



PROJECT ESSENTIALS

LIVESTOCK: SMALL STOCK

VOL.1



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Cooperative Extension



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Project Essentials Livestock Fact Sheets

Small Stock Vol. 1:

Cavies, Poultry, Rabbit

How to Read “Project Essentials” Fact Sheets

The goal of the “Project Essentials” sheets is to provide a basic resource for 4-H members and parents to get started in a new small stock project. Small stock projects are a challenge, and these sheets will help provide first steps and basic knowledge on your animal’s needs. These sheets should be utilized by families to foster a youth’s ‘learning to learn’ skills. There are several key housing boarding and feeding needs to be discussed, in addition to cost estimates for each type of animal. You will also see an “additional resource” and “local resources” section. The additional resources are links to examples within a greater body of resource material, again this is not a complete source but rather a place to get started in your project journey. The local resources section is very important – getting involved in your local community will provide a 4-H member with a rich body of knowledge and experience, and this is a great opportunity for young people to interact with peers and caring adult volunteers.

What skills and experience do youth gain from raising an animal in 4-H?

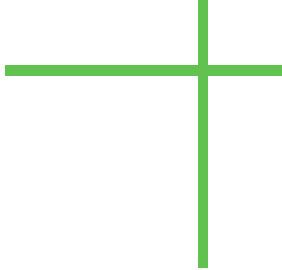
Small Stock projects provide day to day experiences that enable youth to learn new skills and, most importantly, ‘learn how to learn.’ We expect 4-Hers to gain abilities and knowledge in:

- Marketable skills for many careers
- Planning, organization, goal setting, and record-keeping
- The wise use of resources
- Critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision making
- Learning to learn
- Stress management and personal safety
- Self-discipline, self-motivation, and self-responsibility

What are the long-term outcomes for 4-H youth?

Small Stock projects provide challenges that enable youth to gain social skills, learn valuable skills, and gain content expertise in career fields in a controlled context. These efforts allow young people to develop a sense of responsibility and maturity. Working through these difficult projects will have profound outcomes, not only as a 4-H member but as thriving adults. We expect 4-H animal projects to foster:

- Academic motivation and success
- Social competence

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- Personal Standards
 - Contribution to others
 - Connection with others
 - Personal responsibility.

Completing an animal project is a proud accomplishment, and our goal in Extension is to help youth achieve success. Please feel free to share these documents and contact county-based 4-H professionals with further questions and guidance.

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank the following 4-H volunteers for providing on these sheets.

- Eric Treece – Coconino County
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- Jodie Bagley, Pima County

The input from these volunteers has added great value to these documents and produced a better resource for 4-H youth.

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Project Essentials Fact Sheet: Cavy

Congratulations on taking on your cavy project! Cavy projects require smart investment, informed management, and caring oversight. Here are a few helpful tips on preparing for your animals, maintaining health, safety, and managing your project for success.

Learn the Ground Rules: Reach out to your 4-H Project Leader or County 4-H Staff to obtain a copy of your County Premium Book or Rule Book for the Project. In this book, you should be able to find a list of requirements for raising your project. Additionally, it is highly recommended to obtain a copy of the American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA) Standard of Perfection for your project as there is great info about your Cavy in this document. Additionally, most major shows and programs follow ARBA rules and standards.

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) training is required in some counties for small stock projects and should be completed as early as possible. In some counties, the YQCA Class is required before the ownership deadline.

Important scheduling and facts about your project:

- The cost range associated with purchasing a cavy: \$30 to \$50. Supplies: \$30-50; Common supplies include a cage, water bottle, feed bowl, showmanship practice mat, grooming items.
- Cavy purchase weight varies, breeders often sell cavies at 3-4 weeks and the animals are well below the required show weights. Good target weight for a new Cavy is 12 ounces, however, a lighter cavy that is 3-4 weeks old is quite common. It is appropriate to buy a Cavy at this age, but make sure you have enough time to manage the cavy's weight before the County Fair or show. The animal should be purchased a minimum of 30 days before showing (quarantine to prevent spreading illness).
- Weights at your county show should be between 12 oz. and 40 oz., the minimum weight for a cavy to show is at 12 oz. In most counties, there is not a maximum weight, however, an overweight or "fat" cavy will not do as well. Cavy weights vary by breed; however, the common weight is right around 24 to 42 oz. at adult weight. A few breeds that are well selected for this purpose are Abyssinians, Americans, and Teddies.

- Cavies are prone to illness when exposed to excessive draft or sunlight, be sure that your cage location accounts for this. Additionally, cavies are susceptible to catching the human “Cold” virus. Be sure to practice proper biosecurity with your project by washing your hands and not handling your cavy while you are sick.
- To make ideal show weight, your cavies need to eat about ¼ cup of food a day.
- Talk to your project leader or county extension staff about the timing of tagging. When tagging cavies, the tags come in a long sleeve and are assigned to the animal. The breeder may sometimes choose the tags, however, it is common to have an untagged cavy because it is too small before the sale. You should reach out to your Cavy Project Leader for assistance with Tagging your cavy. Tags frequently rip out and need to be replaced. Most cavies are not pedigreed therefore there is no need for matching tags to pedigrees like rabbits. However, some breeders do pedigree, and the tag needs to match the pedigree. Ripped tags can be edited on the pedigree. As a note, the tag always goes on the left ear. Tagging can take place at any time.
- It is helpful to research and gain knowledge about an animal before purchase. It is important to learn about the most common diseases and how to treat them. Although not required, it is advisable to well-check animals after they are purchased. A well-check visit would establish baseline information of your rabbit and help establish a Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship with your local veterinarian’s office.

Maintaining Your Cavy:

- Cavies need to eat an unlimited amount of pellets. Additionally, hay from either Timothy or Orchard Grass is highly recommended. Cavies need constant access to clean cool water. Your cavy should be regularly supplemented with vitamin C in either water or with tablets. They can also be given daily access to fresh vegetables as a treat.
- A cavy’s weight needs to be taken every two weeks so they can be placed in the appropriate weight class. These animals tend to grow faster and place into an “older” class based on weight, not age.
- Cavies need to be worked with regularly for short periods. Plan on at least an hour to 1 ½ hour spread out each week because cavies tend to get stressed out quicker than rabbits. With regular handling, the cavy’s nervousness will reduce.
- Cavies are susceptible to human cold – proper hand washing and avoidance of the animal when sick is very important.
- **Find a Veterinarian** - For any health concerns make sure to contact your local veterinarian.

Conclusion:

Raising a Cavy is a great way to start your 4-H experience! Cavy is relatively easy to provide for. Further, they can have fun personalities and provide an excellent opportunity to learn valuable life skills. At all times, remember that you are aware of the rules of your County 4-H Program and abide by them, communicate with your 4-H Project Leader, follow the quality assurance standards set forth by the YQCA class that you attended either online or in-person and do not be afraid to ask questions!

Additional Resources:

- Cooperative Extension Cavy Resources: <https://extension.arizona.edu/4h/project/cavy>
- YQCA Training - <http://yqca.org/>
- American Cavy Breeders Association - <http://www.acbaonline.com/>
- American Rabbit Breeders Association- <https://arba.net/>
- Your Guinea Pig: a kid's guide to raising and showing - https://openlibrary.org/works/OL3518681W/Your_guinea_pig
- Look into shows and camps for practice/educational opportunities - a good example is the Colorado River Small Stock Show: <https://extension.arizona.edu/colorado-river-small-stock-show>
- Cooperative Extension homepage: <https://extension.arizona.edu/> (educational content, staff contact information, event dates, etc.)

Local Resources:

My Project Leader name _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

My County Agent name _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

Two 4-Hers that have done this project before me are _____ and _____.

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

My county 4-H extension website is <https://extension.arizona.edu/4h/>(your county name here)

Project Essentials Fact Sheet: Poultry

Congratulations on taking on your Poultry Project! Raising poultry requires smart investment, informed management, and caring oversight. Here are a few helpful tips on preparing for your birds, maintaining health, safety, and managing your project for success.

Learn the Ground Rules: Reach out to your 4-H Project Leader or County 4-H Staff to obtain a copy of your County Premium Book or Rule Book for the Project. In this book, you should be able to find a list of requirements for raising your projects. Refer to county agent or 4-H leader for information on tagging and other important dates.

For your poultry project, it is highly recommended that you view a copy of a Standard of Perfection for your poultry type to help inform you on bird selection and breed characteristics.

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) training is required in some counties for small stock projects and should be completed as early as possible. In some counties, the YQCA Class is required before the ownership deadline.

Preparing to Purchase and Selecting Your Birds:

- Cost range associated with purchasing your project – Initial bird costs can range from \$25-\$50 depending on the breed, quality of the bird, and location of purchase. There are many local breeders and feed stores that love to give 4-Hers great deals! It is recommended that you reach out to leaders for suggestions and advice on buying your first animal, the best case they can accompany you through this process.
- Inquire with your 4-H poultry leader to see which breed is best for you. You should consider which size bird is based on your size, age, and experience.
- Choose your bird weeks (may vary per county event/rules) before your contest to have ample time to prepare and train it for the show.
- Poultry includes Chicken, Ducks, Geese, Turkeys, and Pigeons
- All breeds accepted by the American Poultry Association, and the American Bantam Association, as stated in the Standard of Perfection, may be exhibited by 4-H/FFA Small Stock exhibitors.
- Poultry Meat Pens: Must be 6 to 8 weeks old for (Fryer or broiler), 18 to 22 weeks for heritage pens (depending on breed). Fryers must weigh 3 ½ to 5 pounds each. Broiler weight 5 pounds each. Heritage pens uniform in size, weight not limited due to multiple breeds, and judged based on uniformity and overall production quality. Cornish Rock Cross Meat Pen birds should be uniform in appearance and size.

- Common laying hen breeds: Australorp, Rhode Island Red, Wyandotte, Cochin, Leghorn, Plymouth Rock, and Buff Orpington
- Common poultry meat pen: Cornish Crosses, Red Broiler, Delaware Broilers
- Common Turkey: Broad Breasted White, Broad-Breasted Bronze, White Holland, Narraganset, Palms, and Bourbon Red.
- Make sure you have the right facilities! You will need 2-3 square feet within a coop, and at least 8-10 square feet for the run. Access to cool clean water, shade and feed is a must for any coop.
- Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) training is required – before tagging or identifying the purchase date (contact your county-based 4-H Professional for details).

Maintaining your animal:

- While raising your animal, be sure to follow the ethical, animal care, and welfare standards outlined in the YQCA training required each year.
- Provide a safe draft-free environment for your poultry, depending on the amount, size, age, and breed.
- Check a nutritional needs chart as you are getting started
- Recommended feeds:
 - Breeder Pellets always available or Feather Fixer (especially during molting season)
 - Black oil sunflower seeds - helps make feathers shiny,
 - Bird Seed Mix - fed as a treat
 - Oyster shell - for strong eggshells,
 - Greens - when available
- Discuss your bird and their needs with your project leader.
- Predators and heat are the most common causes of bird mortality – be sure to predator-proof your coop, especially from dogs, and provide ample shade.
- Make sure you have the right equipment that can include heat lamps, bedding, proper feed (do not restrict feed during the brooding stage), and water (chick waterers).
- Follow the proper brooding guide for your poultry
- Isolate any new animals from others to prevent any spread of diseases from following adequate biosecurity measures.
- Establish a schedule to check the feed, water, environment, temperature, and record the weight of your poultry.

Find a Veterinarian - For any health concerns make sure to contact your local veterinarian.

Biosecurity: It is important to protect your poultry using proper methods. When raising your poultry maintain a perimeter to keep other birds away from yours. Avoid the introduction of new birds into your coop and have a plan for quarantine. Also, get familiar with common diseases and ways to prevent them using local resources and your 4-H professionals.

Conclusion:

Poultry projects are a great way to start your 4-H experience! At all times, remember that you are aware of the rules of your County 4-H Program and abide by them, communicate with your 4-H Project Leader, follow the quality assurance standards set forth by the YQCA class that you attended either online or in-person and do not be afraid to ask questions!

Additional Resources:

- Cooperative Extension poultry resources: <https://extension.arizona.edu/4h/project/poultry>
- YQCA Training - <http://yqca.org/>
- Arizona Department of Agriculture: <https://agriculture.az.gov/animals/state-veterinarians-office/animal-importation-requirements/importing-poultry>
- American Poultry Association: <http://amerpoultryassn.com/sample-page/apa-breeds-varieties/accepted-breeds-varieties/>
- American Bantam Association: <https://www.bantamclub.com/online-store>
- US Poultry & Egg Association: <https://www.uspoultry.org/>
- Cooperative Educational website <https://extension.arizona.edu/4h/>
- Brooding guide: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2014/pub_bioguide_poultry_bird.pdf
- Poultry Biosecurity: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2014
- Cooperative Extension homepage: <https://extension.arizona.edu/> (educational content, staff contact information, event dates, etc.)
- Nutritional standards for proper poultry feeding: <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C954&title=Nutrition%20for%20the%20Backyard%20Flock>

Local Resources:

My Project Leader name _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

My County Agent name _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

Two 4-Hers that have done this project before me are _____ and _____.

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

My county 4-H extension website is <https://extension.arizona.edu/4h/>(your county name here)

Project Essentials Fact Sheet: Rabbit

Congratulations on taking on your rabbit project! Rabbit projects require smart investment, informed management, and caring oversight. Here are a few helpful tips on preparing for your animals, maintaining health, safety, and managing your project for success.

Learn the Ground Rules: Reach out to your 4-H Project Leader or County 4-H Staff to obtain a copy of your County Premium Book or Rule Book for the Project. In this book, you should be able to find a list of requirements for raising your projects. Refer to county agent or 4-H leader for information on tagging and other important dates.

For your rabbit project, it is highly recommended that you view a copy of a Standard of Perfection from the American Rabbit Breeder's Association (ARBA) to determine the eligibility of your rabbit to meet the breed characteristics required of your animal.

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) training is required in some counties for small stock projects and should be completed as early as possible. In some counties, the YQCA Class is required before the ownership deadline.

Important scheduling and facts about your project:

- Cost range associated with purchasing a rabbit: \$25 to \$150 based on the quality of the rabbit. Supplies: \$30 to \$200; includes a cage, water bottle, feed bowl, showmanship practice mat, nail trimmers, grooming items. Feed: \$.15 per pound. You'll feed 1-4 pounds per week.
- Rabbit purchase weight should be between 2 ½ and 4 lbs., yet this varies based on breed.
- The animal should be purchased at least 30 days before showing, but for meat pens, it is recommended purchase is at least 6 ½ weeks before the show. Check with your County's 4-H Premium Book to make sure that you are compliant with all ownership deadlines before purchasing your animal.
- Weights at your county fair should be between 3 ½ and 10 lbs. depending on the breed of your Rabbit., check the ARBA Standard of Perfection to obtain an ideal weight for your rabbit's breed.
- A few breeds that are well selected for market purpose are New Zealand, Californian, and Florida Whites, and crossbreeds.

- To maintain a healthy weight, your rabbit needs to eat approximately ½ to 1 cup of food per day. Include the following items in your rabbit's diet:
 - Hay pellet 70-80 percent
 - High Fiber pellet 20 percent
 - Green veggies 5-15 percent – parsley, spinach, mustard greens, beet greens, radish tops, sprouts, broccoli greens, alfalfa, etc.
- Rabbits that weigh under 10 lbs. should be fed ½ cup of feed, and over 10 lbs. should be fed 1 cup of feed. Feed meat pen rabbits one cup a day per rabbit, but monitor what each animal gains per day. For meat pens, the goal is to raise a pen of uniform rabbits – similar weights matter to the judge.
- Rabbits require regular exercise, provide a safe space for this.
- Rabbits can be tattooed anytime (be sure to tattoo the left ear), yet the ear tattoo must match the animals' pedigree, the tattoo is usually chosen by the breeder. Club leaders can provide more information.
- It is helpful to research and gain knowledge about an animal before purchase. Especially important is learning about the most common diseases and how to treat them. Although not required, a well-check visit after the purchase of a rabbit would establish baseline information of the animal and begin a relationship with the local veterinarian.
- It is important to watch a rabbit's weight to prevent going over that rabbit's breed weight limit. Weight should be checked approximately every other week for show animals. Market rabbits should be weighed every week to keep the meat pen as close in weight as possible.
- A rabbit should be handled often from a young age, after weaning. Plan to spend at least 90 minutes throughout the week. It is recommended to spend 10 to 15 minutes each day working with the rabbit.
- **Find a Veterinarian** - For any health concerns make sure to contact your local veterinarian.

BIOSECURITY & Rabbit Diseases:

It is important to maintain knowledge of current rabbit diseases such as RHDV2. Biosecurity should be practiced when purchasing new rabbits. Consult with your veterinarian about healthcare options for your rabbit including possible vaccinations for specific diseases.

Conclusion:

Raising a rabbit is a great way to start your 4-H experience because they put less of a strain on economic resources and take up less habitat area to raise. At all times, remember that you are aware of the rules of your County 4-H Program and abide by them, communicate with your 4-H Project Leader, follow the quality assurance standards set forth by the YQCA class that you

attended either online or in-person and do not be afraid to ask questions!

Additional Resources:

- Cooperative Extension rabbit resources: <https://extension.arizona.edu/4h/project/rabbit>
- YQCA Training - <http://yqca.org/>
- American Rabbit Breeder’s Association: <https://arba.net/>
- [Rabbit | National 4-H Curriculum](#)
- Rabbit Feed [Rabbit Food](#)
- Rabbit Diseases [Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Fact Sheet](#)
- Cooperative Extension website: <https://extension.arizona.edu/> (educational content, staff contact information, event dates, etc.)

Local Resources:

My Project Leader name _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

My County Agent name _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

Two 4-Hers that have done this project before me are _____ and _____.

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

•Email address _____

•Phone number _____

My county 4-H extension website is <https://extension.arizona.edu/4h/>(your county name here)



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