compatible — Pertaining to eye color; a normal color that complements or matches the body of the colored portions of a marked rabbit.

Condition — The overall physical condition of a rabbit in relation to health, cleanliness, fur, and grooming (see full ARBA definition).

Coprophagy — A normal practice of a rabbit consuming some of the droppings (soft, night pellets) direct from the anus.

Cots or cotted fur — Small particles or bunches of tangled or matted fur (or wool in Angoras).

Cow hocks — Hind legs that turn inward at the hock, causing the foot portion to turn outward from the body.

Creamy — Light yellow; the color of cream.

Crown — A strong basal ridge of cartilage at top of head between the base of the ears of some lop-eared breeds.

Dead hairs — Fur which lacks life, caused by moulting or hutch stain.

Defect — Presumed to be temporary and curable. Cause for elimination from a show or registration until cured or corrected.

Definition — The sharpness and clarity of a color break, as the ring color in the Agouti fur.

Density — The property or quality of a thick coat of fur, the amount of fur in a given area.

Dew claw — An extra toe or functionless digit on the inside of the front legs.

Dewlap — A pendulous fold of loose skin which hangs from the throat. Common in does. Should be in proportion to total body size. Not allowed in some breeds.

Disqualification — One or more defects, deformities, or blemishes that render a rabbit unfit for competition and ineligible for registration.

Doe — An unaltered female rabbit.

Doe and litter — A female rabbit with suckling young of her own bearing, not over two months of age.

Dominant — Referring to genes or characteristics of one parent (color of fur, etc.), that when transmitted to the offspring cover up a subordinate or recessive characteristic.

Ear canker — An inflamed, swollen, scabby condition of the lower inside ear of rabbits caused by colonies of rabbit earmites.

Ear lacing — A colored line of fur that outlines the sides and tips, or inside of the ears (depending on breed standard).

Elbow — In animals, the second joint of the foreleg.

Elimination — One or more defects presumed to be temporary.

Estrus cycle — The recurring 14- to 16-day cycle when the doe is more apt to conceive.

Eye color — The color of the iris, the circle of color that surrounds the pupil of the eye.

Faking — Any change in the external appearance of a rabbit on exhibition with intent to deceive.

False or “pseudo” pregnancy — A 17-day period during which the doe cannot conceive. This may be caused by a sterile mating or by other sexual stimulation.

Fancier — One who breeds rabbits for the purpose of producing ideal specimens in conformity to a recognized standard of excellence.

Fine coat — A coat of fur too fine in texture, lacking body. Guard hairs are weak and thin in structure; lacking the proper amount of guard hairs.

Finish — The desired degree of perfection in condition. Fully prime in coat, color, and flesh.

Flabby — The condition of a rabbit when the skin hangs loosely on the rabbit by its own weight; not trim and shapely.

Flat coat — Fur lying too close to the body, lacking spring or body as noted by touch; usually a fine coat coupled with lack of density.

Fly back — A coat of fur which flies back to its smooth, normal position when stroked from the hindquarters to the shoulders (see Commercial Normal Fur ARBA Standards).

Flying coat — A loose, fluffy coat of fur, caused by long length and thinness of underfur and weak guard hairs.

Foot — The portion of the skeleton on which the rabbit walks or stands. On the foreleg—that portion below the the pastern (wrist); on the rear leg—that portion below the hock.

Forehead — The front part of the head between the eyes and the base of the ears.

Foreign color — Any color fur, eyes, or nails differing from the prescribed standard for the breed and variety in question.

Fostering — Use of a doe other than the dam to nurse the young.

Furnishings — The tassels and fringes on the ears, the bangs and side trimmings on the head, and the wool on the front feet of the English Angora.

Gestation — Period of time from mating of the doe to kindling.

Glossy — The reflection, luster, or brightness from naturally healthy fur in rabbits; a natural property of fur (improved by grooming).

Guard hair — The longer, coarser, projecting hair of the rabbit's coat that offers protection to the undercoat and furnishes wearing quality to the coat in addition to providing sheen.

Haunch — The fleshy part of the hip and buttock.

Herd — Term to describe a large assembly of rabbits.

Heredity — Characteristics inherited from ancestors.

Herringbone — The spine or dorsal stripe on the English Spot; a herringbone or serrated edge to the spine markings.

Hind leg (rear) — Consists of the foot, hock, stifle (knee), and hip joint; that portion distal to the attachment of the leg to the pelvis.

Hindquarters — The rear portion or section of the body; composed of the loin, hips, hind legs, and rump; from the last rib posterior.

Hip — The joint that attaches the hind legs to the trunk of the body.

Hock — The joint in rabbits that corresponds to the ankle in humans; the joint distal to the stifle.

Hog fat — A rabbit that is obviously over-fattened and, consequently out of proportion for the true type of the breed.

Humpback — A hump or protrusion on the back that mars the appearance of the rabbit.

Inbreeding — Mating closely related animals.

Inner ear — The concave portion of the ear.

Intermediate — A rabbit 6 months of age or over and under 8 months of age in selected breeds.

Junior — A rabbit under 6 months of age.

Kindle — Parturition to give birth to young rabbits.

Knee — The second joint of the hind leg—connects the thigh to the leg; also known as stifle.

Knock-kneed — On the front legs, bones that turn inward from the middle. A misnomer of terminology that conflicts with the definition of knee, but often used.

Lactation — The secretion and yielding of milk by the mammary gland.

Lapin — The French word for rabbit. Also in fur trade, the sheared and dyed rabbit fur.

Lap spots — Intensification of belly color in the area of the groin (inside the hind legs); normally associated with Shaded Selves, Agoutis and Wide Band Agoutis (fawn and red).

Litter — A number of young being raised by one doe.

Loin — That portion of the back on each side of the vertebrae from the last rib posterior to the hip joint.

Loose coat — Fur not set tightly in coat and slipping.

Lopped ears — Pendulous ears not carried upright, falling to the front or sides.

Luster — Brightness and brilliance of fur.

Malocclusion — Any departure from the occlusive (opposing) surfaces of the upper and lower jaw meeting properly; causing an improper meeting of the incisors which produces buck or wolf teeth; has hereditary connections.

Mandolin — Having the appearance of a mandolin laid face down. The back and saddle arch toward the loins to make noticeably broader hindquarters. Formation starts behind the shoulders.

Marked — A rabbit, usually white, whose color is broken up by an orderly placement of another color; also, rabbits that carry the Tan pattern.

Massive — Large, bulky and heavy, ponderous.

Mastitis — Infectious inflammation of the milk gland.

Mealy — Having the appearance of being powdered or sprinkled with meal.

Meaty — The quality of being able to carry a good portion of meat in proportion to the bone, size, and type of the rabbit. A noticeably well-proportioned meatiness of the forequarters, back, loin, and haunches.

Moult — The act of shedding or changing fur. The baby fur is moulted at approximately 2 months; the first prime coat is developed at 4 to 6 months of age.

Mutation — A hereditary change resulting in a new genetic combination capable of reproduction. Examples would be Rex and Satin coats.

Muzzle — The lower part of the face and nose of the rabbit.

Neck — That part of the rabbit connecting the head to the body.

Nostrils — The two openings of the nose leading to the internal structures of the head.

Off-colored — Several hairs or patches of fur foreign to the color standard of the rabbit; also, a departure from the desired color of fur or eyes.

Open coat — Fur lacking density in undercoat, accompanied by fine guard hairs, and lacking texture.

Pair — A male and female rabbit of one variety.

Palpate — To feel through the abdominal wall for developing young in the uterus.

Parasites — Internal (tapeworms) or external (lice) organisms which live in or on the host rabbit at whose expense it obtains food, shelter, ect.

Patch — A small section of fur.

Paunch — The prominent portion of the abdomen.

Pearl — The intermediate color band of Chinchilla rabbits; off-white in color.

Pedigree — A correct written chart of the male and female ancestors of a rabbit, showing the date of birth; ownership of dam; and the parents, grandparents, and great grandparents of the specimen.

Pelt — Usable portion of the fur coat covering an animal.

Pepper and salt — A flat, unattractive appearance of black and white ticking, as found in Chinchillas; caused by a lack of contrast and waviness in the ticking and weakness of color on the tips of the guard hairs.

Pigeon breasted — A narrow chest with protruding breastbone.

Pinched hindquarters — Hindquarters tapering toward the tail at the lower hindquarters, giving the rabbit a pinched appearance.

Points — The ears, tail, nose, rear feet, and the forelegs of a rabbit such as a Himalayan or Color Point.

Poor coat — Fur not in good condition due to moulting, rust, or ill health of the rabbit, or of general poor quality due to genetic factors.

Pot belly — A distended condition of the stomach and intestines, usually found in young rabbits.

Predator — A pillaging or destructive animal.

Purebred — A recognized breed kept pure for generations.

Rabbit — A domesticated Lagomorph descendent of the European wild rabbit of the genus *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.

Racy — Slim, trim, alert, and active. Slender in body and limbs, hare-like.

Random mating — Mating within a selected group with no attention paid to a definite mating system.

Recessive — The characteristics of one parent (woolly, yellow fat, etc.), that when transmitted to offspring is concealed by the dominant characteristic of the other parent.

Registration — The official recording of a rabbit that has been approved by a licensed registrar.

Ribs — The curved portions of the sides immediately back and under the shoulders and above the belly.

Roll back — A gradual return of the coat of fur to normal position when it is stroked from the hindquarters to the shoulders.

Roman nose — A nose whose bridge is so comparatively high as to form a slightly convex line from the forehead to the nose tip. (Dictionary: “Aquiline—curving like an eagle’s beak.”)

Roughage — Hay, grass, etc.

Rump — The upper, rounded part of the hindquarters.

Rust — A reddish-brown coloration of the fur, usually appearing on the sides, flanks or feet of rabbits. Rust appears in Blues, Blacks, Chocolates, Lilacs, and Sables. It may be caused by exposure to sunlight, dirty hutches, or dead hair about to moult.

Saddle — The whole upper back portion of a carcass, including both loins, rumps, and hind legs. Also, a marking on the Dutch rabbit where the white color ceases on the upper portion of the hindquarter marking.

Sandy — The color of sand, as in sand-gray Flemish Giants. Gray with reddish brown cast interspersed with dark guard hairs.

Screw-tail — See “Wry-tail.”

Self or self-colored — Animals of the same colored fur over the entire head, legs, body, and tail; solid colored.

Senior — A rabbit 6 months of age or older in show room classes of Junior and Senior only. A rabbit 8 months of age or older in the larger breeds with Junior, Intermediate, and Senior classes.

Settle — To conceive.

Sexing — Determining the sex of a rabbit.

Shaded — Gradual transition of color from lighter to darker shade. Usually having darker extremities as with sable or Siamese coloration.

Shadow bars — Weakness of self-color in the fur of both fore and hind feet, appearing in the form of white or lighter colored bars running across the feet, and acting as a severe cut or penalty in scoring. Occurs more often in the Agouti breeds than in self.

Shape — General conformation; the rabbit’s overall appearance as shown by body structure; synonym for “type.”

Sheen — The principal feature of the Satin mutation. A bright, natural luster attributed to the unique structure of the hair shaft, because glass-like, transparent hair shell has the ability to reflect light. Sometimes used in error to describe fur condition in the normal fur.

Shoulder — The upper joint of the foreleg, connecting it to the body.

Silvered — Having the appearance of silvery sheen or luster—an abundance of silver-white or silvertipped guard hairs interspersed through the fur so as to produce a lustrous, silvery appearance.

Slipping coat — A coat of fur that is shedding or moulting a profusion of hairs.

Slobbers — Excessive salivation—ingestion or gastritis, usually found in young rabbits, caused by improper feeding. Indicated by drooling mouth and wet fur on lower jaw and forelegs. Not contagious.

Smut — A dark, sooty appearing area affecting surface color. Experienced mostly in basic red colors. Also used to describe pelt stain found in Californians and Himalayan marked animals. Also in the pale nose markings of butterfly pattern.

Snipey — A long, elongated, narrow head.

Snuffles — A virulent, contagious affection of the nasal passage and respiratory organs, usually terminating in chronic illness; indicated by fever, heavy breathing, sneezing, and discharge of thick, creamy, nasal pus from nostrils.

Solid color (self-color) — A rabbit with the same basic coloration over the entire body, not mixed with any other color to create a pattern or markings. In a broad sense, it may include: Selfs and Shaded Selfs, Agouti and Wide Band Agouti, ticked as in Steel, Silver, and d'Argent rabbits, but not those of the basic Tan pattern. (Pointed Whites in Angoras and some Lop breeds are classified as “Solids”—see breed standard.)

Sore hocks — An ulcerated condition of the footpads or soles of either fore or hind feet of the rabbit. (A misnomer—not actually pertaining to the hocks.)

Spraddled (spraddle-legged) — A condition where the rabbit cannot hold (abduct) the front or back legs inside the body, and they spread out from the body.

Standard — The characteristics for a breed of rabbits as set up and approved by a registering organization.

Station — Ideal manner of standing or carriage in conformity with standard position or pose.

Stocky — Compact, stout, and cobby.

Strain — Rabbits in any standard breed of the same family blood having the quality of reproducing marked characteristics.

Stringy — The quality of having ropy or sinewy flesh—noticeably in the larger breeds of rabbits if not properly fattened for market.

Sway-back — As applies to type—having a distinct fall or scoop in that portion of the back between the shoulders and hindquarters, as distinguished from a gradually arching back.

Symmetry — As applied to types in rabbits—the quality of possessing a harmonious proportion of head, ears, legs, and body structure conforming to the standard type of breed represented.

Tail carriage — The way in which a rabbit carries the tail. Poor tail carriage is denoted in the tail being carried to one side or the other instead of correctly.

Tattoo — To make a permanent identification mark in the ear of a rabbit through use of a perforating instrument and rubbing India ink into the perforations.

Texture — That quality of fur pertaining to its action when stroked toward the head.

Ticking — Longer guard hairs throughout the fur, of a color distinct from the underwool or body fur which presents a wavy appearance. Ticking is characterized by longer, black, and/or tipped guard hairs.

Top color — The surface color of the fur lying in its normal position.

Tucked up — The trim appearance of the Belgian Hare, with the flank and belly gathered in closely to form an arch when the rabbit is in a sitting position.

Type — Denotes conformation of a rabbit, or shape or size of a particular part of a rabbit; head type; the general physical makeup of the rabbit.

Typical — Serving as an ideal representation of any given breed or variety as applied to type, color, or fur quality.

Undercolor — The color at the base of the fur shaft, next to the skin; not belly color.

Undercut — The belly marking on a Dutch rabbit; a continuation of the saddle marking.

Undercut hindquarters — Where the skeletal and/or muscular structure does not fill the lower hindquarters.

Variety — A division within a breed. Type indicates the breed; color determines the variety. (In some breeds, Broken Color is an added variety.)

Vent disease — Venereal diseases in rabbits of both sexes; indicated by scabby, reddened male or female organ, usually exuding pus.

Wall eye (moon eye) — An eye which is whitish on the surface (cornea) of the eye; having a milky film over the eye.

Wolf teeth — Protruding or elongated incisors in either the upper or lower jaw causing malocclusion, which is the improper alignment of the upper and lower teeth that causes abnormal wear.

Wool — The soft, fleecy hair on Angora rabbits. The guard hair and underfur is from 2½ to 3 inches in length and resembles fine wool in texture.

Wry tail — An abnormal tail, bent, carried, or twisted permanently to one side; a corkscrew tail with one or more turns.

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For more information on state rabbit associations and national specialty rabbit clubs, contact the American Rabbit Breeders Association, phone 309-664-7500.

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4-H 

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