

Rabbit Handbook

Selecting, Grooming and Showing

Generally, 4-H members should not raise rabbits for show only. Rather, they should select the best animals from their colony to show.

Successful rabbit raising begins with pure-bred foundation stock. Rabbits for show should come from purebred parents of a breed recognized by the American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA) in its "Standards of Perfection." Avoid crossbred or mixed rabbits because they cannot be shown, and they vary greatly. It is wise to invest in the best stock available.

For showing, select the best rabbits according to the standards for its breed. Study the show rules, regulations and classifications carefully before taking a rabbit to a show. Shows impose strict requirements on weight, color, size and age of rabbits entered. Although pedigrees are usually not required, good records make good rabbits even more valuable for show and meat production.

You can learn a lot about showing rabbits by watching others show them. Some pointers you should know include:

- , Select best rabbits for showing. Do this early, allowing time for conditioning.
- , Begin working with your rabbit at least 6 weeks before a show.
- , Brush it with a soft brush and rub the hair coat with your hands to remove old, dead hair and give the rabbit a shiny new coat. This also helps gentle the rabbit. This is also the time to teach the rabbit to sit still on a table.
- , Judges do not waste time with rabbits that jump around on the show table.

, Read all the rules and regulations for the show. Ear canker, sore hocks and other abnormalities disqualify a rabbit.

, When you arrive at the show, check your entry with the show superintendent or secretary.

, As the judge examines the rabbit, information about the rabbit is written on the official record. This information usually is recorded also on the back of the card attached to the pen.

, A paper sticker showing the rabbit's placing is usually placed on the front of the card.

, Be present when your rabbits are being judged to learn from the judge's comments.

, In judging rabbits, the classifications of the American Rabbit Breeders Association usually prevail.

4-H members who show rabbits regularly can profit by reading this association's official Guide Book and Standard of Perfection.

Members of the local rabbit producers association or 4-H leaders can also provide information.

For information from the ARBA, see its web site at **www.arba.net**