

4-H Pet Rabbit Projects

Traditionally, youth show 4-H rabbit projects in breeding or commercial classes at county or state fairs. These rabbits are usually judged against the American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA) standards for the breed and/or meat classes offered.

Some youth may not be interested in raising breeding or market rabbits, but may want a rabbit as a pet. They can enroll in the 4-H Pet Rabbit Project (Project No. 227) and show their rabbits in an appropriate class or classes at a county fair or state fair. Pet rabbit classes are not intended for youth to show a breeding or commercial rabbit that does not meet ARBA standards, a leftover market rabbit, or a rabbit as an afterthought. This class is for 4-H members whose rabbits, like dogs and cats, are their companions.

Pet rabbit classes may be added to the traditional rabbit show or as a part of the small animal show. Pet rabbit classes give youth the opportunity to exhibit their pets, as well as share their knowledge and skills about rabbits. In pet rabbit classes, youth are evaluated on their knowledge about rabbits. Other parts of judging may include project records, grooming and condition of the rabbit, the member's ability to handle the rabbit and correct showmanship techniques. Some counties require a scrapbook or poster telling something about the member's rabbit project. Counties may allow youth to show their pet rabbits in the traditional rabbit showmanship classes. Pet rabbits must be healthy, and show no signs of fear or aggression. Check with your Extension Educator to find out how the pet rabbit project is evaluated in your county.

Youth are encouraged to purchase purebred rabbits as their pets. Owning a purebred rabbit that meets its breed standard to the degree that it is a representative of that breed's requirement allows the youth to compete in rabbit shows or become involved in the rabbit industry with their animals if they so desire. However, pet rabbits can be of any breed, mix of breeds, or unknown parentage. They do not have to meet the ARBA standard for their breed. Pet rabbits should be spayed or neutered if they will not be shown in ARBA sanctioned shows.

Rabbit Hopping

The sport of "Rabbit Hopping" originally began in Sweden in the 1970's and is patterned after horse-show jumping. Rabbits are trained on leash to hop over a variety of jumps laid out in a jumping course. Linda J. Hoover of Eugene, Oregon, created the Rabbit Hopping Organization of America (RHOA) in 2001. The RHOA was formed to allow anyone with a rabbit, whether a mixed breed or purebred, to participate and learn different types of hopping, earning points toward a championship title. When first beginning, rabbits hop over jumps of 4, 6, 8, and 10 inches in a straight line, easy course. According to the RHOA rules, rabbits must be at least four months old to train and compete in Rabbit Hopping.



This sport gives owners of house rabbits a new activity, and is becoming popular in 4-H rabbit clubs in certain parts of the United States. Rabbit Hopping is a great way for young people and their rabbits to form a closer bond. This website has information about rabbit hopping: <http://www.kaninhop.dk/uk>