



Basic 4-H Rabbit Showmanship

4-H Rabbit Project Educational Tool

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For Lancaster County 4-H youth and volunteers



Showmanship

The 4-H Rabbit Showmanship project differs from other 4-H animal showmanship projects because it involves the judging of the person giving the presentation rather than the animal involved.

4-Hers are judged by how well they conduct a health evaluation of the animal.

There is a point schedule for 4-H Rabbit Showmanship available from the Extension Office.

Please ask for one!



Where to Begin

Breed Selection

Choose a breed which is appropriate for the age and experience of the 4-Her

Types of Breeds

Small Commercial Commercial
Full Arch Semi Arch
Cylindrical

All breed pictures are taken from www.arba.net and clicking on the pictures will take you to the breed's national specialty club website.

Examples of Small Commercial



Netherland Dwarf



Polish



American Fuzzy Lop



Dutch



Holland Lop



Mini Lop



Mini Rex



Florida White

These breeds are small breeds with nice dispositions and are well suited for younger 4-Hers.

Examples of Commercial



Californian



Champagne D'Argent



Cinnamon



Crème D'Argent



Satin



French Lop



New Zealand



Rex

These breeds are suited for the older 4-Her because these breeds have mature weights above 9 lbs.

Examples of Full Arch Breeds



Belgian Hare



Britannia Petite



Checkered Giant



English Spot



Tan

These breeds range in size from 2 lbs. to 14 lbs. and are suited for the more older, more experienced 4-Her because of breed disposition and their high energy levels.

Examples of Semi Arch Breeds



Flemish Giant



English Lop



Giant Chinchilla



American Chinchilla

These breeds are suited for the older 4-Her because of size-mature weight above 9 lbs, but can be used by the older novice showman because of such easy going dispositions.

Cylindrical Breed



Himilayan

The Himilayan is the only breed with cylindrical body type. They are small with weights about 3-4 pounds and are extremely docile. This breed is well suited for young and novice 4-Her.

A Few Thoughts for the 4-Her

- 1) Have fun and smile! This will come out in your presentation.
- 2) Dress appropriately. You need to have a 4-H shirt or chevron on at the Fair. Shows throughout the year usually allow you to dress without the 4-H chevron.
- 3) Remember you are handling a live animal and even the best trained can have issues on any given day.

Rabbit Handling for Showmanship



Carrying the Rabbit to the Showmanship Table



Rabbit needs to have its head tucked under the 4-Her's arm.

Rabbit needs to be have its weight supported by the same arm.

The rabbit is said to be tucked and carried like a football.

Beginning the Presentation



The rabbit should be posed so it is facing the judge.

4-Her should then tell the judge their name or number, the breed/age/sex/variety of the rabbit being used.

During this time, the 4-Her may also give a brief summary of the breeds history.

The Right Side of the Rabbit



After the 4-Her has completed the introduction, the animals should be posed so the right side faces the judge.

4-Her should talk about the right eye, the right ear (is it free and clean of scratches, mites, debris, etc) and if there is a tattoo in the right ear.

4-Her can also talk about the type (shoulders, midsection, high-point—good and bad points) for the right side of the animal.

The Rump of the Rabbit



4-Her should pose the rabbit to give the judge a view of the hind end.

The 4-Her should talk about the rabbits type as it pertains to the rump of the animal.

4-Hers should look for a fullness, pinched hindquarters at this time and if the rabbit has a straight tail.

The Left side of the Rabbit



4-Her should talk about the left eye, the left ear (is it free and clean of scratches, mites, debris, etc) and if there is a tattoo in the left ear.

4-Her can also talk about the type (shoulders, midsection, high-point—good and bad points) for the left side of the animal.

Flipping the Rabbit



The rabbit needs to be flipped so the rest of the presentation can be completed.

- 1) Place right hand on rump of animal.
- 2) Place left hand so thumb is under the rabbits jaw and the ears slide through behind either the first or second fingers.

(reverse the above directions if you're a lefty)



- 3) Gently and slowly roll the rabbit over.



When completing this part of the showmanship presentation, the 4-Her needs to keep the head restrained and this usually keeps the rabbit immobile.

Checking Eyes, Nose and Teeth



4-Her needs to check the eyes for wrong color, mismatched eyes and for infection in the eyes

The nose needs to be checked and should be clear and healthy with no nasal discharge.



The teeth need to be checked for normal teeth, butting teeth, misalignment of teeth and growth of teeth. This is done with the thumb and first finger of the free hand.

Checking the Chest and Abdomen



4-Her should check the chest and abdomen by rubbing their hand down the animal.

The 4-Her needs to check for abnormalities such as lumps, abscesses, cuts, sores, etc.

Checking the Hind Legs

The Hind legs need to be checked for straightness.



Place a finger underneath the hock and lift up. The leg will straighten. The 4-Her should check for crookedness also.

All toenails need to be checked to make sure none are missing, or broken, or the wrong color.

Both Feet and legs should be checked for scratches and sore hocks.

Checking the Front Legs



Front legs should be checked for straightness or crookedness also.

Place thumb or finger under elbow and lift up. The rabbit will extend their leg.

Toenails need to be checked for broken, missing, or wrong color nails.

Legs need to be checked for scratches, sores, etc.

Sexing the Rabbit



The 4-Her needs to sex the rabbit and tell the judge if it is a buck or a doe.

At this time, the rabbit should be checked for any abnormalities on or around the genitalia area.

Bucks and does both need to be checked for venereal disease.

Checking the Tail



The Tail needs to be checked for straightness, and to make sure it hasn't been broken.

Rabbit can then be gently and slowly rolled back over and posed.

Type and Fur



Rabbit should again be posed to show type to judge.

4-Her should talk about the good and bad points the rabbit has with its type.

At this time, fur type should also be identified and examined by a slow reverse stroking of the fur in the opposite direction.

Finishing the Presentation



The rabbit should be posed and the 4-Her should ask the judge if there are any questions.



After the judge is done with the question part, then the 4-Her should pick up the rabbit and carry it from the table tucked in the "football position."

After the Competition

After the competition, the Showmanship winners will be announced. Point Schedules will be handed back to participants with ribbons and scores.

These Point Schedules can be used to improve for your next Showmanship Presentation.

Summary

Choose a breed of rabbit which is appropriate to the age and experience of the 4-Her

Small or Large Breed

Netherland Dwarf or Flemish Giant

Temperament of animal (low key or active)

Himilayan or Tan

Presentation

1. Introduction
2. Four sides of the rabbit
3. Face and underside
4. Type and Fur
5. Conclusion

Above all remember to

HAVE FUN!!!!



Are there any ???s

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For more information, contact
University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Extension in Lancaster County
(402) 441-7180 • lancaster.unl.edu/4h



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources
at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the counties and
the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the non-discrimination policies of the
University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.