
4-H RABBIT & CAVY CARE, SHOWMANSHIP, AND SELECTION

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Livingston County

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CHOOSING YOUR FIRST RABBIT OR CAVY

- **Consider which breed is the best for you**
 - Smaller breeds are great for younger showmen
 - Don't choose a breed that will be too big for you to handle
 - Take into consideration the amount of care that may go into keeping certain breeds "show ready"
 - Certain cavy breeds have long hair and require a lot of grooming/care
 - You should also consider the amount of space a breed requires for housing
 - Some commercial rabbit breeds get quite large!

CHOOSING YOUR FIRST RABBIT OR CAVY

- **If you choose a mixed breed instead of purebred your animal can still be shown!**
 - Both the rabbit and cavy shows have a Pet Care Project Class that is designated for mixed breeds or breeds with disqualifications
- **Once you have decided on a breed and are ready to choose your animal, make sure it falls within the Standard of Perfection for that particular breed**
 - Check for disqualifications!

BASIC RABBIT GROOMING



<https://youtu.be/kViNgJAergs>

GROOMING YOUR CAVY



<https://youtu.be/SDa8irIN0pA>

CARING FOR YOUR RABBIT OR CAVY

- **Feed a balanced diet appropriate for breed and age**
 - If you feed too much and your animal is heavier than the breed standard, it can be disqualified
- **Be sure to clip toe nails!**
- **6-8 weeks prior to the fair/show you should begin to train your animal**
 - You need to be able to handle and examine your animal for showmanship. The animal should cooperate throughout your showmanship presentation
 - This includes “flipping” them (except Cloverbuds)
 - You also need to train your animal to “pose” properly
 - Each breed standard has a particular pose each animal should be able to replicate. They may not automatically stand in pose. You will need to work with them
- **Be sure your animal is groomed, healthy, and free of parasites prior to the fair**

RABBIT SHOWMANSHIP



<https://youtu.be/sqodpNT-fW8>

CAVY SHOWMANSHIP



<https://youtu.be/entjkRL6iCM>

SHOWMANSHIP TIPS & TRICKS

- **Work with your animal!**
 - They should be tame and used to being worked with prior to the fair
 - You should also practice flipping them
- **Know your breed! Especially if you are a senior showman!**
 - Seniors should be able to tell the judge the history of their breed as well
- **Know their pose!**

SHOWMANSHIP TIPS & TRICKS

- **If your animal has a defect or disqualification talk about it! This is a GREAT talking point and shows that you have studied the Standard of Perfection**
- **Be sure to ask the judge if they have any questions once you are done**
- **Never use an animal for showmanship that is flighty or is too big for you to handle**
- **Practice, Practice, Practice**
 - Find a showmanship scoring rubric and plan your showmanship presentation from that

EVALUATING YOUR RABBIT OR CAVY

- **American Standard of Perfection**
 - Classifies and describes the standard physical appearance, coloring and temperament for all recognized breeds of rabbits and cavies
- **This book will tell you exactly what your breed should look like**
 - Study the standard and then compare your animal to the standard
 - These comparisons (good or bad) are great talking points for your showmanship presentation



- **If you have any further questions please contact:**

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