

Marketing and Project Expansion

Researching the Law

Believe it or not—laws and rules were written in most instances by people in order to protect us and our fellow citizens from bad decisions and physical harm. Where you live there may even be laws to protect rabbits in your neighborhood. You should always know the laws and rules involved.



- Rabbit Skill:** Examining local laws related to raising rabbits
- Life Skill:** Researching information
- Success Indicator:** Researches animal control laws to determine effects on raising rabbits.
- Science Standard:** Science and technology in local, national and global challenges

“Hop to it!”

Write a letter to your local animal control department requesting information on regulations concerning raising rabbits in your area. Use the space below to draft your letter. Specific laws you may want to ask about include housing/owning rabbits in your county, getting rid of waste, caring for a rabbit (animal welfare), and selling and labeling rabbit meat.



What should I say in my letter?

Letter to Local Animal Control Department



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

What information did you ask for in the letter to Animal Control? Why?

Process What's Important

What did you learn about animal control laws in your area? How do rules and laws affect your life?

Generalize to Your Life

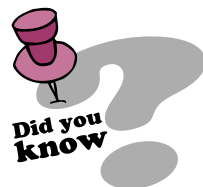
What other rules govern how everyone should behave towards fellow citizens?

Apply What You Learned

How does being a good citizen make our community better?



USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Website: www.aphis.usda.gov



A rabbit kit's eyes open when it is about 10 days old.

Rabbit Facts

Community Regulations

Every community may have different regulations concerning raising rabbits. The phone number to your local Animal Control office is usually listed under your city administration in the phone book.



Business Letter Form

Date

Name
Address

Dear _____:

(Body of Letter)

Sincerely,

Your Name

Bounding Ahead

1. Schedule an appointment with someone from the local Animal Control office to speak to your rabbit project group about the regulations concerning rabbits

Rabbit Marketing 101

As the size of your rabbitry increases, you will need to find a market for your culled rabbits. In order to establish a market it is important that the public knows you have rabbits for sale. Good advertising can be the difference between success and failure. In this activity you'll plan an advertising/marketing campaign.

Rabbit Skill:



Design a rabbit marketing plan.

Life Skill:

Planning and organizing

Success Indicator:

Plans a rabbit marketing strategy.

Science Standard:

Evidence models and explanation

“Hop to it!”

Pretend that you have 50 fryer rabbits plus breeding stock to market each month. In the space provided outline the steps you would take to market these rabbits.

Points to consider:

1. Live or dressed
2. Meat processing rules and regulations
3. Health inspections/labeling
4. Wholesale vs. retail
5. Fresh or frozen
6. Locate local processor

Photo:

of a rabbit market or sale?



My Rabbit Marketing Plan

Pilot 9/15



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

What did you include in your plan?

Process What's Important

What's most important about establishing a market for your rabbits?

Generalize to Your Life

What points do you consider when applying for a summer job?

Apply What You Learned

How can you use your plan to market your own rabbits?

Rabbit Facts

Advertising Methods

Sign. Put up a sign in your yard. If the road past your home isn't very heavily traveled, the sign would get better results elsewhere. Have the sign made professionally if it is to be permanent.

List in the yellow pages. You can list your rabbitry in the classified directory for a relatively small amount each month.

Newspaper advertising. Small classified ad which is run regularly seems to be the best. Check your local papers to see how much it would cost to run an ad.

Radio advertising. If your rabbit operation is a large one, radio advertising is a good way to go. However, you need to be able to supply many customers. You may not have a large enough operation to justify radio advertising.

Use of bulletin boards. In every community, feed stores, grocery stores, etc., there are places where you can post for sale notices. Take advantage of this free advertising.

Business cards. An attractive business card is a good way to advertise.

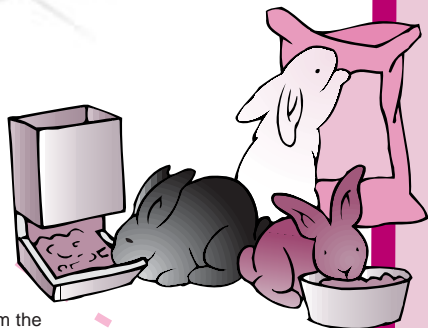
Prepare a simple brochure. You may want to prepare a simple brochure that explains what you have available to sell. These are good to pass out at fairs, shows, etc.

Show your rabbits. Show your rabbits at the local fairs and other shows. This will get your name in the public eye. Attend swap meets.

Promote rabbit meat: You could set up a small booth at local events and promote nutritional value of rabbit.

Bounding Ahead

1. Interview one or two rabbit breeders and find out what they have found to be the most successful marketing strategies. Share what you find with your helper.
2. Decide what useful purposes could be made for the parts of a processed rabbit (feet, tail, pelt, etc.). Develop this into a promotional display or give a talk on this topic.
3. Prepare and serve rabbit recipes at a special rabbit tasting party for your group.
4. Contact a local supermarket about having a rabbit promotional display. Write out favorite recipes you might distribute and decide what other facts you want people to know about rabbits. Inform people that you are a source for rabbit meat.



Is the Pelt Prime?

Rabbit fur has many uses. Fur should be processed when it is in prime condition when a rabbit is 5–7 1/2 months old. Reaching prime depends on the rabbit's health, diet, the season of the year and the environmental temperature.

Pilot 9/15

Rabbit Skill: Prepare hide for tanning
Life Skill: Completing a project/task
Success Indicator: Properly stretches and prepares hide for tanning
Science Standard: Systems, order and organization

“Hop to it!”

Process a rabbit and prepare the hide for tanning. Refer to the “Hare Harvest” lesson in level II for processing for meat.



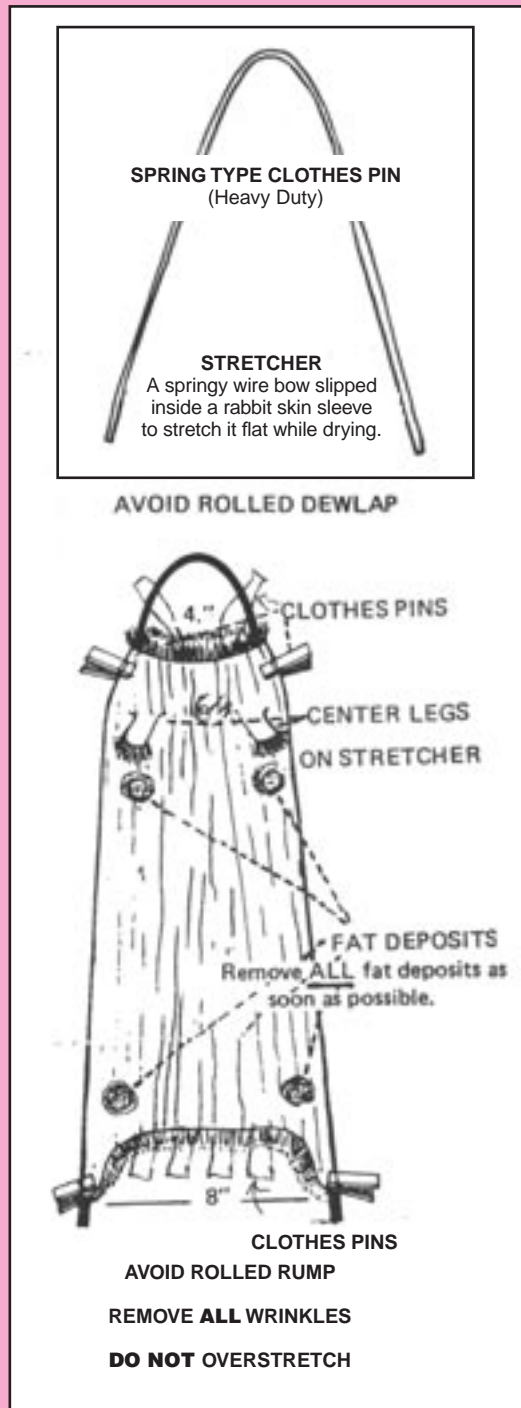
Non-prime

Prime

Did you know?

By blowing into the fur, you can visually see the light and dark skin indicating how close to prime the pelt might be. The rump and back of the neck are the last areas of the pelt to achieve prime condition.

How to Stretch a Hide



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

What was different when processing for a pelt as compared to processing for meat? What difficulties did you encounter when stretching the pelt?

Process What's Important

How did you know when to harvest for a prime pelt? How do you know when hide is ready to be tanned?

Generalize to Your Life

How do you prepare to finish a task? How do you know when a task is finished?

Apply What You Learned

How can you outline a task so that you know when it is completed? Why is it important to finish what you start?

What Quality Are My Skins?

- #1 *Superior Garment Quality* - Only the very best. Density, color and texture to be the ultimate in a Rex skin. Must be in complete prime, no pits, white hairs, rusty spots or bald spots.
- #2 *First Garment Quality* - Might have a few white hairs, etc., fur to be top quality and in complete prime.
- #3 *Second Garment Quality* - White hairs, some guard hairs, bald spots, pits, but only in small amounts. Fur to be good quality.
- #4 *Commercial Garment Quality* - This is fur that will be mass produced (China, Korea). Some guard hair, bald spots and pits, etc., fur and color not that great.
- #5 *Novelty Quality* - Guard hairs, damage marks, fur is not good enough to go into a coat, but would make very marketable teddy bears, pillows, critters, etc.
- #6 Pure junk, by anyone's definition.

Rabbit Facts

Processing Rabbit for Pelt

When pelting, the majority of the hide is removed by cutting, not pulling, because the hide is more solidly attached to the body on roaster age animals. Follow these altered steps from the *Hare Harvest* lesson in level two.

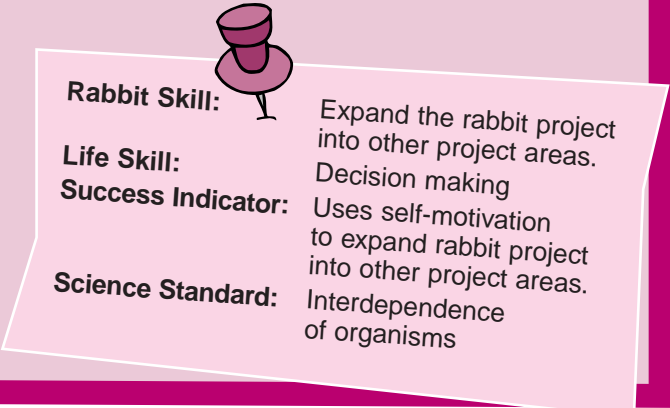
1. Get from *Hare Harvest*
2. Get from *Hare Harvest*
3. Fasten the right leg onto the hook
4. Cut off both front feet at the ankle joint
5. Cut around the top of each hind leg at the hock/ankle joint to loosen the fur
6. Slit the skin down the inside of each leg to the vent area. Cut around the leg and peel the hide down to the tail area in back and vent area in front.
7. Cut the hide from the tail and vent by forcing your fingers between the hide and the body ahead of the tail and over the rump.
8. Gently pull down and cut the hide away from the body leaving as much fat as possible on the body, not on the pelt.
9. When the pelt is halfway off, wipe any excess blood from the neck area with paper toweling. This prevents blood from getting on the fur as the hide comes into contact with the neck area during removal. Continue pulling and cutting.
10. Place the pelt on the stretcher (fur inside) with the two front legs on one side and pull the ends of the skin down over the stretcher to remove all wrinkles, but do not actually stretch the skin.
11. Fasten the skin from the hind legs to the stretcher with clamp clothespins. Straighten out the folds in the neck skin. Lift up the skin on the front legs so it will not come in contact with the pelt and will dry more readily. Hang the hide on a rack and dry indoors for five days.
12. Remove the hide from stretcher and scrape any excess fat with tablespoon; rub both sides of hide vigorously with absorbent towel.
13. Store in an air tight container for at least ten days between several layers of newspaper to absorb excess fat. If storing for a longer period, sprinkle with moth crystals or camphor flakes to prevent insect damage.
14. Tan hide using home remedy or send to commercial tannery.

Bounding Ahead

1. Measure a rabbit pelt to determine the square inches for selling.
2. Visit a trade show or fur shop to see how many items can be made from rabbit pelts.

Broader Horizons

Whether working with your rabbit project or teaching other 4-H members knowledge and skills, you can utilize the activities you have learned in other 4-H involvement. Foods & nutrition, public speaking, wildlife, horticulture and veterinary science are just a few examples of how you can broaden your horizons and expand your rabbit project.



Rabbit Skill: Expand the rabbit project into other project areas.

Life Skill: Decision making

Success Indicator: Uses self-motivation to expand rabbit project into other project areas.

Science Standard: Interdependence of organisms

“Hop to it!”

Using the chart below list other project areas in which your rabbit experiences could be utilized. Under each project area write two activities you could teach some one else that involves rabbits. For example in a gardening project rabbit manure could be used.

Project Areas	Activities
Gardening Flower Growing	Use rabbit manure to fertilize bed

“Rabbit Rap”

Share What You Did

How many project areas did you think of in which you could use your rabbit knowledge? Which is your favorite? Why?

Process What’s Important

What is the connection of your rabbit project to the other projects you list?

Pilot 9/15

Generalize to Your Life

How does expanding your rabbit project into other projects benefit you?

Apply What You Learned

What other business opportunities might you explore?



Why not grow worms!



“Bounding” Ahead

1. Teach three of the activities you picked to younger 4-H members.
2. Develop a method demonstration about the other project areas you can use your rabbit knowledge in and present it to your fellow members.

A

Adult - See Senior.

Agouti color pattern - A hair shaft that has three or more bands of color with a definite break between each color. Usually dark slate at the base, with two or more alternating light and dark bands or rings interspersed with black guard hairs. The head, ears and feet usually have ticking; the belly color is much lighter and does not carry ticking. Examples: steel or gray Flemish, Chinchilla and Belgian Hares.

Antibiotics - Organic compounds used to combat disease caused by bacteria.

B

Balance - An orderly and harmonious arrangement of physical characteristics that present a pleasing type, shape and/or conformation.

Breeder - One who breeds or rears a special variety or varieties of rabbits in keeping with accepted standards of perfection or for the purpose of improving their commercial value.

Butterfly - A dark-colored area on the rabbit's nose. Examples: Checkered Giant and English Spot breeds.

C

Cannibalism - When a doe eats her own young.

Coccidiosis - A disease caused by protozoan parasites or one-celled animals that injure the lining of the bile ducts of the liver, intestines.

Cold - A respiratory infection in rabbits, characterized by sneezing, a thin watery nasal discharge, and/or slightly matted fur on the inside of the foot.

Condition - The physical state of a rabbit in reference to health, cleanliness, texture of fur, fleshing and general alertness.

Conjunctivitis - The inflammation of inner membrane of the eyelid. Also called Weepy Eye.

Coprophagy - The practice of rabbits consuming some of the droppings direct from the anus.

D

Disqualification - One or more permanent defects, deformities or blemishes that make a rabbit unfit to win an award in competition or to take part in an exhibition. (Disqualified rabbits are not eligible for registration by the A.R.B.A.)

Dominant - A characteristic of one parent that, when transmitted to offspring, covers up a subordinate or recessive characteristic.

E

Embryo - A kit in the early stages of development inside the doe.

Enteritis - "Bloat" or "Scours" in rabbits. Best demonstrated in the live animal by shaking it close to the ear. If it sounds as if it is full of fluid, mucoid enteritis is present.

F

Fertility - Ability to reproduce.

Fine coat - The condition of a coat that is too fine in texture and lacking body. Guard hairs are weak and thin in structure, similar to hairs making up the undercoat.

Finish - The desired condition of flesh and coat for market on show rabbits.

Flat coat - Coat lying flat or close to body. Lacking spring or body when touched. Fine coat coupled with lack of density.

Fly back - Fur properties that cause it to return quickly to its normal position when stroked toward the head.

Fostering - The use of a doe other than the dam to nurse and develop young.

Full feeding - Supplying each rabbit with all the feed it will consume each day without wasting any food.

G

Genotype - The genetically inherited characteristics and potential of the rabbit stock.

Genus - A division or group of animals or plants that may include several species.

H

Haunch bone - The protruding joint of the fleshy part of the leg when rabbit is in a sitting position. Called the stifle joint in horses and knee in two-legged animals.

Hind leg - The portion of the rabbit including the foot, hock, stifle joint, thigh and the hip joint to its attachment to the trunk.

I

Inbreeding - A breeding program involving the mating of closely related rabbit stock, such as brother and sister.

Inherited - The degree to which a trait or characteristic is passed on from a parent to offspring.

Intermediate - A show term referred to rabbits that are six to eight months of age.

Inventory - A list of everything on hand that is necessary to the project. A beginning inventory is taken at the start of a project year. An ending inventory is taken at the close of a project year.

J

Junior - A show class term referring to rabbits that are under six months of age and that fulfill the weight requirements of the breed.

L

Linebreeding - A breeding program involving the mating of rabbits that are descended from the same animal, but several generations back. For example: mating first cousins, uncle to niece or aunt to nephew.

Luster - The term used to designate bright and brilliant fur.

M

Malocclusion - An inherited defect where the upper and lower jaws do not let the teeth meet, resulting in long, uneven teeth extending out of the rabbit's mouth as in wolf or buck teeth.



Mandolin - As applied to type; having the appearance of the body of a mandolin laid face down—back and saddle arching toward the loins to make noticeable large and broad hindquarters.

Mange - The infestation of the skin with tiny mites.

Mastitis - An infection of the milk glands.

Mealy - Having the appearance of being powdered or sprinkled with meal.

Muzzle - The projecting portion of the head surrounding the mouth, nose and lower jaw.

N

Nick - A mating that produces offspring that are superior to either parent.

O

Outcrossing - A breeding program involving the mating of unrelated rabbits of the same breed.

Overly fat - A rabbit so fat that it is out of proper proportions in comparison to the true type for the breed.

P

Palpation - A method of examining by touch used to determine if a doe is pregnant.

Pepper and salt - A flat, unattractive appearance of black and white ticking, as in Chinchillas. Caused by lack of contrast and waviness, and in ticking and weakness of color in the tips of guard hairs.

Phenotype - The appearance of the individual rabbit.

Processing - The process of killing and preparing a rabbit for market.

Purebred - A recognized breed kept pure for generations.

R

Recessive - A characteristic of one parent that, when transmitted to offspring, is subordinate to the dominant characteristic of the other parent.

Registration - The official recording of a rabbit and its pedigree that has been approved by a licensed registrar.

Restrained mating - A term used to describe the situation when a doe is held for mating.

Ringworm - A fungus infection of the skin usually in a circular form.

S

Senior - A show class term referring to rabbits that fulfill the weight requirements of the breed and that are 1) six months of age and older in those breeds having two show classes (junior and senior) or 2) eight months of age and older in those breeds having three show classes (junior, intermediate and senior).

Service - The mating act of the buck with the doe.

Slobbers - Excessive salivation creating a wet or unsightly fur around the mouth and lower jaw.

Smut - A term describing slate gray fur that is foreign to the standard color for the breed. Example: New Zealand White.

Snipey - A term describing a narrow and elongated head, with an appearance of undue leanness.

Snuffles - A virulent contagious infection of the nasal passages and respiratory organs, usually terminating in chronic illness. Indicated by fever, heavy breathing, sneezing and discharge of thick, creamy pus from the nostrils.

Species - A division or group of animals or plants with certain similar characteristics that may interbreed. All domestic rabbits are of the same species, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.

Standard of perfection - The book stating the characteristics for each recognized breed of rabbits as approved by a registering organization.

Station - Ideal manner of standing or carriage in conformity with the standard position or pose for the particular breed.

Sterile - A barren or infertile rabbit.

Stops - In the Dutch, the white part of the hind foot extending upward from toes and ending abruptly about one third of the way to the hocks.

Strain - A race or stock of rabbits in any standard breed of the same family blood, having the quality of reproducing marked racial characteristics.

Stringy - The quality of having a ropy or sinewy finish, noticeable in the larger breeds of rabbits if not properly fattened for market.

Symmetry - A harmonious proportion of head, ears, legs and body structure conforming to the standard type of the breed represented.

T

Test mating - The returning of the doe to the buck after breeding.

Trio - One buck and two does.

Tucked up - The trim appearance of a Belgian Hare, with rounded body and breast and belly closely gathered in to form an arch when the rabbit is sitting.

Typical - Serving as an ideal representative of any given breed or variety as applied to type, color or fur quality.

V

Variety - (As applied to rabbits, "Type shows the breed and color the variety.") A breed subdivision that applies to animals of any recognized standard breed. Distinct in color of fur from other races or subdivisions.

Vent disease - Venereal diseases in rabbits of both sexes. Indicated by scabby, reddened male or female organs, usually exuding pus (rabbit syphilis).

W

Wall eyes (moon eyes) - Having a milky film over the cornea or appearance similar to a moonstone. Colored eyes have an extremely light iris giving a glazed appearance.

Wolf Teeth - Protruding or elongated teeth in the upper and lower jaw caused by improper alignment of the upper and lower front teeth, preventing normal eating action.

Wry-tail - Abnormally bent, curled or twisted permanently to one side; a corkscrew tail with one or more turns.

Y

Yellow fat - Body fat of a carcass that is yellow instead of the normal white fat. Not harmful, but undesirable from a sales standpoint. Hereditary in nature.

