

Barry County 4-H
Rabbit and Cavy Project Area Rules 2024
Barry County 4-H Rabbit & Cavy Developmental Committee
MSU Extension Office: (269) 945-1388
Superintendent: Wes Casarez (616) 318-0867
Assistant Superintendent: Sara Robinson (269) 579-0367

- All Rabbit/Cavy Developmental Committee meetings are open to the public. It is encouraged that at least one person from each club attends these meetings.
- All meeting dates are posted in the Reminder under the Calendar of Events and on Facebook. Scheduled meetings are usually on the fourth (4th) Tuesday of the month, but additional meetings may be called as needed.
- Additional rules will be in the fair book which is available in May.

PRE-REGISTRATION/ BASIC RULES

- All rabbit and cavy exhibitors (including Young Clovers) planning to participate in the current fair must be enrolled in 4-H or FFA and pre-register through the MSU Extension Office by May 1st.
- All rabbit and cavy exhibitors (fair age 9-18) are required to attend a mandatory rabbit/cavy meeting and an educational workshop to be able to show at the fair.
- Rabbits and cavies must be in the youths' possession by May 1st except for purchased market rabbits (that possession date will be published annually).
- Pre- Registration is turned in by club. It is the leader's responsibility to turn this form into the Superintendent and MSU extension by May 1st.
- Each exhibitor should obtain at least \$20 in sponsor money payable to the Barry County Rabbit/Cavy Developmental Committee. Without these funds, we cannot continue to supply awards, education workshops, or programming throughout the 4-H year. Please see the current year sponsor form for all due dates and available awards for sponsor.

MDA PAPERWORK

- MDA Paperwork is to be turned in by the due date published annually by the Fairboard. If these documents are not turned in with the appropriate fees, exhibitors will not be able to participate in the Rabbit and Cavy Project area for the current year.
- The number of breed class entries is not limited. However, you may only enter up to two (2) animals per class. The total number of entries will be approved each year by the Superintendents. If there are concerns they will contact you.
 - For Clarification: The maximum amount of entries per breed class (listed in the fairbook) is 2 Sr. Bucks, 2 Sr. Does, 2 Jr. Bucks, and 2 Jr Does.
- Progeny senior animals must be entered on the MDA form listed as a PROGENY SENIOR ANIMAL (no premiums).

FAIR CHECK-IN
(See the attached checklist)

- Check-in will be from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. the Saturday before fair. Teen superintendent check-in is at 2:00 p.m.
- A supply fee of \$1.00 per rabbit or cavy must be submitted to the Committee Treasurer at check-in. Forms will be provided for you at check-in. Cash, checks, and money orders will be accepted.
- Animals must be clean with all toenails trimmed before you enter the barn. Unclean or animals deemed unfit for show will not be allowed entry into the barn. No animal will be allowed in the barn without the Superintendent's approval.
- All Rabbits and Cavies must have an identification tattoo or ear tag (cavies only) in the left ear. All Market rabbits must have a Green Clover tattoo (see market section).
- All rabbits and cavies must be transported in a wire carrier with a leakproof pan attached to the carrier. Absorbent material must be in the pan.
- Exhibitors will receive their cage assignments at check-in. The animals are to remain in their assigned cage(s) for the duration of the fair. Animals may not leave the barn before the last Sunday of fair without written permission from the Superintendent. The release form must be signed by the exhibitor, parent, leader, and superintendent.
- Screen bottom feeders are provided in each cage for food by the Rabbit/Cavy Developmental Committee. Please do not remove these feeders. If you think your cavy will not eat from the provided feeder, you may bring a heavy crock.
- Heavy crocks are to be provided by the exhibitor for water. Light plastic, aluminum bowls, glass bowls, and tin cans are not acceptable. Dirty, chipped, or broken crocks are not acceptable. Clean water bottles are allowed for cavies ONLY. These must be with you at check-in and checked by the superintendent or representative. If the crock brought does not meet the standard above a fee will be assessed per crock for use of committee crock during fair week.
- Thank you cards/ signs
 - All exhibitors are required to provide two (2) thank you cards for our sponsors
 - EX: Thank you for sponsoring the 2024 Rabbit and Cavy Barn at the Barry County Fair. I really appreciate your support because I enjoy working and showing my rabbit/ cavy project....
 - Market exhibitors must have generic thank-you notes ready for review at check-in. These must be given to their buyer at the Small Animal Sale on Thursday night.
 - For previous year's market exhibitors: An 8 ½" x 11" or larger sign, for the prior year's buyer must be turned in at check-in. The sign should include the buyer's name, your name, and the type of unit that was purchased.
- You should bring a copy of your fair entry (MDA) form to check-in. This is your backup if entries are questioned.
- No entry changes will be allowed at check-in or during the show. Extenuating circumstances must be submitted to the superintendent one week before check-in.
- No parents will be allowed in the barn during check-in. Teen superintendents will help the exhibitors get their animals in their cages.

- Exhibitors must bring their Educational Non-livestock project or Market notebook to check in, this will be judged after you check in.

BARN RULES

- During fair week, Monday through Saturday the barn will be open from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM.
- The Exhibitor is responsible for daily animal cleaning, feeding, and watering. Cages must be cleaned by 10:00 a.m. If cages are not cleaned by 10:00 a.m., the exhibitor's cage(s) will be tagged. The exhibitor will be responsible for contacting the superintendent or assistant superintendent to see why the cage(s) have been tagged. After three (3) tags, the exhibitor's animal(s) will be sent home and premiums will be forfeited.
- Each exhibitor must provide their own feed and bedding for their cages. Pine wood shavings are the only approved bedding. There is absolutely no barn storage due to lack of space.
- No loose hay or straw is allowed in the rabbit and cavy exhibit area. Hay cubes may be used if needed.
- Ribbons must be hung on the club sign, they cannot be hung from the cages. If ribbons are lost or eaten by your animal(s), they will not be replaced. Be sure to label them as you receive them.
- All trophies will be displayed in the trophy case in the barn for the entire fair week. Each club must send one person to collect its projects, ribbons, and trophies on the last Saturday of the fair at 10:00 p.m.
- Exhibitors 11 and under must have a parent/guardian or club leader present when on barn duty.
- Barn duty time slots will be available for sign-up at the mandatory meetings.
- Exhibitors on barn duty must be present the entire time. You may not leave the barn without permission. Please plan your time accordingly.
- Teen superintendents must be 13 years of age and older. This may change at the superintendent's discretion if there are not enough teen superintendents.
- Junior Teen Superintendents are 12 years of age and must have a parent or leader recommendation sent to the Superintendent.
- Electronics, outside of basic cell phone use (contacting parents, leaders/ adults) are prohibited. Excessive phone use (watching videos, playing games ect.) will be addressed by the superintendent.

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

- All Non-livestock/educational project guidelines are available at the Extension Office and on their website.
- Judging for all educational projects will be from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the rabbit barn after you check in. Failure to turn in/show your educational/ market project will result in the removal of animals from the exhibit area. The exhibitor will not be allowed to show, or sell any rabbit, cavy, or market exhibit.
- Breed class exhibitors must complete an educational notebook, poster, or exhibit.
- Market class exhibitors must complete the market notebook for each unit they are showing. An additional educational notebook or poster is optional. If two (2) units are

shown, information for each unit should be in the same 3-ring binder and separated by unit.

- EDUCATIONAL NOTEBOOKS – should contain only the current year’s work, unless the notebook is done over a 2yr span. Notebooks should be in a 3-ring binder – must be displayed in your club’s booth during fair week.
- RECORD KEEPING (market notebook) – includes records or notebooks required for market classes – must be displayed in your club’s booth during fair week.
- POSTER AND EXHIBITS – must be displayed in your club’s booth during fair week. The maximum size for a poster is 22”x28”. If these dimensions are exceeded your project should be entered as an exhibit. Posters/exhibits should be age-appropriate.

SHOW DAY

- All Rabbit and Cavy Exhibitors need to be in the show arena by 7:45 am
- The Cavy show will begin at 8:00 a.m. with the Rabbit show starting immediately after.
- The Young Clovers show will begin at 9:00 a.m.
- The show order will be as follows:
 - Showmanship
 - 30-minute lunch break
 - Market classes
 - Breed classes
 - Progeny
 - Club Herd

SHOWMANSHIP

- All exhibitors are required to participate in showmanship. There is only one entry in showmanship per exhibitor, per species.
- Showmanship for both rabbits and cavies will be judged based on the current Michigan 4-H Rabbit/ Cavy Showmanship Guidelines. Please look for guidelines published in 2025, if you cannot find them please contact MSU Extension or the RCD Committee.
- Dress code: dark long pants, white long-sleeve shirt with a collar or show coat with a white shirt underneath, closed-toe shoes, and long hair tied back. Absolutely NO sandals, jewelry, nail polish, or hats. You must look neat and clean!
- The showmanship animal must be shown in its respective breed class.
- The exhibitor may not change their showmanship animal during the show.
- Market project animals are NOT to be used for showmanship.
- First-year exhibitors have the option of showing in the novice class appropriate for their age.
- Awards of A, B, or C will be given to each exhibitor.

OVERALL SHOWMANSHIP WINNERS

- The first three (3) winners of each showmanship class will qualify for the overall showmanship class.
- Rabbit Kiwanis Showmanship Plaque will be awarded as follows:
 - Junior plaque contest will be Novice 9-12 and Junior showman

- Senior plaque contest will be Intermediate, Novice 13-18, and Senior showman.
- Cavy Kiwanis Showmanship plaque will be awarded to the exhibitor with the highest showmanship points in their competition (Senior, Intermediate, Junior and Novice classes). In case of a tie, the individual showmen will be called back to compete for the plaque.

BREED CLASSES

- Rabbits must be three (3) months or older as of show day to be shown in breed classes and must weigh at least one-half of the minimum senior show weight. No unworthy/undersized animal will be awarded a premium whether or not there is competition.
- Cavies must be four (4) weeks old or older as of show day and must weigh at least 12 ounces to be shown in breed classes. No unworthy/undersized animal will be awarded a premium whether or not there is competition.
- All animals must be tattooed or ear-tagged for identification in the left ear. If an animal needs a tattoo or ear tag, someone will be available at the mandatory meetings, or market tattoo day.
- ANY breed class animal with a 4-H emblem tattoo must be over 1 year of age and from a previous year's market breeding.
- Breed classes will be judged using ARBA standards. Exception: Pet/Mixed breed classes will be judged on condition (fur or coat and body composition).
- Only purebred animals may be shown in breed classes. If you know your animal is not purebred, enter it in the pet/mixed breed class.
- Each exhibitor must handle their animal(s) in showmanship and market classes during judging. Exception: Breed classes due to conflict of showing other livestock species. You must arrange for another exhibitor to help you show your animals. NO ADULTS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ASSIST.
- Exhibitors should not leave the arena until AFTER ALL judging is complete. Classes will not be held or re-judged if an exhibitor is absent. REMINDER – the Best of Breed winners will return at the end of the show to compete for Best in Show and Reserve in Show. Market and Pet/Mixed breed classes are not eligible.
- **PET/MIXED BREED CLASS** – the purpose of this class is to give the single pet animal owner, an opportunity to show and exhibit their project. The animal will be judged on its own merit, not by the ARBA standard. There is a limit of one (1) pet/mixed breed rabbit and cavy per exhibitor. The family cannot own or raise other rabbits or cavies. Exceptions can be brought before the Developmental Executive Board and Superintendent for consideration.
- **PROGENY CLASS** – Each entry shall consist of two (2) animals owned by the same exhibitor. To encourage breed improvement, this class will be judged 40% on the senior animal and 60% on the offspring. Ribbons will be awarded.
 - The SENIOR animal may be entered in the appropriate breed class if desired. This animal has the option of being judged in the progeny class only. No premiums will be awarded to this animal if not shown in breed class.
 - Up to two (2) entries per species may be entered.

Junior Rabbit Requirement- 60%	Senior Rabbit Requirements- 40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offspring of Sr. Animal - Age: between 3-6 months of age - Entered in the respective breed class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent of Jr. Animal - No age limit - Optional entry in the respective breed class

Junior Cavy Requirement- 60%	Senior Cavy Requirements- 40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offspring of Sr. Animal - Age: between 1- 6 months of age - Entered in the respective breed class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent of Jr. Animal - No age limit - Optional entry in the respective breed class

MARKET CLASSES

- The purpose of the market class is to promote salesmanship and meat production. Judging of these classes will be solely on meat type, and condition. For fryer and roaster pens, they will also be judged on uniformity. The ARBA breed standard will not apply. However, any health-related issues may disqualify the entry.
- Exhibitors may show two (2) market units. This can be a combination of homegrown and purchased animals. Market exhibitors must be pre-registered on the club pre-registration paperwork due by May 1st.
- **Homegrown Units** must be bred and raised by the exhibitor with the doe being in the exhibitor's possession and pre-registered by May 1st .
- **Purchased animals** must be in the exhibitor's possession no later than 29 days prior to show day. A bill of sale must accompany the animals at market tattooing.
- Tattoo requirements for all market animals
 - 4-H emblem in the left ear done at Market tattooing in June, done by the Rabbit and Cavy Superintendent or a representative. Youth exhibitor must be present for market tattooing, and have a copy of their bill of sale of purchased animals and all current records for their project.
 - The superintendent assigns the letter to each market exhibitor. These letters must be at the start of the identification tattoo in the left ear. Rabbits must be tattooed with their identification tattoo prior to tattoo day. If you need assistance for tattooing please reach out to the superintendent.
 - EX: Purchased pen AA12, Homegrown pen A12
- All market rabbits must weigh a minimum of 2 pounds each at the time of market tattooing.
- Due to bruising, market rabbits can be shown only in market classes. They cannot be used in showmanship or Show of Champions. They should not be handled except for show classes and sale days.

- Record keeping is required for each market unit. Please refer to the record keeping guidelines which are available at the Extension Office or online.
- All market units **MUST** be sold at the Small Animal Sale on Thursday of fair. Refer to the current fairbook rules for the Small Animal Sale.
- **SMALL ANIMAL SALE** – exhibitors must wear their showmanship attire during the sale and for pictures. They must also give their buyer a thank you note at the time of sale.
- Pictures must be returned to the buyer with a thank you prior to Labor Day.
- **HOMEGROWN AND PURCHASED FRYER PENS** shall consist of three (3) rabbits, the same breed and variety, weigh 3 ½ to 5 ½ pounds each in weight and not over 12 weeks (84 days) old.
- **HOMEGROWN AND PURCHASED SINGLE FRYER RABBIT** shall weigh 3 ½ to 5 ½ pounds and not over 12 weeks (84) days old. This rabbit **CANNOT** be shown as part of a fryer pen class.
- **HOMEGROWN AND PURCHASED ROASTER PENS** shall consist of three (3) rabbits, the same breed and variety, weigh 5 ½ to 9 pounds each in weight and not over six (6) months (182 days) old.
- **HOMEGROWN AND PURCHASED SINGLE ROASTER RABBIT** shall weigh 5 ½ to 9 pounds and not over six (6) months (182 days) old. This rabbit **CANNOT** be shown as part of a roaster pen class.

AWARDS

- All awards (other than ribbons) are conditional depending on the availability of funds. Funding for the rabbit/cavy project comes from sponsorships.

CLEAN UP

- All animals must be removed **BEFORE 7:00 A.M.** on the last Sunday of fair. Any animals remaining after that time will be disposed of. The barn will be open at 6:30 a.m. to begin taking animals out of the barn.
- Upon removal of animals on Sunday, each exhibitor is responsible for cleaning and disinfecting **ALL** cages and equipment and storing them in the barn for the next year. Wear old clothes because the cages are washed with a soap/bleach/water solution.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ YOUR FAIR BOOK Please keep this document for reference. Turn in your Pre-registration Form to the Extension Office and the Superintendents via email or mail. If you have any questions please contact the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent.

Fair Check-in list

- Rabbits: Clean water crocks. Crocks must be free of cracks and chips. Must be heavy- no plastic or aluminum dishes allowed. No water bottles
- Cavies Only: Clean water bottles
- Copy of MDA form for clarification
- Educational Requirements- notebook and/or poster per species
- Thank you, card - Sponsors 1/species
- Thank you card for buyers - sale day (1/unit) Market only
- If you sold a market project last year an 8.5x11 Thank you sign for the barn
- Clean carriers with shavings- no cat/dog carriers or boxes
- Pine wood shavings (only) for bedding your pens
- Please make sure rabbits are groomed with trimmed toenails.
- Remember there is no loose hay allowed in the barn
- All Animals must be free of illness to be approved by the superintendent and admitted into the barn
- All animals must have proper identification prior to check-in
 - Rabbits tattooed legibly in the Left Ear. Market rabbits with correct assigned letter and clover tattoo
 - Cavies- ear tag or legible tattoo.

TIP! If you are bringing several rabbits. Label your carriers with the rabbit's ear number, age and sex to help check-in go more smoothly.

