

# Morgan County Rabbit Project

## Selecting your Rabbit

Whether you are brand new to the rabbit project, or a veteran with many years under you belt, here are some tips on the animal you are looking for.

- Make sure you pick a reputable breeder if you are purchasing your animal.
- Know the genetic makeup of the animal you are going to purchase.
- Consider the following factors: frame size, muscle, structural correctness, balance, eye appeal, and disposition.
- The average cost per rabbit is \$50-\$100. This includes the purchase of the animal, feed for 3 months and show supplies.
- Rabbits should have an all-wire cage and should be at least 2' wide by 18" high by 2' long. Rabbits need a sitting board 6-8" square or larger to prevent sore hocks and feet.
- Outside cages need a shady roof and protection from rain, wind, drafts, dampness, and direct sun during the hot summer months.
- To cool a rabbit, put a gallon jug of frozen water in the cage or put long wet towels on the sides of the cage.
- Rabbits need plenty of fresh, clean ice-free water each day.
- Clean the water bottle every few days with a mild solution or warm soapy water.
- You can feed hay or alfalfa as the rabbits like to nibble on it and the fiber helps them with stress, so they don't get sick.
- It takes 20 days to change feed because rabbits stomachs are easily upset. Start with 3/4 old feed, 1/4 new, and increase 1/4 every 5 days until completely converted.
- Remember your ABC's for treats-apples, bananas, and carrots-but only as a treat rarely, or they may go off their regular feed because they want special food.
- Do not feed lettuce or table scraps. This can give a rabbit diarrhea and wet-tail, and they will dehydrate quickly and die.
- Clean the cage regularly by removing all droppings from the cage every day. At least once a week, clean, and disinfect the cage and tray.
- Keep the area around the pen clean and neat. Keep other pets and rodents away.
- Always check for parasites such as lice, fleas, and mites.
- When treatment or injections are necessary for animal health read the label, administer properly, adhere to withdrawal times, and keep accurate records.
- Trim the nails of both young and adult rabbits on a regular basis. Trim on a 45 degree angle, with the end of the nail trimmer toward the nail.
- Ask For Help: 4-H Agent, Leaders or other members in the 4-H Rabbit Project.



## Breeding Rabbit Information

- A doe and her litter will drink about a gallon of water a day.
- Do not handle pregnant females too much and keep males away.

Turn over for Market Rabbit Information.

## Upcoming Events:

- Meat Quality Assurance 5/13/2024 or 5/14/2024 , 4:30-6:30 pm, MCFG
- Breeding Rabbit Primary Care Begins, 6/1/2024
- Fair entries and record books due, 7/10/2024, 4 pm, Extension Office



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## Market Rabbit Information

- Your Rabbit must weigh between 3.5 and 5.5 pounds at fair.
- Manage weight by managing feed, you have approximately 56-70 days to feed your animal.
- Feed them 2-3 oz., twice daily to start, and adjust based on how they gain.
- A weanling rabbit typically has a feed conversion of 3-3.5 lbs. of feed per 1 lb. of gain.
- Your rabbit can be a maximum of 90 days old at fair, 70 is ideal.
- Fresh clean water should be available at all times
- Feed should contain 16-18% protein.
- Use the chart to the right to determine how big your rabbit should be at purchase to ensure he is properly finished by county fair.
- The goal is to have your rabbit weigh between 3.5 - 5.5 lbs.
- Use a baby scale, kitchen scale, or postal scale to monitor your rabbits weights. They will not gain lots of weight on short notice.
- Make sure you are working with them by getting them out of the cage and handling them. A carpet square or towel works well as a surface to work with them on.
- Use the other side of this sheet for Selection and General Care Guidelines.



## How Much Should My Rabbit Weight?

**\*Assuming a 7 oz. ADG**

Days to Rabbit Show	Desired Beginning Weight	Desired Market Weight at Show
70 days	.5-2 pounds	3.5 - 5.5 pounds
56 days	.5-2 pounds	3.5 - 5.5 pounds

Turn over for Breeding Rabbit Information.

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## Upcoming Events:

- Meat Quality Assurance 5/13/2024 or 5/14/2024 , 4:30-6:30 pm, MCFG
- Market Rabbit Primary Care and ID due Date, 6/25/2024, by 4 pm, Extension Office
- Fair entries and record books due, 7/10/2024, 4 pm, Extension Office



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