

# **DOUGLAS COUNTY**

## **GUIDE TO RABBIT SHOWMANSHIP AND SHOW ETIQUETTE**



### **4-H PROGRAM**

Note: This guide is designed for the Douglas County Rabbit Showmanship and is patterned after the guidelines of the American Rabbit Breeders Association (A.R.B.A.). Information obtained from the workshops or handouts from other counties may not be the same as those used in Douglas County. It is strongly recommended that the 4-H member use this guide to perform rabbit showmanship in Douglas County as it contains all information needed and the factors by which the members will be judged.

This guide was created by Karen Serafini and Joslyn Pribble  
Revised edition: June, 2008

# **DOUGLAS COUNTY GUIDE TO RABBIT SHOWMANSHIP AND ETIQUETTE**

## **What is Showmanship?**

Showmanship is an opportunity for a 4-H member to show how much he or she knows about rabbits and how well they can handle them. The ultimate showman can handle any rabbit well, even if he or she has never before worked with it. A good showman is a combination of their knowledge, manners, proper dress and handling skills. They have learned the art of selecting, fitting/grooming and presenting rabbits to their best advantage. The confidence and ability demonstrated by the showman and the rabbit's response and grooming indicates the amount of previous work done with the rabbit. Knowledge is the response to questions about the rabbit parts, disqualifications, breeds and variety characteristics.

Showmanship can be done individually or in a small group depending on the circumstances. The judging will be closed off from public view.

Showmanship is required of every 4-H member who shows at fair. Anyone who does not do showmanship will forfeit all ribbons, trophies and prize money along with receiving an incomplete in the rabbit project. Showmanship is not difficult to do, but it is very obvious when a member doesn't know how to do it properly. Watching and doing what others do can make the contestant look very foolish when the person being copied is doing things wrong. Always watch the judge, not the other people that are doing showmanship.

In order to get good score at showmanship, the member must start early in the year with his or her rabbit. Practicing is very important. It is suggested that the member work with his or her rabbit a minimum of 30 minutes every week, right up until fair, in order to be prepared. This guide will go over the basic requirements for rabbit showmanship as well as offer tips and judging factors.

## **Proper Dress:**

A rabbit showman should wear a white or light colored button down, long sleeved shirt and dark pants such as jeans. No shorts, sweaters, jackets, short sleeved shirts, shirts with club names or logos should be worn and points will be docked if they are. Bright colored or patterned shirts are distracting and show rabbit hair easily; they are to be avoided. All clothing should be clean and in good shape (no holes, tears or wrinkles).

Long hair needs to be pulled back so that it won't cover your face when bending over the rabbit. Hair should be neatly combed. Take all jewelry off including: rings, necklaces, earrings, watches and bracelets. Not only can jewelry be distracting to the judge, but it can be dangerous as rabbit's toenails can get caught up in it.

Girls please avoid bright nail polishes which attract attention to your hands. Make sure your nails are clipped and clean. Makeup, if worn, should be tasteful and non-distracting. Avoid

heavy perfumes or colognes. Gloves are not permitted, but sweat bands on the wrists to guard from scratches are allowed. No hats or sandals are allowed. Boots or tennis shoes, with the laces tied, are acceptable and encouraged. Show coats are permitted as long as they do not have the member's name or 4-H club name on them.

Make sure to change into showmanship clothes as close to the time of the judging round as possible to avoid getting them dirty. A clean presentation is given high points so make sure that your hands, face and clothing are clean.

### **Proper Behavior:**

The member should be confident, but not cocky. A bad attitude will result in the loss of many points. Also, copying what other people do is a big mistake and is the largest source of point deductions in showmanship.

Always answer questions in complete sentences. Never say "I don't know"; instead say something like "I'm sorry but I don't know that answer", which is more appropriate and polite. It is always better to try to answer the question if possible. A wrong answer can earn some points if the member can justify it. If a question is confusing, politely ask the judge if they can repeat or reword the question. Only speak when spoken to by the judge. If asked to show a part of the rabbit, quietly show it without speaking. Points will be docked from the member for telling the judge what is being shown or for reading out tattoo numbers. Be sure to listen carefully and to show exactly what the judge wants to see.

Your eyes are to be kept on the judge and your rabbit only. **Never watch the people around you!** There are several ways to perform some of the steps and the people that you are competing against may or may not be correct. Points will be heavily deducted for watching others.

Don't talk to your rabbit or pet it excessively when doing showmanship. If the rabbit begins to wander, just cover its eyes with one hand. It is always best to socialize a rabbit before fair by practicing with a radio on or with other people talking, so that your rabbit will be used to noise. Work around other rabbits if possible, so that your rabbit will not be distracted by other rabbits.

### **What the 4-H Member Will Need:**

1. Proper dress
2. A good, positive attitude
3. A clean carpet square on which the rabbit will sit (no towels)
4. Knowledge to answer questions
5. Willingness to learn
6. A clean, fully groomed rabbit

For showmanship itself, the member must develop a routine. A judge may or may not direct the showman as to what parts of the rabbit are to be shown. Below is a list of the items

that need to be shown during showmanship. There is no particular order. You must decide what you will show 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc. and follow that order every time that you do your showmanship.

1. Proper lifting and carrying of the rabbit
2. Four preliminary proper poses/standard position of the rabbit
3. Turning the rabbit over correctly
4. Eyes
5. Ears and tattoo(s)
6. Nose
7. Teeth (upper and lower incisors)
8. Body type (shoulders, rib spread, loin, hips and hindquarters)
9. Fur or wool
10. Front toenails (show all 5 toenails) and rear toenails (4 toenails)
11. Straightness of front and rear legs
12. Belly
13. Tail
14. Vent area / sex of rabbit
15. Hocks

The recommended procedure for showing or performing each of these items is as follows:

### **To the Rabbit Showman:**

The procedures in this guide outline various ways to perform showmanship. Please note that there may be more than one proper way to show a certain item and that it is important that you, the member, decide which way is easiest for you. The judge may or may not ask you to show something specific on the rabbit. Judging can be done individually or by age group depending on the judge's preferences. When there are only a few showman or the judge is having difficulty arriving at a decision, the showman may be asked to take part in a more intensified showmanship experience. This usually includes properly removing the rabbit from a cage, switching rabbits with another showman or answering more questions. All questions asked will come from basic 4-H knowledge and from the A.R.B.A. Standard of Perfection. Questions can be about any rabbit breed and may include definitions. It is very important to make sure that the member turns the rabbit so that the judge does not have to strain to see the actions of the showman. Most importantly, the member is to keep his or her eyes on only the judge and his or her rabbit. Don't watch the other showman.

### **To the Rabbit Showmanship Judge:**

The primary emphasis in rabbit showmanship is the ability of the showman to properly and safely present their rabbit project. The showman should maintain control of the rabbit during the entire judging in a manner which is appropriate. The rabbit should never be put in danger due to improper handling by the showman, nor should the showman show fear or be overpowered by the rabbit. When asking questions to test knowledge content, make sure to ask questions of similar difficulty to each showman. The questions used should be the procedure for correct handling and presentation given in this booklet **only**, in judging contestants in Douglas County.

During each round having all of the showmen show the desired item at the same time may speed up the judging process, but as the judge, you have the right to decide to judge each person separately. Also, as judge, you can personally handle any rabbit to check for cleanliness and grooming. In Douglas County, judging is done in small groups (usually two or three 4-H members at a time) and all members will be in the same age group.

### **Grooming the Rabbit for Showmanship:**

A member may use any of his or her rabbits for showmanship. The rabbit does not have to be purebred or show quality. It may possess one or more disqualifications. The rabbit needs to be free from all hutch stain on the hindquarters and belly. The feet should be as clean as possible. Toenails are to be clipped and ears to be free from wax or excess tattoo ink. Eyes need to be wiped out and fur/wool is to be as well kept as possible. Rabbits in molt should be brushed as much as possible to avoid flying hair. It is better to have bald patches than loose fur. Wool is to be completely free from mats and webbing. Vent area should be free from urine or feces. Rabbits can only be borrowed in hardship cases where the member's rabbit died prior to fair and only then, with the permission of the superintendent. Members with hardship cases can complete their rabbit project by competing in showmanship and turning in a record book along with other club members.

## **Performing Showmanship**

### **Entering and Posing the Rabbit:**

When called for their turn, the 4-H showmen will be asked to enter the judging area. No names are used in judging, only back numbers. Members will receive their back numbers at check in for the rabbit show. Make sure that your hair is not covering your back number. Each person should have complete control of their rabbit by using a firm grip and making sure that the hindquarters are supported at all times. Members enter holding their rabbit well supported, across their midsection, between the judge and themselves. The clean carpet square is held in the other hand. Remember to smile! As the member approaches the showmanship table, they will put down their carpet square, making sure to leave enough room for the other contestants. The rabbit is then to be posed properly for its breed, on the carpet square with its nose pointed to the contestants **left** (remember, this is the judge's right). This pose is referred to as "proper" or "standard" position and is the pose to which the rabbit is to be returned to after each maneuver is completed.

In posing most rabbits, the front feet should line up with the eyes and the rear feet are under the high point of the hip. The member should check the standard to see if this is the appropriate pose for his or her breed. Ears should be held erect for straight eared rabbits and one finger can be placed behind the base of the ears to ensure that they are standing upright.

For the lopped ear breeds, the ears need to have the opening facing their cheek, but not covering the eye. Special care is to be taken with English Lops.

If the judge calls for a “left” pose, pick the rabbit up completely off the carpet and place it in the position (left means the judge’s left, the contestant’s right). Just remember that whatever direction the judge calls for refers to their left or right. A front pose is with the rabbit facing the judge, head on, with ears in the proper placement. A rear pose places the rabbits’ tail end towards the judge. Make sure that the rabbit is not sitting on its tail. When finished posing, return the rabbit to the standard position. (Nose facing the showman’s left).

If the judge asks a contestant to move to a different spot, the rabbit should be picked up, kept between the judge and contestant, and moved to the new location. Don’t forget the carpet square. Immediately pose the rabbit, on the carpet square, in the standard position and make sure to watch the judge, not the other showmen. Smile.

### **Controlling the Rabbit:**

The 4-H member should be in complete control of their rabbit at all times. It should not dig at its carpet, fight with other rabbits or struggle with the owner. If the rabbit gets out of control or refuses to cooperate, it is essential that the member remain calm and not get upset or angry. Never, ever hit the rabbit! If any member is seen hitting his or her rabbit, they will be excused from the round and will receive a score of zero. It is important to keep the safety and welfare of the rabbit in mind at all times. If the rabbit gets out of control or starts to fight, take a deep breath before continuing. Try covering the rabbit’s eyes for a second to calm it down. Don’t talk to the rabbit or pet it excessively. The member will not lose many points if he or she remains calm when the rabbit gets out of control.

### **Showing the Ears:**

Both of the rabbit’s ears need to be shown to the judge. There are a couple of correct ways to do this. The first is to leave the rabbit on the table and open the ear closest to the judge wide so that the judge can see deep into the ear. The member needs to make sure that he or she is not bent over the rabbit so to block the view of the judge. Then, take the index finger of either hand and rub it in the ear from the base to the tip. Now rub the index finger and thumb together to show that the ear is clean. Pick the rabbit up and turn it around so that the other ear is facing the judge and repeat the above procedure. When both the left and right ears have been shown, replace the rabbit to the standard position.

The second correct way to show the ears uses all of the above steps but instead of the rabbit being flat on the table, it is held in the member’s arms. Both ears must again be shown and the rabbit placed in the standard position when finished.

The judge will count points off if the entire ear is not shown, the rabbit is not turned around to show the second ear, for dirty ear(s), if the member loses control of the rabbit or if the rabbit is not returned to the standard position.

### **Showing the Eyes:**

This can be done with the rabbit posed on the table, in the contestant's arms or turned over on its back. With the index finger and thumb of one hand, lightly open the eye. Tilt the rabbit's head slightly to check for spots, blindness or abnormalities in the eye. Using extreme care, lightly rub the index finger over the rabbit's closed eye and rub the index finger and thumb together to show that the eye is clean. Normally the rabbit will close its eye when fingers come at it so this step takes some practice. If the rabbit doesn't close its eye for the last part, gently blow at (not in) the eye to make it close. Turn the rabbit around and repeat the procedure for the second eye. Remember to return the rabbit to the standard position, even if it was turned over for this step.

The judge will deduct points for failure to show both eyes, losing control of the rabbit, for discharge in the eye(s) or if the rabbit is not returned to the standard position.

### **Showing the Nose:**

This must be done with the rabbit turned on its back. However, the rabbit may be held in the arms of the member or may be resting on the table. Turn the rabbit's head towards the judge so that he or she can easily see the nose. Using the index finger and thumb of either hand, rub the nose from the tip to the edges and rub the index finger and thumb together to show that the nasal area is clean. When finished, turn the rabbit back over and return it to the standard position.

The judge will deduct points for failure to show the nose, losing control of the rabbit, for discharge from the nose or if the rabbit is not returned to the standard position.

### **Showing the Teeth:**

This step must also be done with the rabbit turned on its back. Again, the rabbit may be held in the arms of the member or may be resting on the table. Turn the rabbit's head towards the judge so that he or she can easily see the mouth. Using the index finger and thumb of either hand, place the fingers on both the upper and lower lips, just below the rabbit's nostrils. Use the index finger and thumb to spread the lips back and reveal all four incisor (two on the top and two on the bottom) teeth at the same time. When finished, turn the rabbit back over and return it to the standard position.

The judge will deduct points for failure to show the four teeth at the same time, not completing the step in one attempt, losing control of the rabbit, if the rabbit bites or if the rabbit is not returned to the standard position.

### **Showing the Type:**

This must be done with the rabbit in the standard position. The member places the thumb of the right hand on the side of the rabbit's shoulders closest to them with the other four fingers



on the other side (closest to the judge). Starting at the shoulders, run the hand down the rabbit's back, over the ribs, loin and hindquarters, and down to the base of the tail.

The judge will take away points if the rabbit is bony or flabby, or if the rabbit flattens out or jumps around during type examination, and is not returned to the standard position.

### **Showing the Fur/Wool:**

The rabbit needs to be in the standard position for this part. With the right hand at the base of the rabbit's tail, stroke the fur up towards the head and show the hand to the judge. In rollback and flyback furred breeds, the fur will resume its natural position. Next, take the same hand and stroke the rabbit from the head to the tail and show the hand to the judge to show that the rabbit is free from molt. Since Rex type fur doesn't have flyback quality, pat the fur to show the density and let the fur come up between the fingers to show the length. On Angoras, fluff the wool back into its proper place after showing the lack of molt. On all breeds, blow into the fur to show the color and rings (which are present only if the rabbit is agouti patterned). When finished examining the fur/wool, make sure it is laying smooth (fur) or fluffed (wool) again.

The judge will take away points for a molting, matted, mite infested or dirty rabbit, failing to show color, if the coat is not back in place after showing the fur/wool, and if the rabbit is not returned to the standard position.

### **Showing the Front Legs and Toenails:**

After turning the rabbit over, the showman places the thumb of one hand into the center of the paw pad of one of the rabbit's front feet (the rabbit may be resting on the table or in the member's arms). Press gently and the nails will show. Using the index finger of the same hand, push back the fur/wool around the toes to show the nails. There are five nails on each front foot and all of them must be shown. Repeat for the other foot. To show the straightness of the front legs, extend the leg by gently pushing the arm upwards at the elbow joint. Or, if the member prefers, the leg can be straightened by lifting the leg upwards by pulling up on the foot. Repeat for other front leg. When finished, the rabbit must be returned to the standard position.

Points will be subtracted for failing to show all of the toenails, showing nails on only one foot, excessively long toenails, losing control of the rabbit, failing to show the straightness of both legs, crooked legs, stained foot pad(s), presence of sore hocks or failing to return the rabbit to the standard position.

### **Check the Body for Rupture and/or Abscesses:**

With the rabbit turned over and resting on the table, run either hand from the chest to the abdomen area to check for abscesses, tumors, a rupture or any other abnormalities. The rabbit must be returned to the standard position.

Points will be reduced for failing to check the rabbit thoroughly, the rabbit tensing up, problems controlling the rabbit, a dirty underside or failing to return the rabbit to the standard position.

### **Showing the Rear Legs and Toenails:**

The rabbit should be turned over and resting on the table. Nails are checked by using the index finger to push back fur/wool. Show all four nails on each rear foot. To show the straightness of the legs, use a cupped hand to gently push towards the feet, on the rabbit's knee joints. Point outstretched legs towards the judge. The rabbit must be returned to the standard position.

Points will be subtracted for failing to show all nails, showing nails on only one foot, excessively long toenails, losing control of the rabbit, failing to show the straightness of both legs, crooked legs, stained foot pad(s) or failing to return the rabbit to the standard position.

### **Showing the Hocks:**

The rabbit needs to be turned over and be facing the judge, either resting on the table or in the member's arms. Show the bottom (pad) side of the rear feet. Rub the pad area with either the thumb or index finger. Show finger to judge to show that hocks are clean. The rabbit must be returned to the standard position.

The judge will take away points for failing to show either or both hocks, losing control of the rabbit, dirty foot pads (if points were deducted when showing rear nails/legs, they will not be deducted again), the presence of sore hocks (must be open or inflamed, not merely bare) or failing to return the rabbit to the standard position.

### **Showing the Sex of the Rabbit or the Vent Area:**

With the rabbit turned over (on table or in arms of the member) and facing the judge, clamp the tail between the middle finger (on underside of tail) and the thumb (on base of tail below the vent area). Place the index finger on the raised fur area above the vent. Gently push the index finger towards the front of the rabbit to expose the sex. The rabbit must be returned to the standard position.

Points will be subtracted for losing control of the rabbit, failing to completely show the sex, vent diseases/dirty vent area or failing to return the rabbit to the standard position.

### **Showing the Tail:**

With the rabbit turned over resting on the table and facing the judge, clamp the tail between the index finger (on underside of tail) and the thumb (on base of tail below vent). Gently run your fingers down to the base of the tail showing that it is straight. When finished, turn the rabbit back over and place it in the standard position.

The judge will dock points for failing to show the tail, losing control of the rabbit, crooked or dirty tail or failing to return the rabbit to the standard position.

### **Turning the Rabbit Over:**

In order to turn the rabbit over, its head must be facing the 4-H member's stomach. Turning can be done with either the left or right hand. The following explanation is for right handed people (left handed people should just use the opposite hand as described). With the rabbit sitting on the table with its head facing the showman, place the thumb of the right hand in front of the ears, the index finger between the ears and the remaining fingers on the rabbit's shoulders. Wrap the left arm and hand around the side of the rabbit closest to that hand. Rest left hand on the rabbit's hindquarters. With a firm hold on the rabbit's ears, gently lift up on the head. At the same time as the rabbit is being lifted off the table, the member should use the left hand to bring the hindquarters towards them. Using a rolling motion, the right hand will pull the head away from the member as the left hand brings the hindquarters towards the member. A firm and secure hold on the ears is essential as is the support and control of the hindquarters. In order to turn the rabbit back over, reverse the process. Never just let go of the rabbit and let it flip over by itself. The rabbit can injure its back.

Points are taken away for turning the rabbit over when it is not facing the member, turning or lifting the rabbit by the scruff of the neck alone, losing control of the rabbit, not supporting the hindquarters, letting go of the ears, letting the rabbit turn back over on its own or turning in any manner which is unsafe for the rabbit or the showman. Then return the rabbit to the standard position.

### **Appearance and Attire of the Showman:**

This is worth 10% of the overall showmanship round. Proper dress has already been described. The judge will cut points for unclean apparel, no shoes, untied shoes, leaning on the table, chewing gum, unclean nails or nails that are distracting, heavy perfume or cologne, and long hair falling in the way of the rabbit. Points will also be taken for wearing jewelry, hats, jackets, shorts, short sleeved shirts, patterned shirts, shirts with the member's name of club on it, or gloves. If the carpet square being used is not clean, points will be deducted from the appearance score.

### **Actions:**

This section is also worth 10% of the overall score. Your actions should be carried out in a confident manner. The showman should be considerate of his or her animal, the judge and the other contestants. Strict attention should be paid to the judge at all times. Eye contact is very important as is a smiling, happy face. When answering questions, make sure that your voice is loud enough that the judge can hear but not so loud as to be distracting. Always use complete sentences.

The judge will lower points for being timid, if your voice is not loud enough to be easily heard, any awkward movements, endangering the rabbit or other contestants, rough handling of your rabbit, failure to follow instructions, talking or offering information not asked for, difficulty in performing any item, excessive petting of your rabbit, lack of eye contact with the judge, inappropriate tone of voice, lack of confidence, watching other contestants, failure to use complete sentences, talking to either the rabbit, other showman or adults, or becoming frustrated or angry. A showman will be dismissed from the round and a zero earned for cheating, hitting the rabbit or other contestants, or swearing.

### **Knowledge:**

This area is the final section for the judging, and is worth 10% of the total points. Each showman needs to be prepared to answer questions about rabbits in general in reference to the parts, terms, disqualifications, general rabbit or 4-H information and breed and variety characteristics of rabbits (the member should pay special attention to the breed that he or she raises). These questions will be taken from the A.R.B.A. Standard of Perfection as well as 4-H guide books and the fairbook. Questions will vary in their degree of difficulty depending on the age and experience level of the member. It is important to remember to use complete sentences and keep eye contact with the judge while answering the questions. A wrong answer may be given partial credit if the member can justify it.

The judge will subtract points for failure to answer questions, not using complete sentences, incorrect answers given, partial answers given, lack of eye contact, excessive hesitation in answering the questions, or answers which show lack of understanding of the question asked.

## PROPER SHOW ETIQUETTE

Believe it or not, how you behave when you are showing your rabbit can effect your placing. There are several things that you **must** remember when you show your rabbit(s) so that the judge likes judging your animals and your other competitors enjoy showing with you.

Showing your rabbits is very exciting, especially if it is your first show. It can also be confusing if you don't know what to do. No one can possibly know the "ins and outs" of rabbit shows if they have never been explained to them.

First, you need to know what to do to get ready for any show, including fair. For most shows, you fill out an entry form about two to four weeks before the show (for fair, these entries are filled out at one of the ID days). You need to take this entry very seriously. It must be filled out completely and accurately so that you don't mis-enter a rabbit. **Always make a copy of your entry or write down what you entered!** This way, you know for sure which rabbits you are supposed to bring. Nothing is more annoying to those who work behind the tables at shows than people who constantly come up and say, "what class is my rabbit entered in?" It is your responsibility to keep this straight. When you fill out your entry, expect to take the animals you listed. Sometimes things happen that you can not control, such as a rabbit pulling a toenail or injuring itself before a show. There are **substitutions** for such problems. A substitution can be made for a rabbit if you have another rabbit which is the same: breed, sex, variety and/or group, and age (not exact age, but same class like Jr., 6/8 or Sr.) as the one you won't be showing. For example, your Black Rex Sr. Buck ear number FIDO pulled two of his toenails the day before the show. You have his father BART who is also a Black Rex Sr. Buck which you can substitute for him. However, his sister WANDA the Castor Rex Sr. Doe, can not be used as a substitute since she does not meet the requirements for substitutions. If you are going to make a substitution, always write out the original rabbit information as it is seen on your entry along with the ear number of the substitute rabbit on a piece of notebook paper. Don't forget fur classes too. Include your name on this paper and give it to the show secretary **early** on the morning of the show so that the paper work can be changed. Do not ask to substitute a rabbit that is not eligible (does not meet the requirements) and do not give it to the secretary after the show has started. There is usually a specific time by which you must have your substitutions in by. Check your show catalog or fairbook for this information. Remember, in order to substitute a rabbit at fair, it must have been checked in at one of the ID days.

Always make sure to check in as soon after the check in time starts as possible. The county fair is the only show (except for big conventions) where you will have to check in your rabbits. By showing up early, you not only will get in on the good side of the people who are running the show (and like to get everything handled as quickly as possible), but you will not risk missing the time limit, and thus, not being able to show.

When you get to fair for the rabbit show, your rabbit **must** go through a health inspection by the rabbit superintendent, assistant superintendent or an official designated by the superintendent. **Absolutely no sick rabbits are allowed in the barn!** Any rabbit that is

deemed to be sick will need to be removed from the barn immediately. When you get to check in, you will see cages up on tables which open on the front and back sides. You will need to lift the door on your side of the table and put in your rabbit. If you bring your rabbit in a pet taxi, box or any carrying cage in which the rabbit can wet on itself, make sure it is **clean and dry before** you put it on the table. No one wants to touch a wet, dirty rabbit, especially who ever is checking its health. You now need to **politely** let someone behind the table know that your rabbit is ready to be checked when your turn comes. Don't scream or be rude to the people behind the table. Patience is greatly appreciated by all. Some times it gets chaotic with so many people wanting to check in their rabbits. That is why it is very important to get there early and beat the crowds. **ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.** Check the fairbook for specific check in times. If you personally can't be at check in for any reason, make sure to get someone (maybe a parent) to do it for you. Rabbits which are not checked in CANNOT be shown.

Cages at fair are pre-assigned. It is very important that you do not move them around. Maps are made up for the superintendent in case of emergency so that they know whose rabbits are where. After your check in, find your cage (there will be a tag on it with your name and the rabbit's class and ear number) and fill it with woodchips (provided). You will need to provide your own feeders, food, and waterers.

At the show you will see a judging order posted. This order will tell what breed will be judged first, second, third, etc. This list may or may not include the number of rabbits in each breed. When this is posted, it is considered **very rude** to ask a show official what time your rabbit will be judged. No one, including the judge, knows how long it will take to get to a particular breed. You can basically tell if your breed will be up right away or if you have some time. As a general rule, you should avoid getting in the way of or bothering the show officials. They are there to help you, but they do have a job to do too.

**Never** go behind the show table where the judge is unless you are asked to! The tables are set up where there is a judge's side and a shower's side. When you groom your rabbits, set your table up at least thirty feet from the show table (the further away, the better). This is for several reasons. First, you don't want to be in the way of people trying to get their rabbits to the table (within ten feet of the show tables are very high traffic areas). Second, since you spend so much time grooming your rabbits, you don't want all of the people up by the tables running their hands through your rabbit's fur/wool.

So, how do you know when your rabbit is supposed to be on the table? There is a person, called the table superintendent, who will call classes to the table. For example, he or she will yell out "Broken Mini Lop Sr. Bucks" or "All Mini Rex". When you hear the class that your rabbit belongs in called, you need to bring it up to the table. You are only given three calls. If your rabbit does not make it to the table in three calls, the class will be judged without your rabbit, and it **will not** be re-judged. Make sure you pay careful attention to the table calls. If you need to leave for any reason, tell someone where you will be so that they can come get you if your rabbit is called. You do not want to have the table superintendent have to call you by name to bring up your rabbit. Not only is this embarrassing, but it makes you look really bad and irresponsible for not paying attention.

When your class is called, bring your rabbit to the table and when it is your turn, tell the table superintendent your rabbit's ear number. Don't give them your name or the rabbit's name, only the ear number. It is very important at shows that you don't let anyone on the other side of the table know which rabbit is yours (with the exception of the table superintendent). You will be told in which hole (cage) to put your rabbit. Put your rabbit in the cage and step back from the table. **Do not pet or talk to your rabbit while it is on the table!** You should keep quite and wait for the judge. Don't say things like, "that's my rabbit" or "nice rabbit, huh?" You don't want the judge to know whose rabbit is whose to keep things fair. Don't make comments, good or bad anywhere near the judge. Kissing up to the judge is cheating and your rabbit could be disqualified for it. Also, saying bad things like, "this judge is slow" or "this judge doesn't know anything", even if it is true, can get you last place in a class. Keep your comments to yourself, but if you feel that you have to say something, go far away to do it. However, if you do have valid questions like, "what does that term mean?" or "how can that problem be corrected?" do this at big open shows). 4-H is about learning and most judges don't mind explaining themselves. But, questions like "why did I get last?" or "are you sure?" are **not** appropriate.

When the judge comes to your rabbit, he or she will take it out of the cage from their side and look over it. They may weigh it or compare it to others. Please keep quite while the judge is examining your rabbit. You may even catch them using coins or poker chips to mark rabbits in large classes. Don't ask about it; try to figure out their system on your own. When judges place a rabbit, they will read off the tattoo (ear) number to a person who is taking comments. Each rabbit has a comment card for each class. As the judge gives comments, the comment taker writes down as much as they possibly can. However, they can't get everything down, so you should listen closely. If your rabbit gets anything less than first place, it can be taken off the table once the judge returns it to the cage. A judge may switch the rabbit from cage to cage while judging. Don't remove it until after it has been placed. Don't hang on the cage of your rabbit or shuffle around to be right in front of its cage. Stay a couple of steps back until the judge starts to place the rabbits. Then, you can move up closer to hear the placings. Remove your rabbit from the table as quickly as possible after it has been judged so that people can bring up the next class. If your rabbit receives first in its breed class (fur, stewart and roaster classes excluded), it will need to stay up to compete for best of variety (for breeds with varieties). For example, your first placed Mini Lop Broken Sr. Doe will compete against the Broken Sr. Buck, Jr. Buck and Jr. Doe for best Broken Mini Lop. If you win best of variety or best opposite sex of variety, your rabbit has to stay up to compete for best of breed. Since this may be a little confusing at first, it is okay to ask if your rabbit needs to go back or stay, but ask politely.

When the show is over, it is always a nice gesture to thank the judge for judging. Don't forget to thank the people behind the table for all of their hard work. Many people don't realize how many endless hours of work go into preparing for a show. It always makes them feel better if they know they are appreciated. Better yet, write the superintendent a thank you note and send it to them!

While it's hard enough to make sure you are doing everything right, you need to keep your eye out for others who aren't exhibiting good show etiquette. You can always nicely

explain to a person what they are doing wrong and explain what the right way is. Good show etiquette makes the show more enjoyable for everyone.

### RABBIT SHOWMANSHIP SCORE CARD

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTESTANT # \_\_\_\_\_

1. Showing the Rabbit (70 points total)

- A. Lift/turn the rabbit (7) \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Show the ears (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Show the teeth (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Show the eyes (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Show the nose (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Show the front legs (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Show the front nails (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Check for abscesses/rupture (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Check rear legs and nails (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- J. Check hocks (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- K. Check the sex (6) \_\_\_\_\_
- L. Check the tail (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- M. Check the fur (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- N. Posing the rabbit (7) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Appearance, Actions and Knowledge of the Showman (30 points total)

- A. Appearance (10) \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Actions (10) \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Knowledge (10) \_\_\_\_\_

**Score** \_\_\_\_\_

**Placing** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hormel Ribbon** \_\_\_\_\_



