



RABBIT/CAVY PROJECT GUIDEBOOK



Species-Chair:

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IMPORTANT DATES & INFO				
Registration Due	May 4 th			
MARKET CLASS	POSSESSION DATE	AGE AT FAIR	MINIMUM WEIGHT	MAXIMUM WEIGHT
Meat Pen (3)	May 1 st	Bred: May 1 st Birth: May 29 th	3 pounds (per rabbit)	6 pounds (per rabbit)
Single Fryer	May 1 st	Bred: May 1 st Birth: May 29 th	3 pounds	6 pounds
Single Roaster	April 17 th	Bred: January 9 th Birth: February 10 th	5 pounds	None
Record Book (Both Market and show only)	Required		Thank You Note	Required

General Requirements

- ◆ Participating youth must abide by all general rules and regulations listed in the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council's Member Guidebook. This includes, but is not limited to, Code of Conducts, registration deadlines, showmanship and market requirements, Record book and Thank you Letters etc.
- ◆ To participate in a 4-H market rabbit project, youth must attain the age of eight (8) or older by January 1st of that calendar year and be registered with 4Honline.
- ◆ Registration is due to the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council Auction Committee no later than the May council meeting.
 - If you are bringing multiple rabbits or cavies, be sure to list each one on the registration form
- ◆ Youth are required to complete a project record book depicting their experience from beginning to end of the project.

Animal Requirements

- ◆ All animals must be purebred and conform to that breed
- ◆ All animals must be selected and tattooed (rabbits) or tagged (cavy) by June 30th
 - Species chairperson will schedule a time and location for tattooing
 - No animal will be tattooed while at the fair
- ◆ Market rabbit projects requirements:
 - Must be a meat breed (American, Californian, satin, New Zealands, etc)
 - Bred doe(s) must be in possession by the dates listed above.

- For pen of 3, bred does must be all the same breed and color
- It is recommended to have a couple of back up does
- Types of market projects:
 - Meat Pen:
 - Pen of 3 rabbits
 - Any sex
 - Age: 10 weeks maximum at fair
 - Weight at fair: 3-6 lbs each
 - Single Fryer:
 - 1 rabbit
 - Any sex
 - Age: 10 weeks maximum at fair
 - Weight at fair: 3-6 lbs
 - Single Roaster:
 - 1 rabbit
 - Any sex
 - Age: 6 months maximum at fair
 - Weight at fair: 5-8 lbs
- ◆ Breed animal (rabbit or cavy) requirements:
 - Must be at least 8 weeks of age at the fair
 - Younger kits/pups do not do well in the busy fair setting
 - Must meet weight guidelines for their breed

Fair Week Requirements

- ◆ Absolutely no horseplay, no yelling, no screaming, and no running in the barn at any time
- ◆ Rabbits and cavies can only be removed from their cages for:
 - Showmanship practice
 - Grooming
 - Cleaning of cages
 - Judging
 - Any other time requires permission from the species chair
- ◆ Youth are responsible for providing their own feeder, waterer and enough feed for the week
 - Be sure to label the feeder and waterer to identify who they belong to
- ◆ No feed, feed bags, or supplies are to be left in the barn (everything must be stored at the campsite).
- ◆ Youth are responsible for feeding, watering, and caring for their animal the entire week.
- ◆ Youth are responsible for keeping their cages and under their cage area clean all week.
- ◆ Show Requirements:
 - All animals must have nails trimmed and be properly groomed before going to the fair
 - Rabbits do NOT need baths and there is no hot water at fair for cleaning

- All animals will be judged by American Rabbit Breeders' Association (ARBA) standards
- All members must participate in the appropriate showmanship class AND either a breed or market class
 - Market rabbits that did not make weight may participate in a 4-H breed class
- Classes will be called 3 times only
 - Any participants not present will be dropped from the class
 - If youth is showing another 4-H animal, scheduling arrangements can be made with the species chair
- Show Attire:
 - Black pants
 - White long-sleeved shirt
 - White lab coat (optional)
 - Boots or solid shoes
 - No sandals
 - Bola or Tie (optional)
- ◆ Weather Conditions:
 - Cavies – If the weather is extremely cold or hot, all cavies MUST be taken to a home or camper during the night and returned to the barn the next morning
 - The need for this will be determined by the species chairperson
 - Frozen water bottles – will be provided on extremely hot days, during the hottest part of the day
 - Youth may choose to bring their own ice bottles for their own animals only
- ◆ Barn Decorations:
 - Cages may not be altered in any way
 - Must be in place by 6:00PM on the first Saturday of fair
 - Nothing may be permanently attached to the cages
 - All decorations should allow for airflow through and around the cages
 - Any decorations hindering airflow will be removed
 - This includes solid material or large wooden signs placed on top of cages
 - If your rabbit is a biter, be sure to bring cage dividers
- ◆ Barn Duty:
 - All participants in the barn must sign up for a 2-hour time slot
 - Sign up is posted on the first Saturday of fair
 - If youth fail to sign up, a time slot will be assigned to them
 - Come prepared to help and interact with the public
 - Be courteous and polite
 - Keep yourself and the barn neat and clean
 - Remember to smile!
- ◆ Skillathon
 - Open to all rabbit and cavy 4-H youth
 - Teams of 6 from all age brackets will be randomly selected at fair
 - Most questions are taken from the rabbit project and will include showmanship, ARBA, breed identification, etc
 - Show attire is NOT required

- ◆ All animals must be removed from the barn between 7:00AM and 9:00AM on the last Sunday of fair

Helpful Info

- ◆ Fair Week Barn Essentials:
 - Wheelbarrow, shovel, rake
 - Feeder, waterer, water cans
 - Grooming items
 - Items for decorating – hammer, screws, nails, stapler, etc
- ◆ Helpful Terms:
 - Sex:
 - Rabbits: Buck (male) or Doe (female)
 - Cavy: Boar (male) or Sow (female)
 - Variety/Color:
 - Important to know the proper color term – Ask for help if needed
 - Solid – white, black, chocolate, etc
 - Broken – 2 different distinct colors
 - Age:
 - Junior – Younger than 6 months
 - Intermediate – Mature over 10 pounds between 6 and 8 months
 - Senior:
 - Small animals – Over 6 months of age
 - Large animals – Over 10 pounds and older than 8 months

Cloverbuds

- ◆ 4-H members who are 5-7 years of age (as of January 1st of the current year)
- ◆ Cloverbuds must still register by the May deadline
- ◆ The rabbit or cavy must be in the possession of the Cloverbud 4-H member (or under his or her care) by July 30th
- ◆ Cloverbuds can participate only in Cloverbud Showmanship which is held on Friday of fair week
 - Cloverbuds may not participate in breed or market classes
- ◆ Cloverbuds must have direct one-on-one adult assistance while showing their animal
 - The adult is to stand behind or very near the Cloverbud during the show
 - The adult is not to talk or assist the Cloverbud; if help is needed, the evaluator will ask for it
- ◆ All Cloverbud shows will be non-competitive; each member will receive recognition
- ◆ Cloverbuds must follow all rules laid out for the older 4-H members in the barn
 - They will complete their own chores; Parents, siblings, or another 4-H member may assist
 - Animals must purebred and conform to ARBA standards

Resources

- ◆ Livestock Council's website: www.northwestmichiganlivestock.org

- ◆ *Rabbit Resource Handbook for Breeding, Market and Pet Rabbit Projects*, Ohio State University; 4-H Circular 228R
- ◆ Rabbit Learning Lab Kit, Ohio State University – borrow from the Grand Traverse MSU Extension Office
- ◆ Resources and educational workshops offered by MSU Extension/4-H