

Chapter 1

Rabbit Observation and Selection

Tour Time

Throughout these rabbit activities, visits to rabbitries or visits with a local breeder, have been mentioned. One of the best learning experiences that youth can have is to actually visit or tour sites within the industry they are studying. Conducting a tour of a rabbitry will require much planning and organization by your members to make it educational, interesting and fun.

Rabbit Skill:

Life Skill:

Success Indicator:

Time Involved:

Suggested Group Size: 10–20

Conducting tours
Planning and organizing
Plans and organizes
a tour of a rabbitry.
One hour to plan



« Hop to it! »

Have your group develop a checklist of things to do before going on the tour. Break into teams and discuss information that will be needed for the tour to be a success. Ask each team to generate a list of items that should be considered. Then combine all the ideas on one checklist. The next step is to have each team take responsibility for playing a part in the tour. Have the group make a list of questions to ask during the tour. Areas for questions might include housing, management, equipment, breeding program, etc. Finally, actually tour a rabbitry or another enterprise related to the project. Follow the tour by asking individuals or each team to report on one aspect.

« Rabbit Rap »

Share What You Did

What were the top five things to do before a tour?

Process What's Important

How did you organize this activity?

How did making a checklist of To Do's before you started your tour help?

What did you like about planning as part of a team?

Generalize to Your Life

What challenges did you face planning this activity?

What did you learn about planning and organizing an activity?

Apply What You Learned

How does making a checklist make it easier to get things done?

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Acknowledgments: Written by Gloria Blackman

Photo:
of youth on tour

Rabbit Facts

Tour Checklist

- ___ Place
- ___ Contact Person
- ___ Date
- ___ Time
- ___ Transportation
- ___ Prepared questions to ask
- ___ Meals
- ___ Clothing
- ___ Video camera
- ___ Videographer
- ___ Processing the experience

« Bounding » Ahead

1. Plan and conduct your tour as you have started using your checklist.



Identifying Rabbit Breeds

One of the first interests of youth in the rabbit project is to be able to name each of the breeds and even the varieties within the breeds. As the project helper you can involve them in many fun activities to help them learn the breeds and varieties. Just some of the many ways are outlined in this activity. By involving them in fun activities you'll also be helping them learn how to learn.

Rabbit Skill:



Identify breeds of rabbits.

Life Skill:

Learning to learn
Researches and identifies 15 rabbit breeds.

Success Indicator:

One hour

Time Involved:

Suggested Group Size: 5 to 15

Materials Needed:

A chart of rabbit breeds.

Getting Started

A good supply of breed pictures is very helpful. Often youth enjoy looking for pictures of their favorite breeds. Prior to the meeting ask youth to collect breed pictures. Encourage some to write to the A.R.B.A. and breed associations to obtain pictures.



“Hop to it!”

Here are several ways for youth to learn the breeds.

Breed on the Back. Simply tape different names of a breed and perhaps pictures of a breed on the back of each youth. They then ask question of other youth until they have guessed the breed on their back. Encourage only yes/no answers at first.

Matching. Divide the group into teams of two to four youth. Give each team a set of 10 or so breed pictures on cards with breed names and cards with varieties listed. Have each team match the breed, pictures, breed names and breed varieties. When each group has completed its match pair the team with another and have one team check the other's match. This activity often stimulates excellent discussion about the breeds.

Barn Breed Scavenger Hunt. The rabbit barn at the fair or at a rabbit show is an excellent place for youth to discover breeds new to them. Have teams of two see how many different breeds and varieties they can find at the show. A notecard and pencil works well to record. In just 15-20 minutes youth will often be able to fill the notecard. After this introductory activity more in-depth discussion about certain breeds is appropriate.

Flash Cards. Again divide into teams and have each team see how many breeds they can identify.

Quiz Bowl. The quiz bowl format works well to learn

in-depth information about the breeds. Questions might relate to any of the following areas:

1. Breed origin
2. Mature weight
3. Varieties
4. Use
5. Popularity
6. Identifying features
7. Other

Breed Reports. Ask each youth to draw a breed name from a hat and either prepare a short report using resource materials available or perhaps give an impromptu speech about the breed. If you have a small group perhaps they can chose a breed. This is a good way to help youth develop communication skills as you quickly learn what they know.

Charades. One at a time have youth draw the name of a breed out of a hat and present a charade to the rest of the group until the group identifies it. Verbal charades where the youth give clues to the group works well for this activity.

Draw and Color. Many youth enjoy drawing their favorite breeds and coloring them. These can then be used for several of the activities previously described.



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

What new breeds did you discover?
What did you learn about a breed that you didn't know before?

Process What's Important

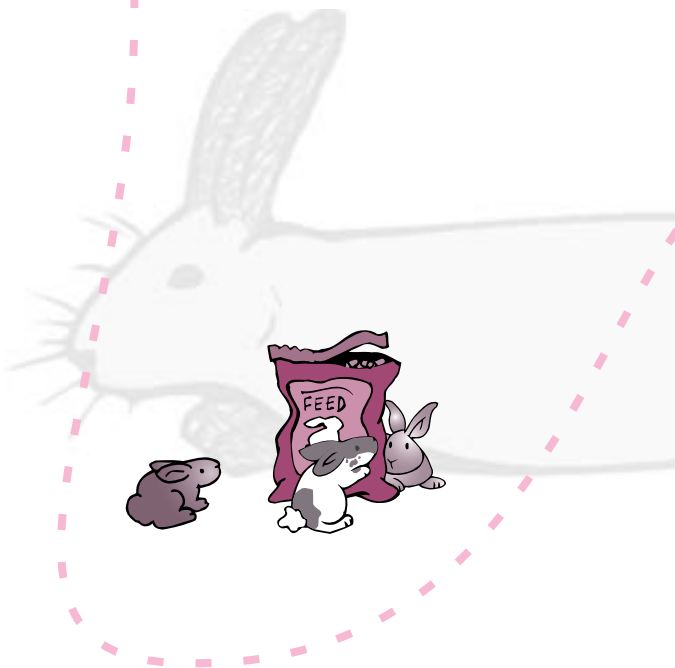
Why are some breeds more popular than others?
What breeds are primarily raised for show? Commercial production?

Generalize to Your Life

How does knowing the correct names of items help you learn about them?

Apply What You Learned

How can you use your knowledge of rabbit breeds in the rabbit project?



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The A.R.B.A. Standard of Perfection is an excellent source of breed information including pictures. Check the 4-HCCS Rabbit web page www.n4hccs.org/

Rabbit Facts

Fur and Wool

There are four different types of hair among rabbit breeds: normal fur, satin fur, rex fur and wool. **Normal fur** has a dense undercoat protected by longer guard hairs.

Satin fur is finer than normal fur and has a glass-like, transparent hair shaft which reflects light and produces a bright luster or sheen. **Rex fur** is very dense. Its **guard hairs** are nearly the same length as the undercoat, and the fur stands at a 90 degree angle to the skin, giving a plush, velvet-like feeling. The **wool type** has long fibers that are collected and spun into yarn to make crafts and garments, or sold in a raw state. There are four distinct types of wool: **French wool, English wool, Giant wool** and **Satin wool**. They reflect the four distinct breeds of Angora rabbits. Examples of these distinct breeds are: American Fuzzy Lop; Jersey Woolly; along with English, French, Giant and Satin Angoras.

Run your hand lightly up the back from the tail. Normal fur should appear bright and alive. The fur should not be soft and downy. There are three points to check: texture, density, and balance and condition.

Texture. The feel of the fur when stroked from head to tail. The texture of the fur should not be harsh or wire like, nor do you want woolly fur. Look for fur that is coarse enough in guard hairs to offer some resistance when you stroke the fur. Guard hairs are heavier hairs that protrude above the undercoat and protect it. The undercoat should be fine and soft.

Density. The amount of fur in a given area (number of hairs per square inch). Look for a good, thick coat of fur.

Balance and Condition. The even length and smoothness of the fur. Look for fur of a uniform length, not too long and not too short. A dense coat of short fur is better than a long, thin coat. Good texture and density along with uniform length make up proper balance. The hair should be set tight in the skin. There should be no breaks in the fur, no mats of fur and no stains. The guard hairs should be supple and glossy. The fur should look alive and brilliant.

Bounding Ahead

1. Help a youth select a breed to raise.
2. Make a scrapbook of rabbit breeds.
3. Make a display about your favorite rabbit breed.



Checking For Disqualifications

What makes a flaw in a rabbit a disqualification? **Disqualifications** are conditions that make a rabbit unsuitable for competition at a show on a given day. In these activities, the youth will learn to identify disqualifications in rabbits and determine whether or not a rabbit is fit to show.

Rabbit Skill:



Identifying rabbit show disqualifications.
Making decisions
Decides which flaws in a rabbit are disqualifications.

Life Skill:

Success Indicator:

60 Minutes

Time Involved:

Suggested Group Size:

Six to ten

Materials Needed:

Paper, note cards, pens, model rabbits, ARBA Standard of Perfection, rabbit posters

Getting Started

Learning the disqualifications and where they are located on the rabbit is more fun if the group is active. One way to energize everyone is to play a game involving teams. First have your group make two sets of note cards for each team—one set with the parts of a rabbit and a second set listing disqualifications. Ideas of what to include are shown in Rabbit Facts. You may also want to add items that are not disqualifications to the note cards. If 3 x 5 note cards are used you can play other games with these. Post It Notes also work fine. You'll also need an outline of a rabbit drawn on a poster 2' x 3' for each team.



“Hop to it!”

Divide the group into teams of three to four youth. Tape the rabbit poster on a wall a few feet from each team. Put a set of cards next to each team. The rabbit parts cards should be face down and the disqualifications cards face-up. The game begins with one youth from each team turning over a rabbit parts card. The teams then search through their pile of disqualification and non disqualification cards to find a disqualification that relates to that part of the body. As soon as an appropriate card is found a team member runs and tapes that card on the outline of the rabbit where the disqualification is located.

After the person doing the taping has returned another body part card is turned over and a disqualification found and taped on the rabbit. The game ends when one team has gone through all the parts cards. Now each team checks the other team's rabbit to see how many disqualifications are identified and placed correctly. Any differences of opinion must be resolved by the teams. The team with the most correct answers wins the round.



Because there may be several disqualifications related to a given body part, the game may be repeated until all the disqualifications are used.

If your group has a 4HCCS cloth model rabbit and pins the disqualifications on the rabbit, this makes even a better educational experience.

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Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

What did you learn about disqualifications?

What was the easiest part about deciding which flaws were disqualifications?

Did everyone in your group agree what disqualification to select? What happened if they didn't agree?

Process What's Important

How did you work together with your team? What did you do when you disagreed?

Why does a rabbit breeder need to be able to identify disqualifications?

Generalize to Your Life

When do you make decisions that require everyone in the group to agree? What do you do when you don't agree with the group?

What kinds of decisions do you make with input from other people?

What kinds of decisions do you make with input from other people?

What kinds of decisions do you make on your own?

Apply What You Learned

Think about times when decisions must be made that eliminate a person from participation in an activity, such as a team sport that requires a limited number of players.

How do you think you can best decide who is included? On your own? With input from others?

By total group agreement?



Did you know

A rabbit is the only animal that will produce 10 times its own weight in one year.

Rabbit Facts

ARBA Disqualifications from Competition

General

- Abscesses
- Tumor or abnormal swelling*
- Rupture or hernia
- Overweight for breed
- Underweight for breed*
- Dying, plucking, trimming to alter appearance

Ear

- Ear canker
- Illegible tattoo
- Tattoo not in left ear
- Ears carried below horizontal in regular eared breeds*
- Torn ears

Belly

- Pot belly*

Vent

- Vent disease

Eye

- Abnormal eye discharge
- Blindness in one or both eyes
- Off-colored eyes*
- Unmatched eyes*
- Spot or specks on eye
- Marbling*

Skin

- Mange
- Fungus growth
- Scabby condition

Nose

- White purulent nasal discharge*

Genitalia

- Split penis*
- Only one testicle
- Wrong sex

Legs

- Crooked legs*

Teeth

- Malocclusion* (buck or wolf teeth)
- Missing or broken teeth

Breast

- Pigeon breast* (a narrow chest with prominent "V" protruding breast bone)

Hocks

- Sore hocks showing infection or bleeding*

Tail

- Tail set permanently out of line*
- Screwtail or bobtail*

Toenails

- Missing toenails including dewclaw
- Unmatched toenail on the same foot*
- White toenails on colored breeds*

Fur

- Foreign spots
- White spots in colored animal
- Wrong undercolor for breed*
- Excessive white hairs in colored section

*Note: Disqualifications to remove from breeding program

Bounding Ahead

1. Find out how you can help with a local Special Olympics...then go do it.
2. Attend a rabbit show. How do the judges make their decisions? Did you agree with all the decisions made? Why or why not?

