



## Introduction to the NH 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Project

4-H Rabbit project members learn about basic care and feeding, health and housing of rabbits and cavies (guinea pigs). Members can start a business raising them. There are opportunities for showing if they choose to do so. Required age for participation in this project is 5-18 years of age as of January 1 of the current year.

A male rabbit is a buck, a female is a doe. Like people, rabbits are classified by scientists as mammals. Rabbits and people have a lot in common. Both come in a variety of sizes, shapes, colors, and personalities. Both can live happily in country, suburban or city settings. Rabbits can be raised almost anywhere; they fit easily into most family settings. Raising rabbits gives members lots of options, from a beginner's pet project to a breeding project and perhaps it will go on to a small business venture. It doesn't take a lot of money to get started with rabbits. This project will fit into most family budgets.

By studying fossils, scientists can tell that the rabbit has been around for about 30 to 40 million years. During all those years, the rabbit has changed very little. It is known that early sailors took rabbits along on voyages because they were easy to feed and care for, and could be used for meat. At the present time, more than forty breeds are recognized in North America by the American Rabbit Breeders Association (over 76 breeds in the world). Rabbits are used for pets, meat, fur, wool, laboratory use and fertilizer.

**Required Participant Age:** 5-18 as of January 1 of the current year

**Required Animal Age to show:** 2 months or older

**Animal Vaccinations:** Rabies vaccination are not required for rabbits and cavies. Check the rules of the Fair or show for additional vaccine requirements.

**Required Animal Identification:** Permanent ID – The animal should have an ear tattoo. (Some member's rabbits may not have an ear tattoo, and in that case should have a picture of their rabbit attached to their approval form.) Pictures are only good if you are not taking your rabbit out of county to show and are only involved in your own county events. If you show out of your county or go to Farm and Forest or other Fairs, your rabbit or rabbits must have Permanent ID.

### Forms

**Intent to Show Forms/4-H Online Animal Registration:** Must be complete with all information and signatures.

**Due Date:** June 1<sup>st</sup> (check with your county and shows for updates) at your county UNH Cooperative Extension office.

**Borrowing Form:** The borrowing form must be complete with animal information and all signatures.

**Due Date:** June 1<sup>st</sup> (check with your county and shows for updates) at your county UNH Cooperative Extension office.

### **Policies**

**NH 4-H Policy on Replacement Animals** - If a 4-H member's ONLY project animals dies, is critically ill to the point of being "unusable", or is deemed unsafe for the 4-H member to use as a project, after having been properly listed on their intent to show form, the Extension Field Specialist, 4-H Program Manager, or Program Associate may verify the loss or condition, and allow the 4-H member one replacement project animal. A new intent to show form is to be submitted. In this instance, the replacement animal can be shown at all fairs (except Eastern States).

If a 4-H member's animals are unable to be exhibited for any reason (illness, death, etc.) and they have other project animals listed on their intent to show form that are eligible, then there is never any substitution of non-listed animals allowed. They may only show the remaining animals on their intent to show form. Should a county have a member who misses an appropriate deadline, due to their not owning an animal at the time of the deadline or their only project animal(s) is (are) sick the county may make an exception for their county only. When a county makes the exception the youth's intent to show form must be marked that these animals can be shown at their county fair only.

**Rabies Vaccination Requirements for NH 4-H Animals(excluding Rabbits and Cavies)** - Upon the recommendation of the New Hampshire State Veterinarian, all mammals (excluding Rabbits and Cavies) shown or exhibited at New Hampshire 4-H events including fairs, shows, clinics, 4-H club meetings, county activities day or any other event sponsored by 4-H, must have a current inoculation for rabies given at least 30 days prior to the event. A licensed veterinarian administered rabies vaccination is recommended. Rabies vaccinations cannot be given to 4-H animals under three months of age AND we require the vaccination be given at least 30 days prior to exhibiting an animal. Other health requirements vary by species and show. Individual shows and fairs may have additional vaccination and health requirements as recommended by the New Hampshire State Veterinarian's office. Always check the fair book for additional health requirements.

### **Resources**

[American Rabbit Breeders Association Breed List](#)  
[ARBA Recommendations for Rabbit and Cavy Care](#)  
[National 4-H Rabbit Curriculum](#)  
[University of Tennessee Rabbit Activity Page:](#)  
[4-H Rabbit Project Guide](#)  
[Getting Started in Your 4-H Rabbit Project:](#)  
[4-H Rabbit Project Reference Guide:](#)

**If you have any questions or for more information:** Call Mary Davis, NH 4-H Animal and Agricultural Science Program Coordinator (603) 862-2188, email at [Mary.Davis@unh.edu](mailto:Mary.Davis@unh.edu), or contact your County 4-H staff member.

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