University of California Cooperative Extension

4-H ANIMAL SCIENCE PROJECT GUIDE
RABBIT

The purpose of the 4-H animal science program is to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development of the young person. A secondary purpose is to teach 4-H members how to feed, fit, select and manage the animals they own. In the process of feeding and caring for an animal, 4-H members have the opportunity to develop many positive life skills.

The 4-H project leader can be of great assistance in developing the member's initiative, pride, and abilities as well as an appreciation toward animals. As a leader you will find a host of "tools" to use in developing the members skills; some of these are:

✦ 4-H lending library
✦ Resource leaders and community members
✦ Junior/teen leaders
✦ State and national breed associations
✦ County fairs and shows
✦ County trainings and events
✦ Members' parents
✦ Project proficiencies

As a 4-H project leader you will recognize that:

➢ not every idea will come directly from the project literature.
➢ each member is an individual and will have a unique learning style.
➢ if an adult does any part of the work necessary for a successful project the youth does not have that opportunity.
➢ members may need help halter breaking a steer or sheering a lamb. The idea is for parents and leaders to allow the member do all they are capable of doing.
➢ junior/teen leaders make excellent assistants. (In general, the junior leader assists an adult leader and an adult leader assists a teen leader.).

The following month-by-month guide will hopefully provide the first year leader with ideas for successful projects, as well as reminders for the experienced leader. It should be recognized that these are only ideas and are not intended as a strict set of rules to follow throughout the year. You, as a 4-H volunteer, may desire to change some of these ideas to another month, use these as a spring board for other ideas, or in some cases not use them at all. The *Project Leader Worksheet* will assist you in planning your project for the upcoming year.

Each member should receive instruction on selection, housing, feeding and routine care of the animal *before* it is purchased. This way the members will better understand the cost, time commitment and responsibility they are accepting.

RABBIT

SEPTEMBER

1. Contact UC Extension 4-H office for list of who is enrolled in the project and who will serve as a Junior/Teen Leader.

2. At first project meeting collect a complete and up-to-date, Medical Release Form (4-H 1109) for each participant.

3. For animals already purchased, review internal and external parasites and control.

4. Instruct members on vitamin/mineral deficiencies and vaccinations.

5. Instruct members on breeds, anatomy and characteristics of verities of rabbits.

6. Instruct members on breeds, conformation and selection.

7. Discuss how to participate in proficiency program and County Presentation Day.

8. Discuss project proficiency and County Presentation Day, and how to participate.

OCTOBER

1. Review what supplies, feed and shelter each members will need to have before purchasing an animal.

2. Discuss with members and parents the cost of market animals, figure a feeding budget.

3. Discuss nutrition needs, types of feed, feeding program, grooming, and safe handling.

4. Assist members in starting project record keeping.

5. Review importance of feeding same time, every day, seven days a week.

6. Check 4-H Lending Library for project reference materials.

NOVEMBER

1. Contact UC Extension 4-H office for an updated list of who is enrolled in the project and who will serve as a Junior/Teen Leader.

2. Review rabbitry safety and safe handling practices.

3. Alert members and their parents to rabbit shows and sales, and other resources to secure market or show animals.

4. Be sure all animals are on proper feed.

5. Review what is, and the importance of, adequate winter quarters.

6. Review nesting boxes and housing for breeding projects.

7. Discuss permanent identification, and different methods of tattooing.

8. Review with each member their personal goals for this project.

DECEMBER

1. Plan project tour to see all animals and facilities.
2. Review toe nail and teeth maintenance.
3. Begin holding practice judging activities or skill-a-thon.
4. Have each member assemble a rabbitry emergency kit for both rabbits and humans.
5. Discuss breeding and kindling procedures.

JANUARY

1. Discuss the importance of exercise and why all animals need some exercise.
2. Continue judging activities/skill-a-thon, using live animals when possible.
3. Discuss topics and ideas for County Presentation Day.

FEBRUARY

1. Check that members have entered County Presentation Day.
2. Arrange for a field day with another project for a judging/skill-a-thon.
3. Plan a field trip to Rabbit Show.
4. Review signs of illness and medicine to have on hand.
5. Plan a community service activity related to the project.

MARCH

1. Review conformation and the difference between show and pet quality rabbits.
2. Discuss project record completion, and other requirements for showing or selling at Lake County Fair.
3. Discuss rate-of-gain and market weight.
4. Review Showmanship

APRIL

1. Tour rabbitries, cages or other housing for all project animals.
2. Review daily grooming, feeding and handling.
3. Each member should attend/participate in a minimum of one hour of animal ethics training.
4. Assist member in locating potential market animals.
5. Discuss bio-security and how to keep animals healthy.

MAY

1. Stress keeping rabbits cool in warmer months to come.
2. Discuss fly and parasite control.
3. Hold fitting and showing activities.
4. Encourage members to show or attend up-coming shows or fairs.
5. Have members start marketing to buyers for the Lake County Fair Auction.
6. Advise members of special fair awards and recognition.
7. Advise members of minimum and maximum birth dates for market animals.

JUNE

1. Discuss project record completion, and other requirements for showing or selling at Lake County Fair.
2. Encourage member to continue grooming and handling as previously outlined.
3. Check what and how much each animal is being fed and have members report on rate-of-gain.
4. Advice members of "due date" on project records, and procedure for fair entry form signature.

JULY

1. Encourage members and parents to read the Lake County Fair Exhibitor Handbook.
2. Help members create a "check list" of supplies to take to fairs.
3. Continue recording rate-of-gain.
4. Work with Junior/Teen Leader to discuss "wrap-up" of year's activities.
5. All requirements for show or sell at fair should be complete.

AUGUST

1. Continue fly and parasite control.
2. Continue project records and encourage members to re-enroll in project.
3. Continue recruiting buyers for the auction.
4. Set up barn work schedule for members to have at fairs.
5. Discuss feeding, watering and cage cleaning at the fair.
6. Discuss requirements, tips and ideas for the Lake County fair:

    a. Showmanship, and uniform requirements.
    b. Proper methods for safely transporting animals to fair.
    c. Weigh-in, thank you notes, and awards ceremony

d. Everyone selling at auction needs to be a Runner
e. Clean Stall and Educational Display Award
f. Stay in uniform after they have sold their animal and help the duration of the Jr. Livestock Auction.
g. Clean Stall and Educational Display Award
h. Stay in uniform after they have sold their animal and help during the duration of the Jr. Livestock Auction.

Several of the animal science projects have Project Proficiencies as a part of the learning experience. They provide youth opportunities to sample a broad array of experiences, measure personal progress, and become self-directed learners. They provide a standard of excellence where members are recognized for knowledge and skills they have mastered. The Project Proficiency may be used as a guideline for 4-H volunteers to enhance and expand project content and experiences. Each proficiency level will help members set goals, record their successes, and be recognized for their work. Each level can take more than one year to complete. Members are not expected to complete a level each year. In some projects, more than one level can be completed in a year if they are highly motivated. For additional information about the proficiency program refer to the *Leader Tips for Utilizing the 4-H Project Proficiency Program.*

Resources available at the UC Cooperative Extension office:
    4-H Lending Library
    Learning Laboratory Kit
    4-H Club Member & Parent Expectations – (project and fair participation requirements)
Teen Leaders
Other 4-H Project Leaders
American Rabbit Breeders Association www.arba.net
UCCE website: http://celake.ucdavis.edu
    Project Proficiency
California State 4-H Website:
    Parts Identification Poster http://ca4h.org/4hresourse/forms
University of California, Davis website:
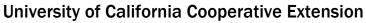   Animal Science http://animalscience.ucdavis.edu
    Safety Notes http://danrrec.ucdavis.edu/ehs/safety_notes/
For additional resources contact the 4-H staff at the UCCE office:
    707/263-6838,
    UCCE Office, 883 Lakeport Blvd., Lakeport   CA 95453

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LAKE COUNTY 4-H
PROJECT LEADER WORKSHEET

Project: _____ Project Year: _____ Date: _____

PROJECT MEETINGS ATTENDED *

Telephone	Member's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

PLAN FOR THE MEETING	DATE OF MEETING	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

* For a project to be considered complete, members must attend a minimum of 6 hours of instruction. (Refer to the *4-H Club Member & Parent Expectations* for further information.)