

Rabbit

4-H Project Newsletter

This newsletter will be updated in December of each year, if necessary, based on changes made to the project at the 4-H Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting in November.

Welcome to the 4-H Rabbit Project! This newsletter will give you an overview of the Rabbit project, answer some of your questions concerning expectations of the project, and provide you with project ideas and some resources. Project newsletters are an excellent reference to keep on hand to refer to throughout the year. Enjoy your year in the Rabbit project and when working on your project, remember to "Learn to do by Doing." If you have any questions, please contact your Regional Agriculture Leadership Coordinator (ALC).

GENERAL 4-H INFORMATION

Ages for Members:

Junior Members: 9 - 13 years of age as of January 1, as of the current year.

Senior Members: 14 - 21 years of age as of January 1, as of the current year.

4-H members may register in the club and county of their choice, but must only be registered in one club, in one province. Members may register in one club and access projects in a neighboring club if that club is willing to assist with leadership of a certain project.

Project Completion:

All 4-H members must complete 'project requirements', for each of their projects, at their club Achievement Day. If you are unable to attend your own club Achievement Day, please make prior arrangements with your Regional ALC. Completion of your project qualifies you to move on to any further county, provincial, or national 4-H competitions relating to that project in the current 4-H year. School projects are not permitted to be used as 4-H projects. Each member must complete and display their own project work (i.e., two members cannot share a project for project completion).

What is Achievement Day?

Achievement Day allows members to display their project work to the public and have their projects evaluated, non-competitively. Project completion at Achievement Day is based on the following system:

A Green project completion sticker will be given to a member who has completed:	A Silver project completion sticker will be given to a member who has completed:	A Gold project completion sticker will be given to a member who has completed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record Sheet • Project Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record Sheet • Project Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record Sheet • Project Work
Plus one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Club Contribution • Judging 	Plus two of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Club Contribution • Judging 	Plus all three of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Club Contribution • Judging

RECORD SHEET – Each member must complete a satisfactory record sheet. Record sheets may be hand written or typed. *For more useful information, refer to Record Sheet Guidelines.*

PROJECT WORK – Each 4-H project (e.g., woodworking, dairy, etc.) has specific project work requirements. Each members' project work will be evaluated on the quality of the work, degree of difficulty for experience/age, the way articles are displayed/presented, and whether all requirements are met. A 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place ribbon will be given for each project. Please review project requirements for each project carefully. In non-livestock projects, members must complete the required number of items as outlined, unless prior approval is given by the Regional ALC. This request should be made in advance of the member's Achievement Day. Consideration of an item counting as additional items will be given based on members age, degree of difficulty, time required to complete, etc.

COMMUNICATIONS – Members who participate in public speaking and/or demonstrations at club level will receive recognition on their Achievement Day Certificate. Each club has its own standards for communications, so members should confirm with the general club leader.

CLUB CONTRIBUTION – Members are encouraged to be actively involved in their club, county, province, and community. The club contribution aspect is an assessment on such things as a member's attendance at meetings and events, attitude, effort, cooperation, and self-expression. Each club has its own standards for club contribution. Evaluation of this Achievement Day component is done by the Club General Leader and / or project leader(s). The standard for club contribution should be communicated clearly to all members by club leaders at the beginning of the 4-H year.

JUDGING – In each project, members are asked to compare four (4) articles or livestock (e.g., 4 wooden shelves in the woodworking project or 4 heifers in a dairy class), then evaluate them to place the class in order from first (closest to the ideal), to fourth (furthest from the ideal). Oral reasons, using proper terminology, are given to an official judge for the project to support those choices. There are many useful judging resources available through your Regional ALC.

In each county, a judging box is also available to borrow to help practice judging skills. It includes judging information and cards as well as judging classes, with reasons. Clubs may book these supplies through the Regional ALC.

At 4-H Nova Scotia Provincial Show, 4-H animals participating in the 4-H Nova Scotia Show competitions are used to make up livestock judging classes (e.g., 4 intermediate Holstein calves). Members are responsible for notifying their Regional ALC by September 15 by email if they do not wish to have their animal used. Please keep in mind that judging classes can only be provided if members are willing to offer their animals for a judging class. As such, 4-H members are encouraged to let their animal be used in a judging class if possible.

Project Work Requirements

On Achievement Day, Rabbit members must complete showmanship with their registered 4-H Rabbit. Please note the dress code for all rabbit showmanship and conformation classes is a white lab coat or white pants and a white long-sleeved shirt. Hard soled boots are encouraged for member's safety. Members can wear sun-safety hats when showing livestock in an outdoor area. The dress code will be enforced at 4-H Nova Scotia 4-H Shows.

Livestock Registration

4-H members must select their 4-H animals by May 1st of the current 4-H year, and must submit livestock registration information to the Regional ALC by May 15th of the current 4-H year. This information is necessary to assist with county show/exhibition planning, including judges, class schedules, awards, etc. The following information must be submitted for Livestock Registration requirements: name of member, junior member/senior member, conformation class entered, sex of animal, breed of animal, and date of birth of animal.

4-H animals may be substituted between the registration deadline of May 15th and Achievement Day in the case of injury, sickness, disease or death of the animal. If an animal is to be substituted prior to Achievement Day, pre-approval from the Regional ALC is necessary. A vet certificate may be required. After Achievement Day, no substitutions are permitted. 4-H members who complete their livestock project with their own registered/approved animal on Achievement Day may use another 4-H member's 4-H animal in a showmanship class at county show/exhibition and the 4-H Nova Scotia Show.

Conformation Classes

Although conformation is not an Achievement Day requirement, livestock conformation classes are commonly held at county level competitions and 4-H Nova Scotia Provincial Show. Rabbit Conformation classes are divided per sex and age of rabbit. Members may exhibit a maximum of 3 animals per 4-H year. This includes divisions in the 4 Showroom Class category, 6 Showroom Class category, and Pet Class category. See Categories below:

CLASS #34: 6 SHOWROOM RABBIT:

Junior: (Doe & Buck) – Born December 1st of the previous year to April 10th of the current year.

Senior: (Doe & Buck) – Born before December 1st of the previous year.

Section #1:	Junior Doe
Section #2:	Senior Doe (Without Litter)
Section #3:	Junior Buck
Section #4:	Senior Buck

6 SHOWROOM CLASS BREEDS:

The following breeds are rabbits that shall be shown in the 6 Showroom Class Category: American, Giant Angora, Beveren, Blanc de Hotot, Californian, Champagne D’Argent, Checkered Giant, American Chinchilla, Giant Chinchilla, Cinnamon, Creme D’Argent, Flemish Giant, English Lop, French Lop, New Zealand, Palomino, Satin, Silver Fox.

CLASS #35: 4 SHOWROOM RABBIT:

Junior: (Doe & Buck) – Born February 1st of the current year to April 10th of the current year.

Senior: (Doe & Buck) – Born before Feb 1st of the current year.

Section #1:	Junior Doe
Section #2:	Senior Doe (Without Litter)
Section #3:	Junior Buck
Section #4:	Senior Buck

4 SHOWROOM CLASS BREEDS:

The following breeds are rabbits that shall be shown in the 4 Showroom Class Category: American Fuzzy Lop, American Sable, English Angora, French Angora, Satin Angora, Belgian Hare, Britannia Petite, Standard Chinchilla, Dutch, Dwarf Hotot, English Spot, Florida White, Harlequin, Havana, Himalayan, Holland Lop, Jersey Woolly, Lilac, Mini Lop, Mini Rex, Mini Satin, Netherland Dwarf, Polish, Rex, Rhinelander, Silver, Silver Marten, Tan, Thrianta.

CLASS #36: PET RABBIT (DOE OR BUCK)

Pet Rabbit – Born prior to April 10th the current year.

PET RABBIT CATEGORY (Crossbred Rabbits or neutered/spayed purebred rabbits):

The Pet Rabbit Category is for rabbit members who have a rabbit that is not eligible for competition in the 6 Showroom Class or 4 Showroom Class. Rabbits that may be disqualified in 6 Showroom Class and 4 Showroom Class Categories because of the American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA) guidelines may be exhibited in the Pet Category.

Rabbits exhibited in the Pet Category must be born prior to April 10 of the current year. Members may only enter one (1) rabbit in the Pet Category per year. There will be only one (1) Pet Category Class; bucks and does will be judged together.

Members can take a Pet Rabbit as a 4-H Rabbit Project beyond the first year.

Rabbits in the Pet Category will be judged on:

- Condition – Overall body and fur condition including cleanliness.
- Health – Good overall health, alertness, showing no signs of ailments.
- Behaviour/Temperament – Calm, showing no signs of aggression.
- Rabbits in this category will not be judged per ARBA disqualifications.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Members should be aware that rabbits may be disqualified in conformation classes for some of these various problems:

- Ear canker, slobbers, pot belly, vent disease, or abscesses.
- Mangy condition – Flakes resembling dandruff or scale on the skin or at the base of fur. Infestation by mites, fleas, or lice.
- Colds, tumours or abnormal swelling, rupture or hernia, abnormal eye discharge.
- Infected hocks, boils, bad cuts, overweight or underweight, and other signs of ill health.
- Obvious signs of trimming or attempts to mark defects.
- Wrong Classification – Animals entered in the wrong age category or breed category.
- Rabbits in the 6 Showroom Class and 4 Showroom Class may be disqualified for exhibiting a spayed or neutered rabbit. (Spayed and neutered rabbits should be exhibited in the Pet Category).

These are only some examples. More examples are available in the Standard of Perfection, which is published by the American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc. It would be a good idea to be aware of these to avoid encountering potential problems with your rabbit project.

The Standard of Perfection book of breed standards has been adopted for use by 4-H Nova Scotia. This book was last updated in 2016. A copy of the standard is available as a resource in each 4-H region.

FEEDING NOTE

Members are reminded that the main food for your rabbits should be pellets and hay. Green feeds (such as green grass or leafy vegetables) can be very dangerous for your rabbit's health and can cause scours or death. If you want to give your rabbit a treat, a small piece of a carrot or apple would be a better choice.

NOTE: *Members are advised to leave junior rabbits with their owner until they reach 8 weeks of age. This is a guideline from the Maritime Rabbit Breeders Association (MRBA).*

CAGE GUIDELINES

Below is a list of cage guidelines from the SPCA. Please read this section carefully. The perfect cage should:

- Be structurally sound and in good repair (i.e. No sharp edges or abrasive surfaces in contact with the animal);
- Allow freedom of movement for normal postural changes (i.e. Standing up on hind feet, laying down stretched out - both normal rabbit behaviours);
- Be escape proof;
- Allow food and water to be provided so that spillage is not a problem;
- Be easy to clean;
- Allow adequate view of the animal both for exhibit purposes and for general observation to prevent problems (i.e. Rabbits becoming ill, no food or water, heat stressed).

CAGE SIZES

The two basic cage sizes for 4-H rabbits at exhibitions are:

WEIGHT OF RABBIT	SIZE OF CAGE
Up to (2 kg) 4.4 lbs.	Minimum: 45 x 45 x 45.5 cm (18" x 18" x 18") high
Over (2 kg) 4.4 lbs.	Minimum: 60 x 60 x 45.5 cm (24" x 24" x 18") high

(45.5 cm (18" height) allows for 5 cm (2") raised floor)

This gives a reasonable standard cage for most of the rabbits exhibited using standard size wire.

- Wire mesh is most practical with the 2.5 x 5 cm (1" x 2") being the largest recommended. The cage bottoms should be set 5 cm (2") off the floor so that a water tight pan can fit under it.
- Most references agreed that 45.5 cm (18") high cage was best to allow standing and stretching, and proper ear carriage for erect eared breeds.
- Woven wire mesh flooring of 16-gauge strength and 1.3 x 2.5 cm (½" x 1") dimension may be the most practical and beneficial flooring. It should not be overlooked that there are other possibilities especially as new technology becomes available.

General guidelines for flooring would ensure that a floor surface is:

- Moisture resistant (i.e. Not soak up and hold wetness);
- Raise the rabbit above urine and excrement;
- Proven not to cause sore hocks (i.e. some slatted floors may cause sore hocks).

NOTE: *Cages should not be stacked without water tight pans between them. 4-H Nova Scotia requires that all cages have waterproof pans at 4-H Nova Scotia Provincial Show.*

Please note that the National Farm Animal Code of Practice should be followed when housing animals for 4-H events.

These standards can be found at: <http://www.nfacc.ca/>

ARBA STANDARDS OF PERFECTION BOOK

The American Rabbit Breeders Association Standards of Perfection is a great resource containing the detailed standards for each breed of rabbit. There is a copy available from each 4-H office for reference, and if you'd like to purchase a copy for yourself or your club, you can contact ARBA at the following location: American Rabbit Breeders Association, P.O. Box 5667, Bloomington, IL, 61702 - phone: (309) 664-7500 - website: www.arba.net

CONTAGIOUS/INFECTIOUS DISEASE & QUARANTINE:

4-H members, leaders, parents and livestock owners are reminded that 4-H achievement days and shows are showcases for the 4-H program, and the agricultural industry in this province. They are reminded that infectious diseases can be transmitted during transport, as well as at the show. As such, it is strongly recommended for the protection of the public, participants, and the animals at the show, that animals having or showing signs of infectious diseases not be brought to shows. As well, livestock exhibitors and owners must understand that in attending 4-H Shows, there is a risk of their animal contracting disease regardless of the best efforts of all involved.

If you suspect that your animal has a contagious/infectious disease, please contact your local vet immediately and learn more about the consequences, treatment, and transmission of the disease.

A brochure providing additional information on "Infectious and Contagious Diseases Affecting 4-H Livestock" is available. If you wish to receive a copy by mail or email, please contact your ALC for this information. It contains important information for all livestock members on this topic and will be critical to review with 4-H Clubs, livestock owners, and your local veterinarian when making decisions about attending 4-H achievement days and shows.

SPORTSMANSHIP – Be a Good Sport!

In 4-H, Sportsmanship plays a key role in living by the motto of 'Learn to Do by Doing'. Please take the opportunity to consider good sportsmanship when at 4-H events. Here are some key factors to good sportsmanship:

GOOD CONDUCT – Demonstrate and maintain high standards of personal behaviour and conduct. You are representing your family, your club, your community and the 4-H program.

FAIRNESS – Learn and follow the rules. Be objective and honest. No matter what the results try your best by using your true skills without cheating. Treat others fairly.

HONESTY – Be a reliable person, do not lie or deceive. Be straightforward in everything you say and do. Understand your abilities and skills, accept the fact that you cannot do everything perfectly, but you still can do many things well.

COMPETITION - Competition experiences enhance positive youth development and prepare youth with competitive knowledge, skills and attitudes. Take pride in your accomplishments and in improving your skills – you are all winners, even if the ribbon color doesn't appear to reflect this.

COURTESY – Be well-mannered in your conduct. Be respectful, thoughtful, considerate, cooperative, friendly, and cheerful, no matter whether you do well or not. When you have concerns, questions, or suggestions, be polite in expressing them. Be pleasant and nice toward other participants, spectators, program officials, judges, the media, your leaders, parents and others. Give others the benefit of the doubt. Treat people and animals kindly. Keep your emotions under control.

GRACEFUL ACCEPTANCE OF RESULTS – Accept judges' results and suggestions with a positive attitude. The judge's decision is final. Regardless of the outcome; thank all that were involved in helping you put forth your best effort. Thank the organizers for their efforts; Sponsors for their generous donations; Agriculture Leadership Coordinators for their wisdom and guidance; Judges for their skilled eye and time given to the 4-H program; and anyone else who has helped you along the way.

The work in any 4-H project should always be done by the members. Hiring, or the use, of professionals and/ or adults to prepare projects for 4-H shows are not acceptable. Using these people as resources provides 4-H members with the information and skills to do the job on their own.

4-H Nova Scotia has a Code of Conduct in effect for all members and leaders. It is to be followed always throughout the year. If you would like a copy of what are acceptable practices in the 4-H program, please [Visit 4-H Nova Scotia's website for more information!](#)

You might also be interested in...

For more information about any of the below opportunities, please contact your regional ALC:

4-H POSTER CONTEST – Create a hand-drawn or computer-generated poster focused around the annual 4-H Theme. Deadline and evaluation is normally at county rally.

4-H THEME CONTEST – Put on your thinking cap and be the one to come up with next year's 4-H theme! Submissions due to Provincial 4-H Office by July 1st. (i.e., "Let 4-H Reign Supreme in 2018").

WOOL & RECYCLING COMPETITION – Open to all 4-H members. These articles must be made from 100% wool or a minimum of 75% recycled materials and members must exhibit a Competition Report Sheet with their entry.

GIANT VEGETABLE COMPETITION – Each year a new vegetable is selected for the Giant Vegetable competition held at the 4-H Provincial Show. Each county can send one junior and one senior giant vegetable entry to the show.

TRACTOR DRIVING COMPETITION – The tractor competition is open to teams of 3 members (1 driver and 2 assistants); the driver must hold a valid class#5 driver's license or tractor license. The driver will drive a tractor and trailer through an obstacle course. The score is calculated based on safe operation and judge's evaluation. One team per county will advance to 4-H Provincial Show.

RECORD KEEPING COMPETITION – An entry will be one record sheet for a project completed in the current year by that member, with a detailed analysis included. Entries in this competition must include a 1 to 4 page analysis of the work and costs in the project for the given year in order to be eligible. Entries should be displayed in a binder/folder. The top two senior and top two junior record sheets per county will be eligible for the Record Keeping Competition at the 4-H Provincial Show, but entries must first qualify at county level. All county entries must be forwarded to Truro by September 15th of the current 4-H year for judging prior to the 4-H Provincial Show.

AWARDS, TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES, AND SCHOLARSHIPS – Each year, 4-H Nova Scotia covers the registration fee to National and International travel opportunities for members awarded such travel experiences. Also, there are several scholarships available to 4-H members in Nova Scotia.

JUNIOR LEADER PROJECT – This project is designed to build leadership skills by providing members with the opportunity to lead any aspects of their club which interest them (e.g., projects, recreation, communication, etc.).

GRADE 10 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT – Members must achieve GOLD completion and document at least 110 hours of 4-H related work to qualify. For more information visit the [NS Department of Education & Early Childhood Development Personal Development Credit website](https://pdcd.ednet.ns.ca/)
<https://pdcd.ednet.ns.ca/>

NOVA SCOTIA YOUNG SPEAKERS FOR AGRICULTURE – Senior Members and screened volunteers up to age 24 compete by creating and presenting a speech on one of five topics from Canadian Young Speakers for Agriculture (<https://cysa-joca.ca/>). The winner represents 4-H Nova Scotia at the Canadian Young Speakers for Agriculture competition held annually in November at the Royal Agriculture Winter Fair in Toronto. Deadline to register for the competition is September 15th of the current 4-H year.

Rabbit Project RECORD SHEET

Name of club member _____ 4-H age _____
 Name of club _____
 Years in 4-H _____ Years in the project _____
 Project _____(rabbit)

Project Animal(s)

Breed	Sex	Birth Date & Category (ie. Junior; senior)	Class (4 Showroom class; 6 showroom class)	Value
			Total	

Equipment Records

Equipment (cage, pan, feeder, etc.)	Start of Project		Equipment Purchased		End of Project	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
Total						

FEED RECORDS

Month	Cost of Pellets	Cost of Hay	Cost of Grain	Other (treats, salt)	Total
Total					

Health RECORDS

Date	Problem	Cure	Cost
Total			

Personal Comments

(What did you learn /Why did you take this project?)

Meeting Summary

How many general club meetings did you attend this year? _____

How many project meetings did you attend this year? _____

Please list any other club/county activities that you may have participated in during the past year:
