

2025-2026  
Citrus County Fair  
Rabbit  
Skill-a-thon Study Guide





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## Citrus County Rabbit Skill-A-Thon

A “Skill-A-Thon” is an excellent method of involving FFA and 4-H members in challenging, learn-by-doing activities. This program of helping youth develop both their life skills and steer project skills is designed as a series of mini-learning stations. Use this guide to prepare for the skill-a-thon at the county fair.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide a learning laboratory which will enhance knowledge of the rabbit industry.
2. To help youth feel more comfortable communicating with an adult.
3. To gain self-confidence and skills in one-on-one communication.
4. To develop responsibility for completing a project.
5. To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
6. To provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments.

To have FUN!

### TOPICS:

The topics are specific for each of the Fair's age groups for skill-a-thons.

Age as of September 1st, 2025.

**J:** Junior (8-10 yrs.)

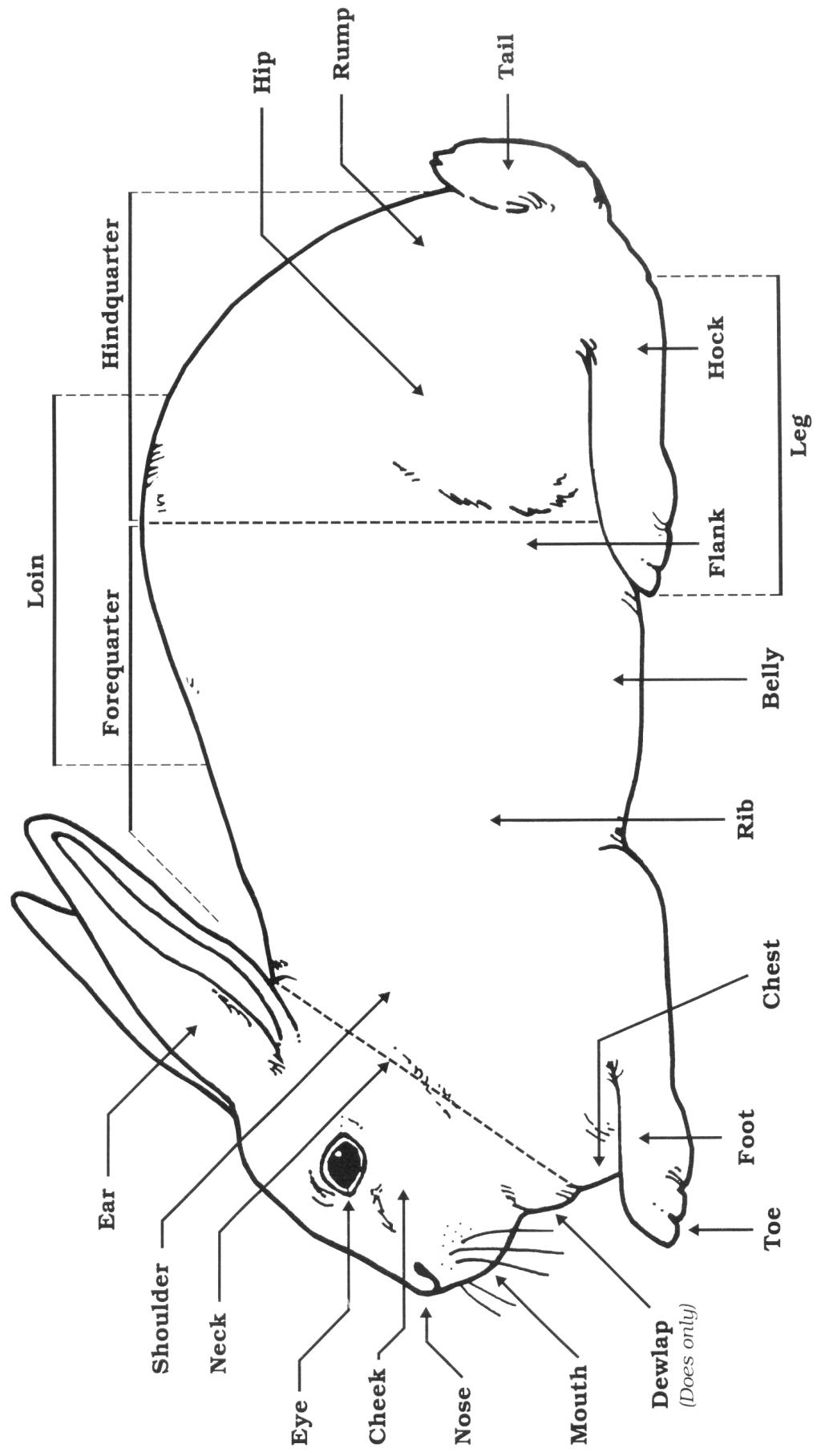
**I:** Intermediate (11-13 yrs.)

**S:** Senior (14-18 yrs.)

1. Parts of a Rabbit (**J, I, S**)
2. Rabbit Breeds (**J, I, S**) and characteristics (**I, S**)
3. Rabbit Showmanship Practice (**J, I, S**)
4. Preventative Healthcare (**J, I, S**)
5. Safe Handling (**J, I, S**)
6. Rabbit Conformation (**I, S**)
7. Rabbit Fur Types (**I, S**)
8. Ailments and Disorders (**I, S**)
9. Tattooing (**S**)
10. Meat Pen Rabbits (**I, S**)

(J, I, S)

# Parts of a Rabbit



## Breeds (J, I, S)

# Rabbit Breeds & Characteristics

## Characteristics (I, S)



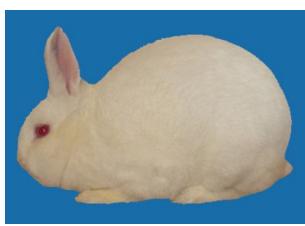
### New Zealand, Variety: White

This large Breed, with commercial type profile, originated in the United States. Varieties include black, red, and white. Head is full and set close to the shoulders. Eyes are dark brown, brown, or pink. Ears are medium thick, well rounded at tip, set high on the head and carried erect. Body is medium length and well rounded with a Gradually curving top line. Fur is flyback. Mature weight ranges from 10 to 11 pounds. This breed exemplifies the meat production qualities.



### Rex, Variety: Castor

This medium breed, with a commercial type profile, originated in France. Varieties include black, black otter, blue, broken group, California, castor, chinchilla, chocolate, lilac, lynx, opal, red, sable, seal and white. Ears are moderately thick and carried erect. Fur is extremely dense, straight, upright, extremely smooth to the touch and between 1/2 and 7/8 inches long. Mature weight ranges between 7 1/2 and 10 1/2 lbs. This is an all purpose breed and popular for its coat qualities.



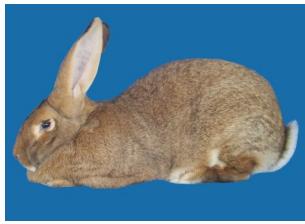
### Florida White,

This small breed has a compact type profile. Coat color is pure white. Head is round, full and set close to the body. Eyes are pink. Ears are stocky, well furred, and carried erect. Body is rather short and close-coupled with a gradually curving top line. Fur is flyback. Mature weight ranges from 4 to 6 pounds. This breed has good fur and meat qualities.



### Californian,

This large breed, with a commercial type profile, originated in the United States. Coat color is white with colored ears, feet, tail, and nose. Point color is chocolate or black. Eyes are bright and pink. Ears are well set, strong at the base, and carried upright. Fur is flyback. Mature weight ranges from 8 to 10 1/2 pounds. This breed has good fur qualities and is popular for show, and bred for meat production.



### Flemish Giant, Variety: Sandy

This large breed, with a semi-arch type profile, originated in England for meat production. Varieties include: black, blue, fawn, light gray, sandy, steel gray, and white. Ears are carried erect with a heavy base. Fur is glossy, dense, and full of brightness. Mature weight is 13 pounds and over. This breed is popular for pets and exhibition, and has good fur and meat qualities.



### Tan, Variety: Black

This small breed has a full-arch type profile. Varieties include black, blue, chocolate, and lilac. Eyes are encircled with an even tan color. Ears are well furred, carried upright and laced at the inside edge with rich tan. Fur is flyback, medium fine, and short enough texture and springiness for a snappy flyback. Markings: tan color is uniform and unbroken from the chin, over chest and belly, and to the tail. Mature weight ranges from 4 to 6 pounds.



### Lionhead, Variety: Black

The Lionhead rabbit is a small breed of rabbit that is relatively new to the United States, having only been imported in 1998. Originated in Belgium, when breeders decided to cross a Swiss Fox with a Netherland Dwarf rabbit. Varieties include Tortoise (Black, Blue, Chocolate, Lilac), Ruby Eyed White (REW), Blue Eyed White (BEW) Chocolate, Chestnut Agouti, Silver Marten, Pointed White, Sable Point, Seal and Siamese Sable. Has a soft, wool coat that, unfortunately, does require a lot of grooming. Shouldn't weigh more than 3.5 lbs. They have a compact body type and their ears stand erect on top of their head.

# Rabbit Breeds & Characteristics

## Breeds (J, I, S)

## Characteristics (I, S)



### Mini Rex, Variety: Broken Group - Castor

This small breed has a compact type profile. Varieties include black, blue, broken group, castor, chinchilla, chocolate, Himalayan, lynx, opal, red, seal, tortoise, and white. Ears are thick, relatively short, well set on the head, carried erect, and set close together. Fur is extremely dense, straight, and upright with an ideal length of 5/8 inches. Mature weight is 3 to 4 1/2 pounds.



### Netherland Dwarf, Group: Tan Pattern, Variety: Black Silver Marten

This small breed, with compact type profile, originated in Holland. Classified in four groups: Self, Shaded, Agouti, Tan Pattern, and AOV. Ears are short, pointed and erect with a strong base. Fur is soft, dense, prime, and glossy. This is the smallest of the rabbit breeds. Mature weight does not exceed 2 1/2 pounds. This is a popular breed for show and as pets.



### Mini Lop, Group: Agouti, Variety: Chestnut Agouti

This small breed, with a compact type profile, originated in Germany as a sub-breed of the English Lop. Classified in seven groups: Agouti, Broken, Pointed White, Self, Shaded, Ticked, and Wide Band. Ears are rounded, well furred, set on top of the head rising from a strong basal ridge, and lopped vertically with the opening toward the head. Fur is glossy, uniform, medium length, very thick, and dense. Weight ranges from 4 1/2 to 6 1/2 pounds. This breed has good meat and fur qualities and is popular for exhibition.



### Holland Lop, Group: Wide Band, Variety: Tortoise Shell

This small breed, with compact type profile, originated in Holland. Classified in seven groups: Agouti, Broken, Pointed White, Self, Shaded, Ticked, and Wide band. Head is massive and set high. Ears are lopped vertically with the opening toward the head. Strongly defined crown. Fur is rollback, glossy, dense, fine, and approx. 1 inch in length. Weight ranges from 3 to 4 pounds.



### English Lop, Group: Broken, Variety: Broken Orange

This large breed, with semi arch type profile, originated in England. Classified in six groups: Agouti, Broken, Self, Shaded, Ticket, and Wide Band. Ears are to be carried low on the head, with no noticeable crown and measure at least 21 inches tip to tip. Fur is medium length, fine, and silk to the touch. Mature weight is 9 pounds and over.



### Dutch, Variety: Black

This small breed, with a compact body type profile, originated in Holland. Varieties include black, blue, brown gray, chocolate, steel, and tortoise. Ears are stocky, well-furred, and carried erect. Fur is flyback. Markings: head and ears are colored with a white blaze from the nose to the ears; front half of body is white; rear half is colored with a straight division between the two. Mature weight is 3 1/2 to 5 1/2 pounds. This breed is bred for show, pets, and laboratory use.



### Polish, Variety: Black

This small breed, with compact body type profile, has an unknown origin. Varieties: black, blue, chocolate, blue-eyed white, and ruby-eyed white. Eyes are large and expressive. Ears are small, set close together and touch all the way up. Body is small and compact. Fur is flyback, short, fine, dense, and glossy. Mature weight is not greater than 3 1/2 pounds.

# RABBIT SHOWMANSHIP PRACTICE

(J, I, S)

## Junior Questions:

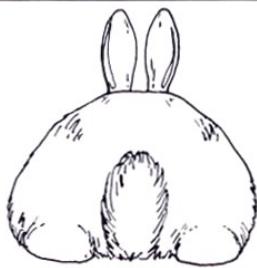
1. What is a female rabbit called? ....Doe
2. What is. Male rabbit called? ....Buck
3. How many teeth does a rabbit have? ....28
4. What breed is your rabbit?.....
5. Where is the tattoo placed? ....Left ear
6. What do you call spotted rabbits? ....Broken
7. What is it called when a rabbit sheds fur? ....Molting
8. Is your rabbit at doe or buck?.....
9. How many toenails does a rabbit have? ....18
10. What does B.O.B stand for? ....Best of breed
11. What is more important food or water? ....Water
12. What is more dangerous hot or cold weather? ....Hot
13. Should you feed a rabbit iceberg lettuce? ....No

## Intermediate Questions:

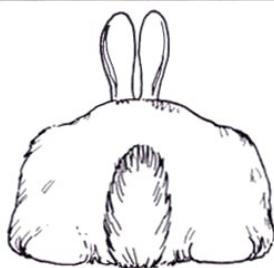
1. How does a rabbit regulate its temperature? ....Through its ears
2. What is the ideal temperature for a rabbit to live in? ....40-60 degrees
3. What are newborn rabbits called? ....Kits
4. What is malocclusion? ....The misalignment of the upper and lower teeth and is a disqualification.
5. Where is the hock? ....Bottom of rear feet
6. What are the 4 large breed of rabbits? ....Flemish giant, Giant Chinchilla, French lop, Checkered Giant
7. How long do rabbits teeth grow? ....They never stop growing. Rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches a month
8. What's does B.I.S. stand for? ....Best in show
9. What does REW stand for? ....Ruby eyed white
10. Some general eliminations for all breeds? ....Ear mites, sore hocks, overweight, underweight, a cold, sore eyes, vent disease, mange, does that are heavy with a litter
11. Name some general disqualifications for all breeds..... Wrong eye color, torn ears, buck teeth, wry tail, and missing toes
12. What is the word for a minor in perfection? ....Fault
13. What is the word for a major imperfection? ....Disqualification
14. What are the three different meat classes? ....Single fryer, roasters, stewers
15. Is rabbit meat white dark or both? ....White

# Rabbit Conformation

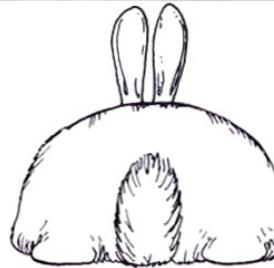
(I, S)



**Ideal Hips**



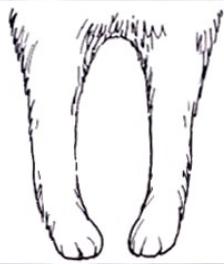
**Rough Hips**



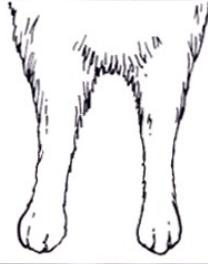
**Not Enough Rise**



**Outward-Bowed Legs**



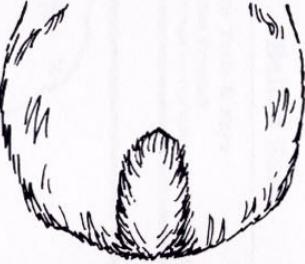
**Inward-Bowed Legs**



**Ideal Legs**



**Side-Carried Tail**



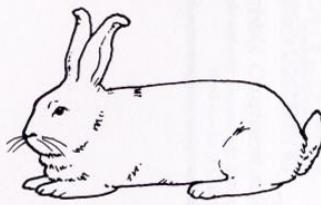
**Ideal Tail**



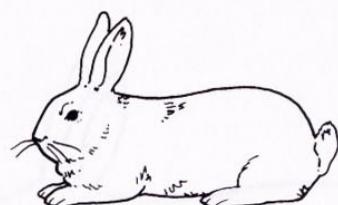
**Screw Tail**



**Open-Carried Ears**



**Belled Ears**



**Ideal Ears**

# Rabbit Fur Types

(J, I, S)

**Rabbit fur** varies as you move from breed to breed, with four main fur types, according to the American Rabbit Breeders Association. The four fur types are Rex, Satin, Wool and normal. The normal fur type encompasses the majority of breeds, but is still as useful as the more commercially known varieties.

**Rex** fur is after the breed for which is found, Rex and Mini Rex. These soft velvety animals have a soft yet dense fur that is useful for apparel. The velveteen lop, although not recognized by the ARBA, has a fur texture like the Rex and is a cross between the Rex and an English Lop.

**Satin** fur is found on the Satin breed as well as the newly recognized Mini Satin breed. It is similar in texture to normal fur, but has a softer more shiny appearance. The sheen comes from select breeding to encourage this gloss to the coat. It was originally bred to increase a chocolate color in the Havana breed, but the shine became widely popular.

**Wool** fur is found on the angora breeds as well as the Jersey Wooley. With a total of six breeds classified as a wool fur type, their primary function is that of a fur breed. They offer a dense wooly coat similar to that of a sheep. They do not carry the waxy residue that a sheep's' wool does and it is more dense, making it a highly chosen option for warmth.

**Normal** fur is found most commonly in varying breeds. In the 47 recognized breeds, more than 35 have a normal fur texture. Normal fur is soft in texture and short. It doesn't change its shape when being stroked. Normal fur can be further classified as *flyback* or *rollback* by ARBA standards. Flyback fur will snap back into its original position after being petted in a backward motion. Rollback fur slowly returns to its former position.

Rex Fur



Wool Fur



Satin Fur



Normal Fur





# Rabbit Safe Handling and Caging Task

(J, I, S)

## Answer Key

- 1) What clothing is appropriate to wear when handling rabbits?  
**Wear clothing that will prevent scratches such as a long-sleeved shirt or gloves.**
- 2) Where should you position feeding and watering equipment in a rabbit's compartment?  
**Depending on the type of equipment – it may be placed inside the compartment on the floor at the front corners, or hung outside on the front of the compartment.**
- 3) What is the purpose of the nesting box?  
**It provides seclusion for the doe during kindling and comfort for the litter afterwards.**  
What materials should you place in the nesting box?  
**Cover the bottom of the nesting box with sawdust or wood chips; then add a little dry grass or straw. Immediately before kindling the doe will pull fur from her breast to also place in the box.**  
Where should you place the nesting box in the doe's compartment?  
**Place it at the rear of the compartment and away from the doe's latrine area and watering source.**
- 4) Describe the proper method for picking up a rabbit.  
**Gently stroke the rabbit and speak calmly and quietly. Next, place one hand under the rabbit just behind the front legs; place the other hand under its rump. Use the hand near the rabbit's front legs to lift, and the other hand to support the rabbit's weight. Next, hold the rabbit next to your body and direct its head toward the corner formed by your elbow. Your lifting arm and body support the rabbit – just like tucking a football – and your other hand is free and rests on the rabbit's back to provide extra security.**  
How do you provide extra control when picking up a rabbit?  
**With one hand, grasp the loose skin over the rabbit's shoulder and enclose its ears. Then place the other hand under the rabbit's rump and lift the rabbit while pulling it toward your body. Now, resting the rabbit on your forearm, place one hand underneath the rabbit's body and one hand on the back of its neck. NOTE: this method may damage the fur and flesh over the rabbit's back, and is especially harmful to the more delicate coats of Rex and Satin rabbits.**
- 5) Why should you cage a pregnant doe/doe and litter away from strange or potentially aggressive animals?  
**If disturbed, the doe may stamp her feet and accidentally injure or kill some of her kits.**
- 6) Why should you move the breeding doe into the buck's compartment?  
**Rabbits are territorial and the doe may be more interested in defending her compartment than in mating with the buck.**  
How should you place the doe into the buck's compartment?  
**Place the doe into the buck's compartment hindquarters first.**
- 7) How do you know if mating has taken place?  
**If the male mounts the female and then falls to one side, mating has taken place. If the rabbits do not mate within 5 minutes, repeat this process the next day.**

**Sore Hocks (Ulcereative Pododermatitis)**

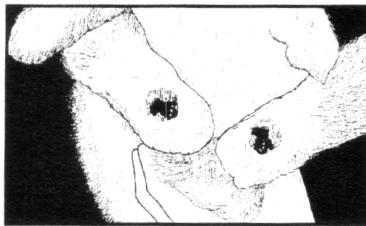
**Cause:** Damage initially to the pad of the foot, usually followed by a bacterial infection

**Prevention:**

- ★ House rabbits in clean cages on soft, clean, dry bedding
- ★ Eliminate environmentally stressful conditions
- ★ Use resting boards
- ★ Cull affected animals and do not use for breeding

**Common treatment:***Preparation H*

- Clean sores/lesions, trim toenails, and apply topical antiseptic or protective covering
- Healing is often prolonged/complicated by secondary bacterial infections

**Wry Neck (Torticollis)**

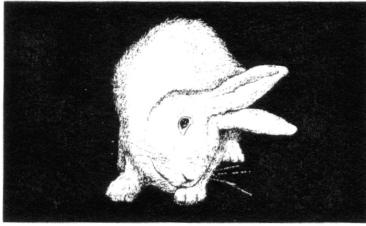
**Cause: Bacterial infection** --- An otitis interna caused by *Pasteurella multocida*, frequently no specific inner ear lesions are detected, with the cause remaining unknown

**Prevention:**

- ★ Cull affected individuals immediately
- ★ Quarantine new arrivals prior to herd/colony entry
- ★ Do not allow affected animals to reproduce

**Common treatment:***Treatment is NOT effective*

- There is NO satisfactory treatment for this condition

**Ear Canker (Acariasis)**

**Cause: Ear mites** --- *Psoroptes cuniculi* and/or *Chorioptes cuniculi* - transmitted from infected animals or environment to noninfected rabbits

**Prevention:**

- ★ Carefully examine the ears of all stock every 14 days
- ★ Quarantine all new arrivals and treat twice before placing in clean herd/colony

**Common treatment:***Mineral- or- Vegetable Oil*

- Treat (smother) with oil-based insecticide preparation
- Clean off exudate and massage 1 to 2 ml of liquid into each ear canal with a cotton swab
- Repeat treatment in 7 days to eliminate newly hatched mites
- or- Treat with injectable Ivermectin

**Snuffles (Infectious Respiratory Disease)**

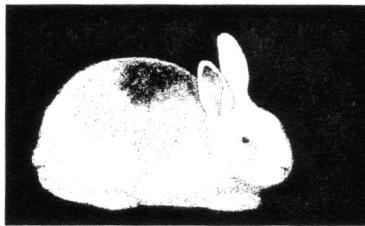
**Cause: Bacterial infection** --- *Pasteurella multocida* - transmitted by direct contact between cagemates, doe and litter, and/or breeding pair - untreated may result in pneumonia

**Prevention:**

- ★ Adhere to strict sanitation and husbandry standards
- ★ Insure good ventilation
- ★ Follow strict culling procedures

**Common treatment:***Terramycin, Bunnit-mycin, -or- Baytril*

- Treat at first symptom of ailment
- Treat with antibiotics via drinking water or injection

**Weepy Eye (Staphylococcosis)**

**Cause: Bacterial infection** --- *Staphylococcus aureus* and/or *Pasteurella multocida* - spread by humans and contaminated food, feces, cages, and/or bedding

**Prevention:**

- ★ Apply rigid sanitation methods
- ★ Eliminate sharp or abrasive surfaces
- ★ Use clean feed and bedding
- ★ Reduce animal stress
- ★ Monitor animals

**Common treatment:***Tetracycline*

- Clean, drain, and excise lesion
- Detected early, treat with ophthalmic antibiotic ointment
- Advanced cases have been treated with antibiotics via injection or drinking water

**Vent Disease**

(Venereal Spirochetosis or Treponematosis)

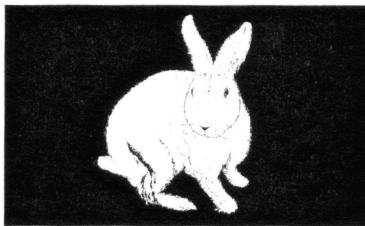
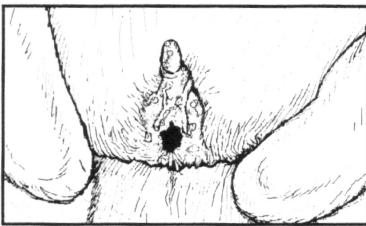
**Cause: Bacterial infection** --- *Treponema cuniculi* - transmitted by direct contact, especially during mating

**Prevention:**

- ★ Examine breeding bucks and does routinely for lesions - treat affected individuals at once
- ★ Cull carriers
- ★ Maintain a closed breeding herd
- ★ Treat and quarantine new stock

**Common treatment:***Penicillin G*

- Treat with injectable antibiotic
- Increased possibility of enterotoxemia from penicillin exposure must be considered

**Wound (Lacerations and/or Abrasions)**

**Cause: Injuries, bites, and scratches** --- Bites and scratches from other animals, and/or injuries from poor housing and environmental conditions

**Prevention:**

- ★ Maintain rabbitry equipment and facilities
- ★ Adhere to strict sanitation and husbandry standards to prevent risk of infection

**Common treatment:***Blood Stop*

- Minor injury - use styptic powder to stop bleeding
- Major injury - clean, disinfect, dress, and apply pressure to laceration or abrasion to help stop bleeding

**Enterotoxemia (Clostridial Enterotoxemia)**

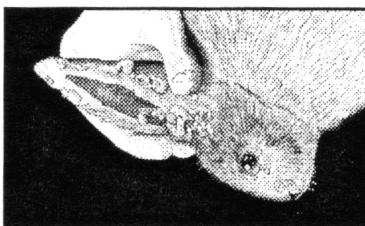
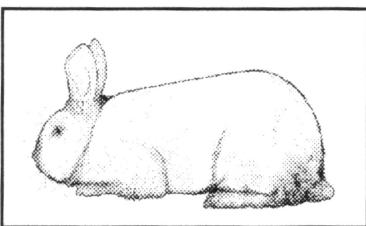
**Cause: Bacterial infection** --- *Clostridium spiroforme* and/or *C. perfringens* - transmission is primarily fecal-oral route

**Prevention:**

- ★ Implement rigid sanitation and husbandry standards
- ★ Use copper sulfate or *Lactobacillus* preparations
- ★ Change diet slowly
- ★ Feed sufficient fiber

**Common treatment:***Biosol*

- Change the diet: increase fiber and decrease protein
- Maintain hydration
- Maintain body temperature
- Neomycin treatments have uncertain benefits

**Ringworm (Dermatophytosis)**

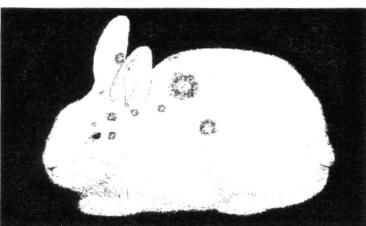
**Cause: Fungal infection** --- *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* and/or *Microsporum canis* - transmitted easily by direct contact with spores on hair coat, in bedding, and/or soil

**Prevention:**

- ★ Maintain high standards of animal husbandry
- ★ Examine animals routinely
- ★ Cull carriers
- ★ Sterilize contaminated facilities and equipment

**Common treatment:***Iodine*

- Individual outbreaks - apply medication to skin: ordinary iodine or an ointment containing hexetidine
- Herd outbreaks - use griseofulvin as a feed additive or in water-soluble form

**Coccidiosis (Intestinal Coccidiosis)**

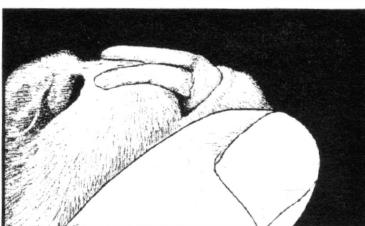
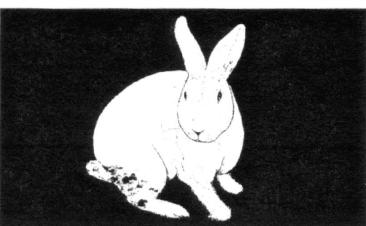
**Cause: Protozoa** --- *Eimeria* spp. - transmitted by ingestion of sporulated oocysts passed in feces and found viable in soil, feed, on personnel, caging, and utensils for several months

**Prevention:**

- ★ Employ strict sanitation and husbandry standards
- ★ Cull infected animals
- ★ Prevent contact with infected feces or contaminated food and water containers

**Common treatment:***Sulfa Q*

- Best prevented and/or controlled through rigid sanitation practices
- Treat infected animals with medication containing sulfquinavoxine or monensin as a feed additive or in water-soluble form

**VHD (Viral Hemorrhagic Disease)**

**Cause: Virus** --- Peracute infection of *Oryctolagus cuniculus* - transmitted by direct contact with secretions or excretions of infected rabbits, or indirectly via aerosol exposure to contaminated rabbit products

**Prevention:**

- ★ Select VHD-free stock
- ★ Adhere to strict husbandry practices
- ★ Quarantine new arrivals prior to herd/colony entry
- ★ Conduct serologic screening

**Common treatment:***NO satisfactory treatment exists*

- Short-term protection is provided from a vaccine that lasts only 6 to 8 months
- Bi-annual vaccination is recommended in epidemic areas

**Malocclusion (Mandibular Prognathism)**

**Cause: Inherited abnormality** --- Inherited condition in which the incisors fail to meet and thus, grow to extreme lengths; may also result from dietary, infectious (abscesses), or traumatic reasons

**Prevention:**

- ★ Do not allow animals affected with this ailment/disorder to reproduce

**Treatment:**

- Treatment of tooth overgrowth involves repeated filing or sawing with a sharp clipper or dental burr
- Removal of affected teeth

**WARNING:** Before any condition is treated, medications not approved (labeled) for use in rabbits or cavies must be prescribed by a licensed veterinarian familiar with the care and treatment of rabbits and cavies.



# Tattooing Procedures and Techniques

(S)

## 1) Gather equipment.

- a) **Tattooing outfit**
  - should include pliers, ink, and character pins/digits
  - (Caution: to prevent spreading diseases from one animal to another, insure that tattoo pliers and character pins/digits have been disinfected before using.)*
- b) **Alcohol or prep pads**
- c) **Cotton swab or applicator**
- d) **Sheet of paper or cardboard for tester**
- e) **Means of restraint** (such as a carpet square and towel if appropriate)
- f) **Petroleum jelly**

## 2) Set character pins/digits in pliers.

## 3) Test puncture by applying tattoo character pins/digits to a stiff paper to check alignment and sharpness.

## 4) Restrain animal.

*(Warning: to prevent injury to the animal, use only a restraint technique appropriate for the age and size of the rabbit being tattooed.)*

## 5) Choose clear area (between veins) of ear and clean area with alcohol prep pad.

## 6) Puncture prepped area with character pins by squeezing pliers.

## 7) Apply tattoo ink to area with cotton swabs or applicator.

## 8) Rub ink into puncture holes with cotton swabs or applicator.

## 9) Clean area around tattoo of excess ink with clean cotton swabs using petroleum jelly or pad dipped in alcohol.

## 10) Disinfect tattoo pliers and character pins/digits.

## 11) Repeat steps two (2) through ten (10) for tattooing the next animal.

**TAKE YOUR TIME**

**If done properly, tattoos are forever!**

# ROASTER/STEWER PRODUCTION IN THE US

(I, S)

The United States is not a major exporter of rabbit meat. While rabbit was popular protein, consumption patterns have changed. An estimated 8 Billion pounds of rabbit is consumed yearly in the United States. This number is difficult to verify as rabbit processing is not regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture. An interesting fact - rabbit is not considered "livestock", so regulations are different.

Rabbits processed for meat are called fryers, roasters, or stewers; based on age and weight.

Fryers — are less than 10 weeks old and 3.5 — 5.5 pounds

Roasters — are 10 weeks to 6 months old and 5.5 — 9 pounds

Stewers — are over 6 months old and over 8 pounds

**Meat type:** The most desirable animals are those with commercial type. The body should be heavily muscled and well rounded. The back legs should be thickly muscled and extend far down the leg toward the hock joint. The loin should be wide and thick starting from the rib cage and continuing to the hip loin juncture.

**Faults:** Large frame, heavy bone, large head, thick ears, and heavy hide. Also animals that are thinly muscled, tapered in the loin, narrow chested, and exhibit protruding hips.

**Uniformity:** Exhibitor selects three fryers for the pen that have similar traits, uniform weight, size, and condition.



## Standard Guide for Judging Rabbit Meat Pen Classes

These 4 factors (listed in order of importance) are used to judge meat pens:

1. Meat type
2. Condition
3. Uniformity
4. Fur