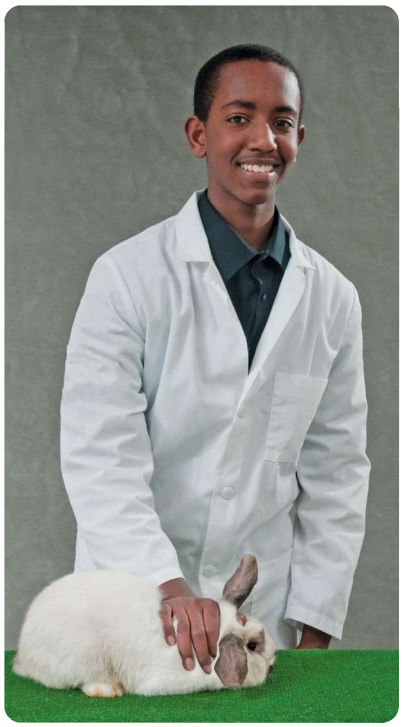
Michigan 4-H Rabbit Fitting & Showing

Member Guide

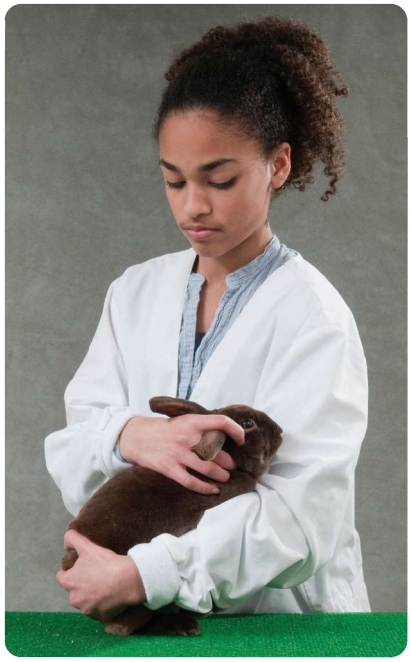












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4-H RABBIT FITTING & SHOWING

Rabbit fitting and showing gives you the chance to compete with other 4-H'ers in your county or from other parts of the state and to be recognized for your accomplishments.

In most rabbit shows, the rabbits are judged, not the exhibitors. In a 4-H fitting and showing contest, however, the judge evaluates your skills and your general knowledge of rabbits. This may include:

- Your knowledge of rabbit breeds.
- The care and fitting of your rabbit.
- Your rabbit's condition, health, and nutritional status.

The judge also considers your presentation, attitude, and behavior.

Fitting

Fitting refers to choosing a rabbit for show and caring for it to enhance its condition and appearance. Fitting also includes any preparation of the rabbit before the contest, such as checking its general health, trimming its toenails, and removing any dead fur from its coat. Practicing good management techniques (such as proper animal care and cage or hutch maintenance) will improve the health and appearance of your rabbit.

Choosing a Rabbit

When you start a rabbit project, choosing a rabbit breed is a very important decision you must make. The American Rabbit Breeders Association, or ARBA, recognizes more than 50 rabbit breeds, all with different temperaments and other characteristics. A 4-H volunteer leader or an experienced rabbit breeder can help you decide which breed is best for you. Keep these traits and characteristics in mind as you consider which rabbit breed to show:

- **Size—**Consider your size and the rabbit's size. Picking a rabbit you can handle easily will be less frustrating for you and the judge (Figure 1).
- **Type—**Avoid running breeds because they don't pose well and will cost you points.
- **Age and sex—**Rabbits that are more than 3 months old are calmer than younger rabbits, so they're easier to train and show. You can show rabbits of either sex in 4-H contests.
- **Quality—**It's important that the rabbit you choose doesn't have any disqualifications for its breed. Check the current edition of the ARBA Standard of Perfection for your rabbit's breed standard.

If you have a mixed breed rabbit, use the grooming and showing techniques for the breed that your rabbit most closely resembles physically, even if you have no idea of your rabbit's parentage.

If possible, choose your rabbit at least 4 weeks before the contest (earlier is better) so you have enough time to prepare it physically for the show and to school it in the showing process.

No matter which rabbit breed you choose, remember that what's most important is how well you work with the animal to demonstrate your knowledge of rabbits and your handling skills.

Objectives

The objectives of 4-H rabbit fitting and showing contests are to help you learn and grow from the challenges you face and your accomplishments and to develop:

- The knowledge and skills you need to accurately examine a rabbit's health and quality.
- Responsibility, communication, and decision-making skills.
- Leadership skills.
- Competition and sportsmanship skills.
- Interest in and a positive attitude about raising and working with rabbits.
- Appreciation for rabbits and knowledge of how to handle them humanely.

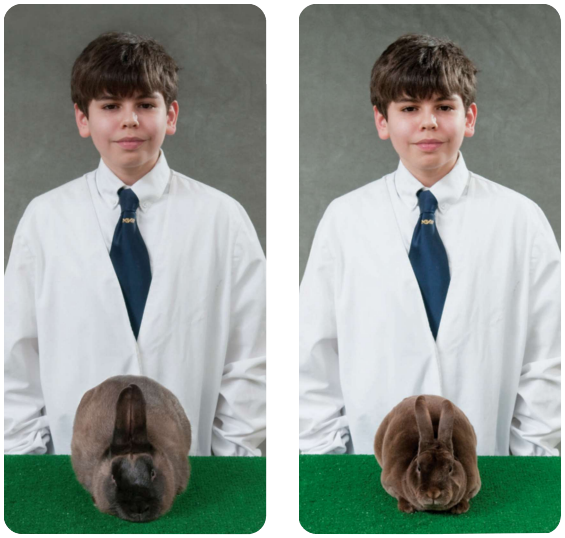


Figure 1. Choose a rabbit that is a good fit for your hand size and strength. The rabbit on the left is probably too big for this exhibitor to handle smoothly and securely. The rabbit on the right is a better fit.

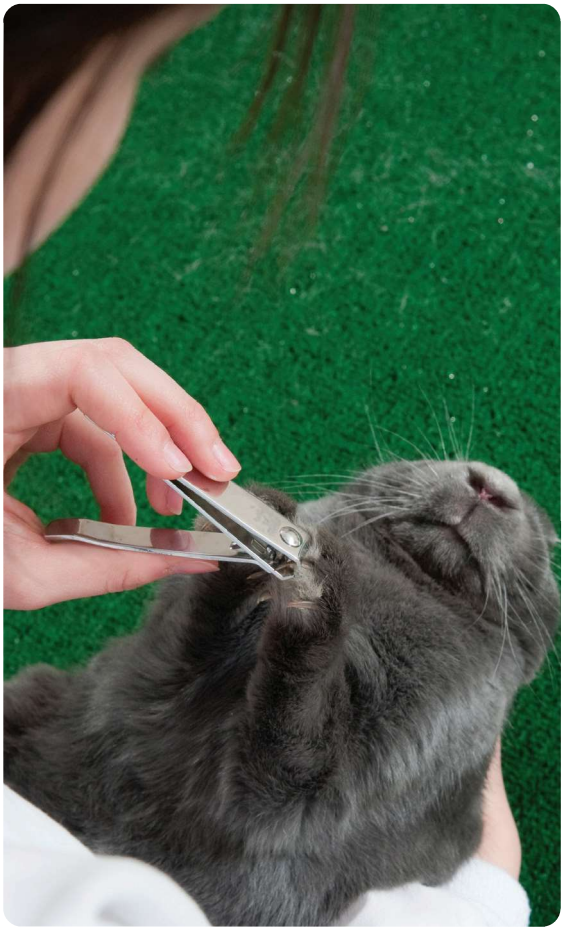


Figure 2. **Trimming a rabbit's toenails with nail clippers.**

Caring for & Grooming Your Rabbit

Give your rabbit quality feed and fresh, clean water every day. (In hot weather, you may need to refill the water bowl or waterer more than once a day. In winter, make sure the water doesn't freeze in the bowl or waterer.)

To prepare yourself and your rabbit for the show, handle it often and expose it to distractions such as unfamiliar sounds like music and people talking, and to different lighting conditions and activity levels (such as other animals and humans moving nearby).

If your rabbit has a minor disease or pest problem like ear mites, treat the issue right away so it is cleared up by show day.

In most breeds (like Mini Rex and Netherland Dwarf), you can remove loose fur by wetting your hands and running them back and forth over the rabbit from head to tail. Don't do this to wool breeds like Jersey Wooly, Angoras, and American Fuzzy Lop, though. You'll need to brush the wool of these breeds.

All rabbits need regular toenail trimming, especially before a show. Use a heavy-duty nail clipper and be careful not to cut the nails too close. If you cut into the pink or quick, the nail will bleed and your rabbit will not be happy with you (Figure 2).



Your Rabbit's Condition

ARBA defines "condition" as: "The overall physical state of a rabbit in relation to healthy cleanliness, fur, and grooming" (2020, ARBA, p. 9). The rabbit's condition is a measure of its health, meat, and fur qualities. The judge will also consider how closely your rabbit matches its breed characteristics. The judge may award a maximum of 10 points related to your rabbit's condition.

Your Appearance, Attitude & Behavior

Your appearance, attitude, and behavior during a 4-H rabbit fitting and showing contest are significant parts of your presentation. The judge may award a maximum of 10 points related to your appearance, attitude, and behavior in the class.

Your Appearance

The guidelines on exhibitor appearance that follow apply to state-level Michigan 4-H rabbit events. County-level 4-H rabbit fitting and showing contests may have slightly different dress codes.

Failure to follow these guidelines will cost you appearance points (see the scorecard later in this guide):

- **Clothing—**Your clothing should always be neat and clean and should include:
  - Long, dark pants or slacks, or a knee-length or longer skirt.
  - Tidy shoes with closed toes.
  - A long-sleeved white shirt or blouse. A long-sleeved white lab or show coat is optional. Avoid low-cut shirts. Ties are optional. If you wear a tie, secure it with a tie clasp or pin to keep it out of the way as you handle your rabbit (Figure 3).
- **Hair, Skin, and Nails—**Your hair should be neatly combed. If you have long hair, tie it back to keep it out of the way as you handle your rabbit. Your face and hands should be clean. Your fingernails should be clean, neatly trimmed, and unpolished.
- **Jewelry—**Don't wear jewelry, except for medical identification bracelets or tags. Your show clothing (including show coats) should be free of names, patches, pins, logos, and other distractions.

Your Attitude & Behavior

Showing your rabbit should be fun. It gives you the chance to demonstrate to the judge and your peers that you're competent and proud to be a part of the contest. Look at the judge from time to time to make sure you have their attention. Be on your best behavior and be courteous. If the judge asks you questions, answer politely. Be a good sport and congratulate your peers on their achievements after the contest.

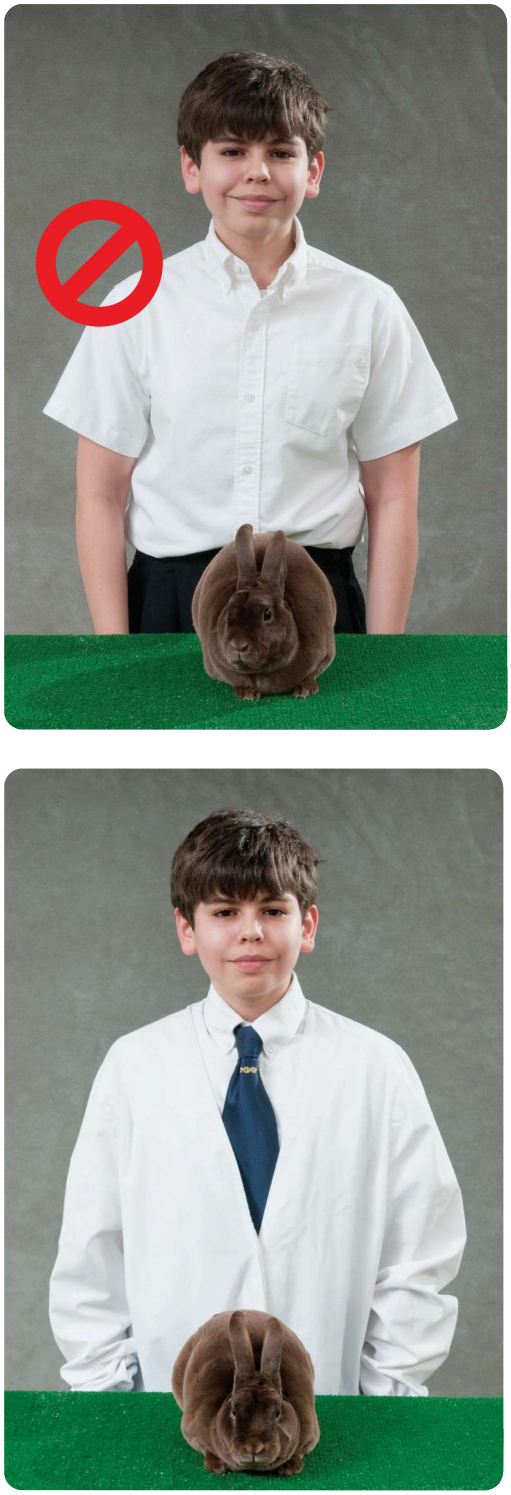


Figure 3. Improper (top) and proper show clothing (bottom) for a 4-H rabbit fitting and showing class. (*Note:* Ties are optional.)

Showing Procedures

Showing is presenting your rabbit to a judge in a way that highlights the rabbit's positive qualities and demonstrates your rabbit husbandry knowledge, skills, and ability. Rabbit showmanship doesn't start the day of the contest; you should begin practicing show techniques with your rabbit weeks before the show.

Whether the judge has you and the other exhibitors approach the table together or individually, you should speak only in response to the judge's questions. If you don't understand the judge's instructions, you may politely ask them to repeat themselves.

Speed is not important when you handle, pose, and examine your rabbit. What matters is that you complete the steps carefully and smoothly so that your rabbit feels secure and stays calm and the judge can see how well you perform each step. (**Note:** Don't expect or wait for the judge to acknowledge each step as you perform it.)

Your performance in a 4-H rabbit fitting and showing class is scored in four parts:

- Handling your rabbit
- Posing your rabbit
- Examining your rabbit
- Answering quiz questions

We'll cover the steps for handling, posing, and examining your rabbit in the next three sections. Note, though, that the parts overlap. You will use some of the skills described in each section in the other two sections as well.

Dealing With Rabbit Behavior

Rabbits are like most other other live animals—sometimes they will behave exactly as you wish them to, and sometimes they won't. The list of potential rabbit misbehavior ranges from embarrassing to alarming and includes things like:

- Leaving feces or urine on the table or on your show clothes.
- Trying to wriggle out of your grasp during the examination.
- Biting or nipping at you because it is stressed.
- Trying to breed or fight with the rabbit next to it.
- Flipping back onto its feet while you're holding it on its back.

These are all natural activities for a rabbit so when they happen, do your best to stay calm and carry on. No need to apologize to the judge. Ignore the puddle or pile your rabbit has left (until the class is over, anyway, then clean it up), settle your wriggly rabbit, separate your rabbit from the one it is trying to breed or fight with, flip it back over . . . and continue the step you're on.

You and your rabbit will perform better in the class if you don't let your rabbit sense that you are afraid of or dreading what it might do. Fill yourself with confidence, take control of your rabbit, and you will do well.

Remember that rabbits are creatures of habit. The more you practice with your rabbit in the weeks before the show, the easier your rabbit will be to handle during the show. Practice, practice, and practice some more.

Safe Footing Is Essential

When you practice the show steps with your rabbit, help it feel secure by always working with it on a rug or piece of carpet on your table. On a smooth surface, your rabbit won't have firm footing and may slip, which could cause it to panic and try to escape (Figure 4).



Figure 4. This rabbit is likely to feel unsure of its footing on this slippery table. Place a rug or piece of carpet on the table to give your rabbit secure footing.

HANDLING YOUR RABBIT

Your rabbit fitting and showing class officially begins as you approach the show table with your rabbit in your arms. When the judge tells you to pose your rabbit, place the rabbit on the table in front of you sideways between you and the judge. Then, using Handling Method A or B (described in this section), turn your rabbit so it faces the judge. (See the "Posing Your Rabbit" section for instructions on posing.)

Next, the judge will say, "Handle your rabbit!" That is your cue to perform the steps described in this section. Choose the handling method (A or B) that is most comfortable for you and your rabbit.

The judge may award a maximum of 15 points for your performance in handling your rabbit.

Handling Method A

Use the handling method (A or B) that you prefer based on what is comfortable for you and your rabbit.

Handling A Step 1.

Lift and turn your rabbit sideways (one side to the judge) using one of the options described here. Be sure to support your rabbit securely as you lift it high enough that its toenails don't drag and catch on the table.

Option A: Place one hand under each side of your rabbit's belly, then lift and turn your rabbit, supporting and maintaining control of it as you do so.

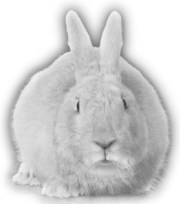








Option B: Place one hand under your rabbit's chest, holding its front leg on the judge's side between your middle and index finger, and place your other hand on its rump. Place a few fingers from that hand between your rabbit's hocks to support its lower hindquarters. Lift and turn the rabbit, supporting and maintaining control of it as you do so.



Handling A Step 2.

Cup your palm around the rabbit's shoulders, directly behind the base of its ears. Position your hands and fingers according to one of the three options described here. Support the animal by gently holding its shoulders with your cupped hand. Do not grasp the rabbit's skin and fur. (**Note:** This step is why it will be easier for you to show a smaller rabbit if you have small hands.)

Option A: Holding one ear between your thumb and index finger.



Option B: Holding both ears between your thumb and index finger.



Option C: Holding one ear between your thumb and index finger and the second ear between your index and middle finger.



Handling A Step 3.

Keeping your hand cupped on the rabbit's shoulders (as shown in option A, B, and C of Step 2), lift it by the shoulder and ears, raising your hand so the rabbit's front legs are slightly off the table.



Handling A Step 4.

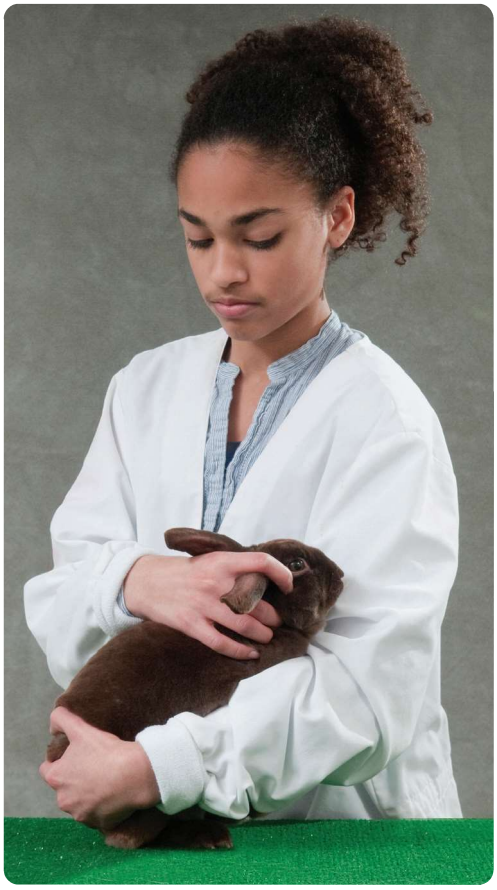
Use your other hand to support the rabbit's lower hindquarters.



Handling A Step 5.

Lift the rabbit and bring it toward your body so its head is hidden in the bend of your elbow. In this position, the rabbit's weight is completely resting on your arm and hand. The rabbit's front feet should be on your forearm, and the back feet in your hand. Step back with your free hand at your side.

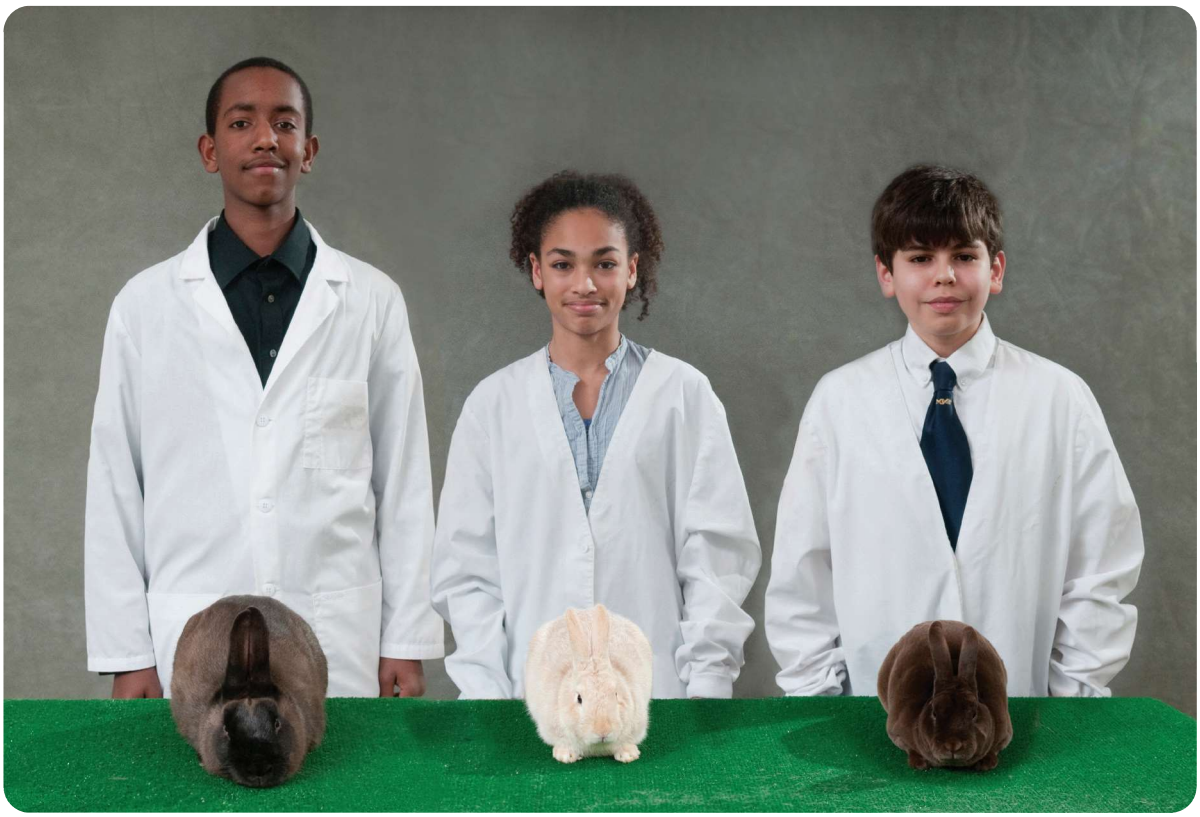




Handling A Step 6.

When the judge tells you to pose your rabbit on the table, support the rabbit's hindquarters while you gently return the rabbit to the table, hindquarters first. Place the rabbit parallel to your body, with one side facing the judge (steps 1 through 5 in reverse order).

Then lift your rabbit, turn it to face the judge, and pose it. (See the "Posing Your Rabbit" section for instructions.)



Handling Method B

Use the handling method that you prefer based on what is comfortable for you and your rabbit.

Handling B Step 1.

Lifting and supporting your rabbit, turn it sideways (one side to the judge). Be sure to support your rabbit securely as you lift it high enough that its toenails don't drag and catch on the table. (This is the same as Handling Step 1 for Method A.)

Handling B Step 2.

Slide the hand that is closest to the rabbit's rump under the rabbit's belly between its front and back legs, being sure to support and maintain control of the rabbit as you do so. Lift the rabbit's forequarters slightly off the table.



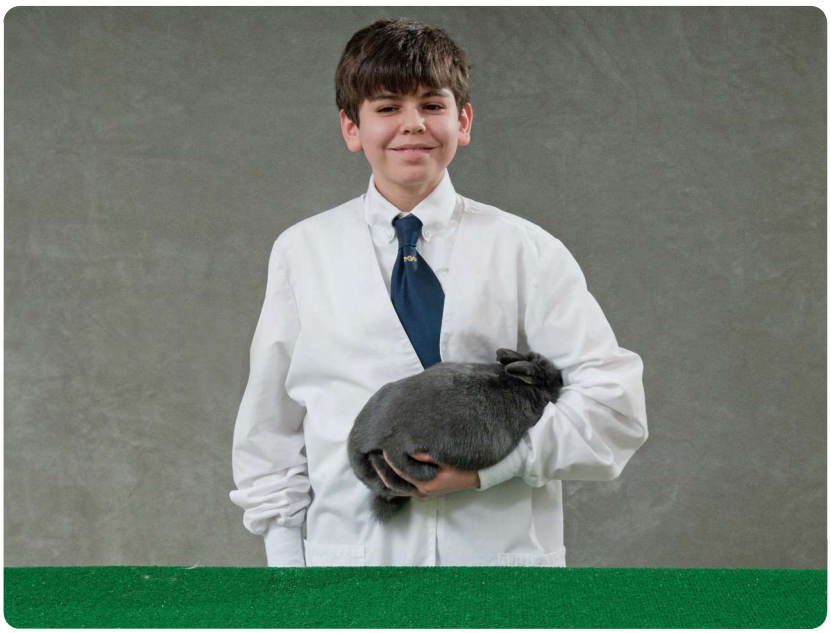
Handling B Step 3.

Use your other hand to support the rabbit's hindquarters.



Handling B Step 4.

Lift the rabbit and bring it toward your body so its head is in the bend of your elbow. Lower your other arm to your side. In this position, the rabbit's head is hidden in your elbow bend and its weight is resting completely on your arm and hand. The rabbit's front feet should be on your forearm, and the back feet in your hand. Step back with your free hand at your side.

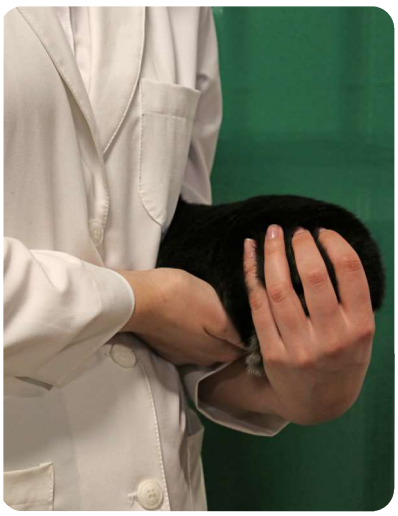


Handling B Step 5.

After the judge tells you to pose your rabbit on the table, gently return the rabbit to the table, reversing the order of the movements you used to pick it up. Pull your forearm that is holding your rabbit away from your body at an angle and slide your free hand back under its belly.

Support the rabbit's hindquarters as you return the rabbit to the table in front of you, hindquarters first. Place it on the table parallel to your body (so one side faces the judge).

Now lift your rabbit, turn it to face the judge using one of the methods described in Handling Step 1, and pose it on the table. (See the "Posing Your Rabbit" section for instructions.)





POSING YOUR RABBIT

In this part of a 4-H rabbit fitting and showing class, you will pose your rabbit on the table facing the judge, following your rabbit's breed standard.

If everyone in the class is at the table at once, keep your rabbit at least one foot away from the rabbit on either side of it. Leave some space between the rabbit's hindquarters and the edge of the table so you have enough time to react and keep the rabbit from falling off the table if it backs up.

The judge may award a maximum of 15 points related to your performance in posing your rabbit.

Posing Step 1.
For most breeds: Cover the rabbit's head and eyes with your hand. Keep the same hand on its head and over its eyes throughout the posing process.

For high head mount breeds: Place your fingers under the rabbit's chin and gently lift the head as shown in the image at far right.





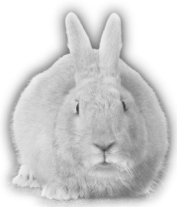


Posing Step 2.
Set the toes of your rabbit's forelegs even with its eyes (left), with these breed differences:

- For low head mount breeds (such as Californian, Himalayan, and Mini Lop), make sure the rabbit's elbows are touching the table. (**Note:** If you are posing a rabbit with its head down, as in the photo on the left, then the elbow will automatically be on the table.)
- For medium head mount breeds (like Czech Frosty and Blue Holicer) and high head mount breeds (such as Holland Lop, American Fuzzy Lop, Netherland Dwarf, and Lionhead), lift the rabbit's head and slightly extend its forelegs to show off its chest and position its head correctly (right).

Posing Step 3.
Set each hind foot in line with the stifle, also known as the back knee.





Posing Step 4.

Set the tail so that it is not tucked under the rabbit.



Posing Step 5.

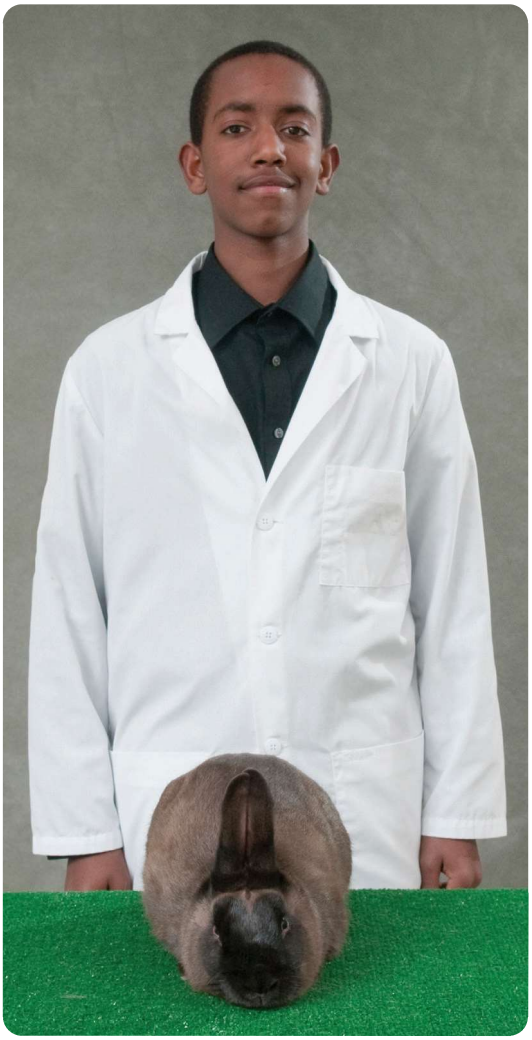
Set the rabbit's ears according to the breed standard. If your rabbit has erect ears, use the back of your hand to lightly push the rabbit's ears forward into a V shape (left). If your rabbit is a lop breed, gently stroke the ears forward to position them directly behind the eyes (right).





Posing Step 7.

Stand back from the table and place your arms at your sides.



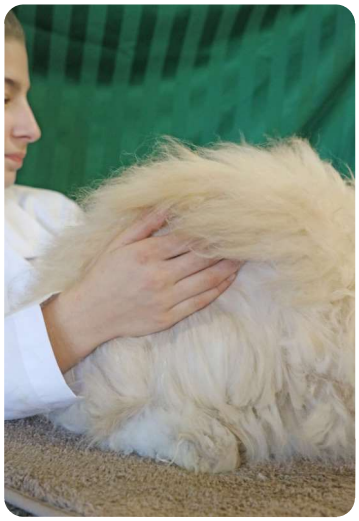
Posing Step 6.

Smooth, fluff, or set the fur according to your rabbit's breed standard:

- **Angora (English, French, Giant, and Satin)—**Fluff the wool forward from the tail to the head to make the rabbit look like a ball.
- **American Fuzzy Lop and Jersey Wooly—**Stroke the wool gently from the base of the neck to the tail.
- **Lionhead—**Gently fluff the mane fur forward to show it off.
- **Rex, satin and normal fur breeds—**Stroke the fur from the base of the neck to the tail. Note that you don't need to pat the fur of a Rex or Mini Rex while setting it. Only pat the fur to check its density.







EXAMINING YOUR RABBIT

In the examination part of the fitting and showing contest, the judge wants to find out how much you know about checking your rabbit for disqualifications and quality. They will evaluate you on how smoothly, systematically, and confidently you perform each examination step. Start on the side you're most comfortable with and continue working from the same side of the rabbit you chose throughout the exam. This will help make your movements smoother and more systematic.

The judge will say, "Examine your rabbit" when it is time to begin. This section explains the examination steps.

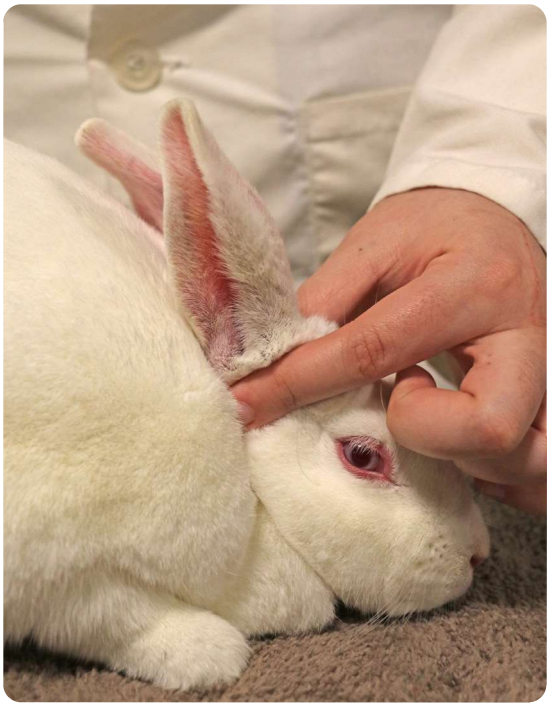
The judge may award a maximum of 40 points related to your performance in examining your rabbit.

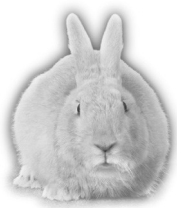
Examining Step 1.

Lift the rabbit and turn it sideways (so one side is to the judge) in front of you on the table (see also Handling Step 1 Option A or B). Be careful not to snag its toenails on the table covering!

Examining Step 2.

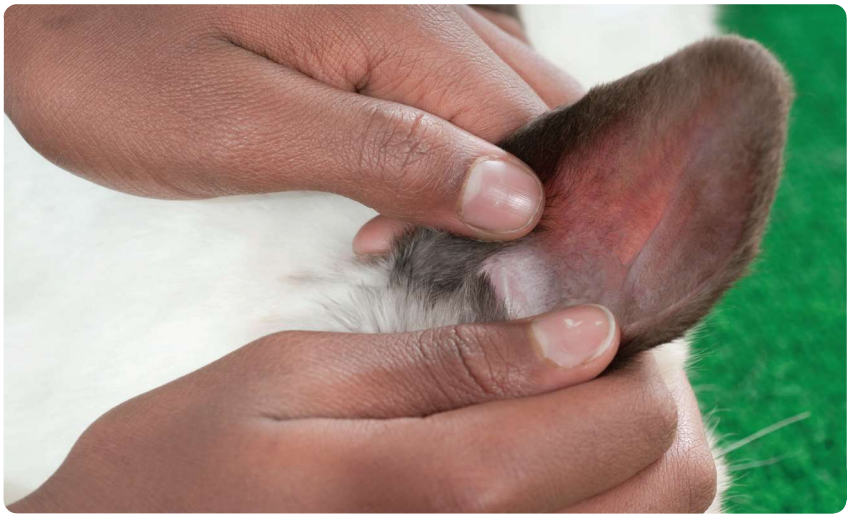
Start the exam at the rabbit's head. Gently squeeze the base of each ear one at a time to check for ear mites.





Examining Step 3.

Open and examine the inside of each ear to make sure that the rabbit doesn't have ear mites and run your hand up the edge of the ear to check that the ears have no nicks.

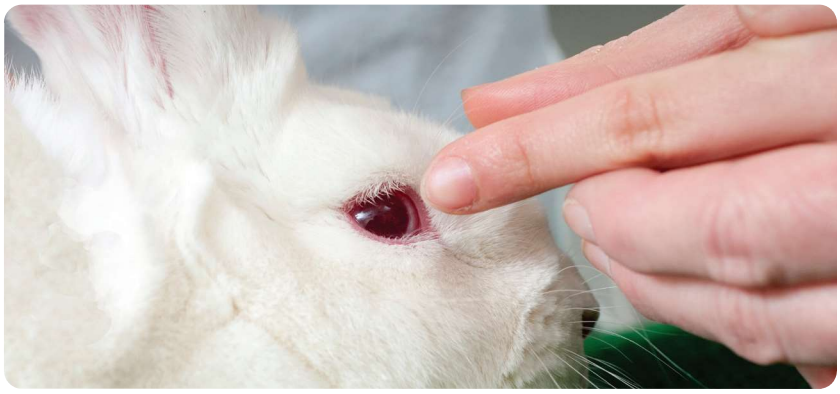


Examining Step 4.

Check your rabbit's eyes to make sure that they:

- Are the same color.
- Aren't blind.
- Aren't weepy or cloudy.
- Are the correct color for the breed.

Show the judge that you're checking the rabbit's eyes by pointing your index finger at each eye in turn. (**Note:** Don't actually touch the rabbit's eyes!) Remember to bend over the rabbit so you can see the eye on the judge's side.



Examining Step 5.

Turn your rabbit smoothly onto its back. To do this, cup your palm around its shoulders, directly behind the base of its ears. Position your hands and fingers according to the option you prefer from Step 2 of the "Handling Your Rabbit" section. Support the animal by gently holding its shoulders with your cupped hand. Do not grasp the skin and fur. Support the rabbit's hindquarters with your other hand by reaching your arm around your rabbit on the side between you and the judge. Lift the rabbit's front end and roll the hindquarters under. Do not let go of the shoulders. Release the rump to proceed with the exam. Make sure you support the rabbit when you turn it over. Don't let it struggle or kick.

Your rabbit should now be parallel to you on the table (so one side faces the judge).

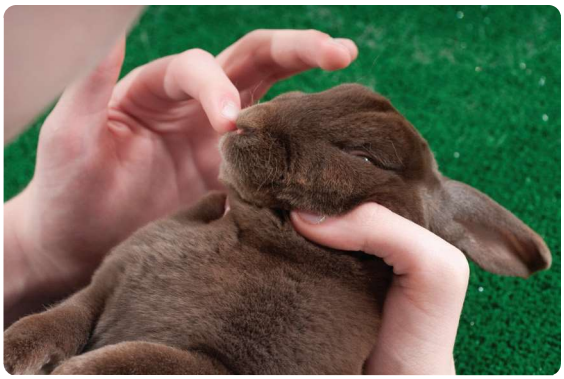
(**Note:** This is a very important step, because the judge will want to see whether the rabbit is under your control while you perform the examination. Slow and smooth movements will help you maintain control of your rabbit.)





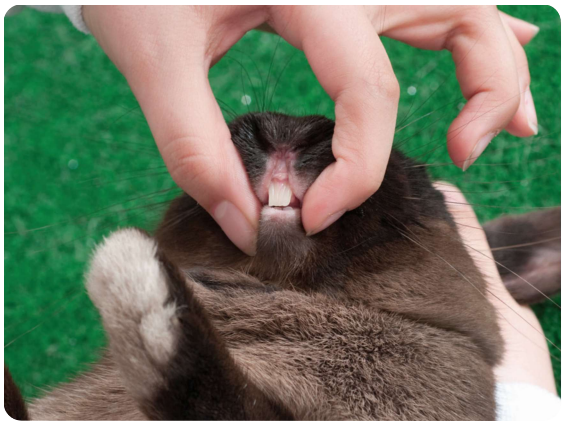
Examining Step 6.

Point your index finger and gently touch the rabbit's nose to check for discharge, which is a symptom of a rabbit disease called snuffles or Pasteurella.



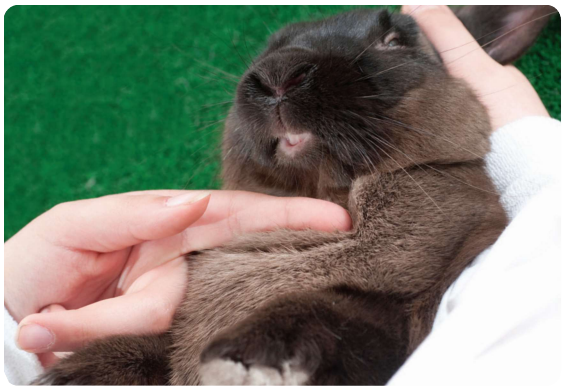
Examining Step 7.

Approaching the rabbit with one hand from above its head, pull its lips back with your thumb and index finger to check the condition of the front teeth. Carefully check for cracked, chipped, broken, butting, or buck teeth (also called malocclusion).



Examining Step 8.

Check the throat area, including the dewlap for abscesses or tumors by stroking from under the chin all the way to the front legs with the flat of your finger.



Examining Step 9.

Use your thumb and index finger to gently pull each front leg up in turn to see if the legs are straight, crooked, or bowed. Check for matting on the inside of the leg, which is another symptom of snuffles.



Examining Step 10.

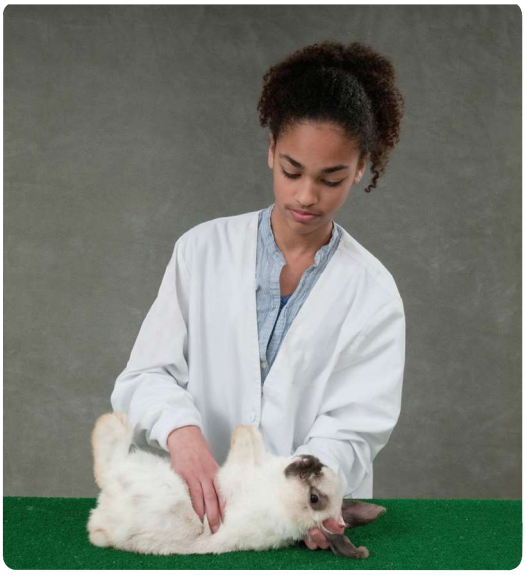
Gently press the footpad of each front foot with your thumb to extend the front toenails so you can check their color and look for missing or broken toes. Check each nail by running your finger down its length. Remember to check the dewclaw. (**Note:** You may need to pull the fur back to expose the nails.)





Examining Step 11.

Starting at the top of the rabbit's chest cavity (under the front legs), slowly slide your cupped hand over the rabbit's chest and abdominal area to check for abscesses, tumors, and other abnormalities. Pause and briefly look up to show the judge that steps 11 and 12 are separate steps.



Examining Step 12.

When your cupped and sliding hand reaches the rabbit's thigh, stop, extend, and gently squeeze the hind legs together to check the straightness of the hind legs and whether they are parallel. Then gently release the legs.



Examining Step 13.

Support the rabbit's hind foot while you check each hock with your thumb for signs of sore hocks. You may also grasp the feet one at a time and use your thumb to check for sore hocks.





Examining Step 14.

Gently push on the rear footpads with your thumb to extend the toenails to check for missing or broken toenails. Check the color by running your finger down each nail. (**Note:** You may need to pull the fur back to expose the nails.)







Examining Step 15.

Check the rabbit's sex by holding its tail between your index and middle fingers and pressing down lightly in front of the sex organ with your thumb. Look for signs of disease in and around the genitals of does and bucks. In bucks, fully extend the penis to check for a split. Look to make sure mature bucks have two testicles. The genitals of a young buck will look like an "o" with lips. The penis of a buck that is more than 6 months old will be clearly visible. A doe's genitals will look like a slit.

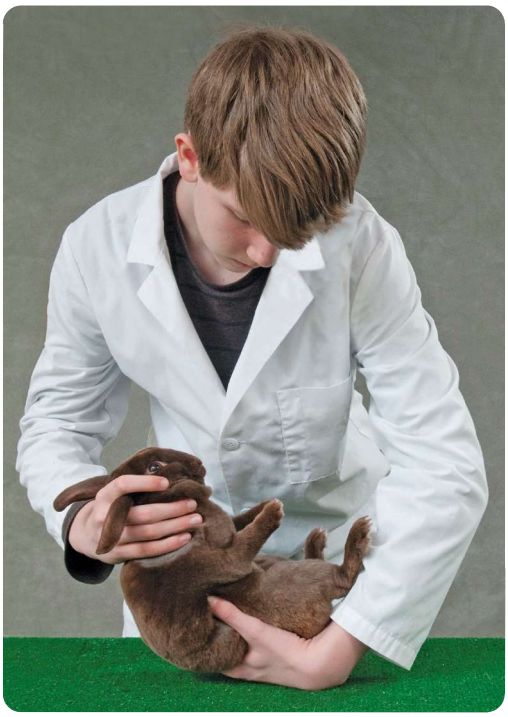
Examining Step 16.

Slide two fingers from the base to the end of the tail to check whether the tail has been broken and for misalignments like a dead or broken tail.



Examining Step 17.

Place your free hand under the rabbit's rump and gently roll it back onto its feet so that it is facing sideways (one side to the judge).



Examining Step 18.

Cover the rabbit's eyes to control it and keep it calm.

With your free hand, gently pull the tail out then release it to check for proper tail carriage and for abnormalities such as a wry or screw tail. Bend slightly at the waist to move your head so you can see the rump and tail from behind your rabbit.



Examining Step 19.

Check and adjust your rabbit's ear carriage according to its breed standard:

- **Lop-eared breeds—**Gently place your cupped hands behind the rabbit's ears to display the rabbit's natural ear carriage.
- **Upright- or erect-eared breeds—**Gently place your open hand behind the rabbit's ears to show the rabbit's natural ear carriage.





Examining Step 20.

Check the animal's body type and flesh condition by cupping one hand on the rabbit's shoulders and slowly sliding that hand down to the base of the rabbit's hindquarters in one smooth motion.



Examining Step 21.

Examine the fur quality, texture, and density by looking closely at it as you slowly run your hand from the rabbit's tail to its head and back to the tail (top left).

If you have a rex-furred rabbit, slowly run your hand from the rabbit's tail to its head and then gently press into the fur to check it for resistance and density (bottom left and bottom right).

If you have a wool breed rabbit, do not run your hand over the animal. Instead, gently fluff its wool from back to front to check the coat's length, texture, shape, and condition. Then gently grasp the wool on the sides of the rabbit to check the density (top right).













Examining Step 22.

Turn (see Step 1 in "Handling Your Rabbit") and pose (see Step 1 in "Posing Your Rabbit") the rabbit facing forward and stand with your hands at your sides. This completes the examination.

THE QUIZ

The quiz to check your rabbit knowledge is the final part of the class and may be written or oral. The number of questions the judge asks will depend on the age division you're competing in, the number of contestants in the class, their skill level, and the time available.

MICHIGAN 4-H RABBIT FITTING & SHOWING SCORECARD

Major scoring category	Maximum points
1. Handling rabbit	15
2. Posing rabbit on table	15
3. Examining rabbit	40
4. Rabbit knowledge quiz (oral or written)	10
5. Condition of rabbit	10
a. Fitting	
b. Flesh	
c. Fur	
d. General health	
6. Participant appearance, attitude, and behavior*	10
Total	**100**

*Note that whether or not the exhibitor smiles while at the show table does not change their score.



Lead to Succeed With Your Rabbit!

Along with learning responsibility and showmanship skills, you can take advantage of many other opportunities through your 4-H rabbit project, such as:

- Visiting a local nursing home with your rabbit. Pet therapy can be provided by more than dogs and cats!
- Participating in state 4-H animal science events such as the 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Show and Expo, 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Youth and Adult Volunteer Leader Workshop, and rabbit and cavy sessions at 4-H Exploration Days.
- Meeting with local, county, state, and national government representatives to discuss animal welfare issues.
- Developing a rabbit-related business such as selling products that come directly (such as fur, meat, or fertilizer) or indirectly (such as rabbit photographs) from your rabbits.
- Developing a rabbit-related commercial service such as a boarding facility or teaching new rabbit owners to care for their rabbits.
- Working with other 4-H'ers to use social media to advocate on rabbit-related issues.
- Creating and leading fun educational activities that help younger 4-H'ers learn to care for and show their rabbits.
- Cross training to learn fitting and showing techniques for other animal species so you can compete in sweepstakes showmanship contests.
- Arranging a 4-H club or group visit to the office of a local veterinarian to discuss rabbit health issues and tour the facility.
- Studying rabbit genetics to plan the best pairings for your rabbits.
- Visiting a meat processing facility that handles rabbits to learn to judge carcass and meat quality.
- Arranging a visit by an MSU Extension manure management specialist to discuss proper handling of rabbit waste.

Rabbit Reflections

Have you ever thought about these rabbit-related questions?

- What and where is a stifle? What other body parts do rabbits share with other mammals? How are rabbits unique?
- What "good condition" means?
- On how many of the earth's seven continents are rabbits a native species?
- What rabbit species are all current rabbit breeds and varieties derived from?
- What diseases can infect both rabbits and humans?
- What diseases can rabbits inherit from their parents? What diseases can rabbits get from their environment?
- What nutrition-related diseases or deficiencies affect rabbits?
- Why have rabbits developed physical characteristics such as long hind legs, long or short ears, and short, long, or wooly coats?

Sportsmanship & Leadership

Keep these points in mind as you show your rabbit:

- Win or lose, enjoy the process. You've worked hard to prepare and showing is a way to demonstrate what you've learned.
- Thank the judge.
- Congratulate the other exhibitors.
- Ask the judge how you can improve, rather than what you did wrong. Most judges will be happy to help you learn more after the classes and placings are done.
- Be a gracious winner. No one enjoys a show-off.
- Helping other exhibitors is part of good showmanship, sportsmanship, and leadership. Support each other when you see a need.
- Practice your leadership skills! If you feel confident about your skill at a particular task, help others learn to do that task well, too.
- Remember that helping others makes you better at showing, too!

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **American Rabbit Breeders Association Inc.** (http://www.arba.net/index.htm)—ARBA is a national organization dedicated to the promotion, development, and improvement of the domestic rabbit and cavy. Pages on the ARBA site that may be helpful include:
  - » Publications (https://arba.net/product/standard-of-perfection/)—Includes price and ordering information for the *Standard of Perfection.*
  - » Michigan State Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. (http://www.msrba.net)
- **Michigan 4-H Youth Development** (https://www.extension.msu.edu/4h)—The 4-H Rabbits and Cavies program page on this site has information on Michigan 4-H animal science-related workshops and events, along with species-specific resources and information. The 4-H Rabbits and Cavies page is at https://www.canr.msu.edu/rabbits_cavies/.
  - » **4-H Rabbit Tracks series** (https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/rabbit_tracks_series)—These fact sheets cover topics such as starting a 4-H rabbit project, rabbit feeds and feeding, summer and winter rabbit care, rabbit breeding, rabbit meat production, and rabbit showroom tips.
  - » **4-H Rabbit Project Snapshot** (https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/236/65886/MI-4-HRabbitSnapshot.pdf)—This project snapshot explains that a Michigan 4-H rabbit project can help you learn about choosing, taking care of, and marketing rabbits, as well as about careers in the rabbit industry. It briefly covers the science and life skills (such as citizenship and leadership, communication, critical thinking, project management, and problem-solving) you can develop in a 4-H rabbit project.

REFERENCE

American Rabbit Breeders Association. (2020). *Standard of perfection: Standard bred rabbits and cavies 2021–2025*. Author.




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