



4-H CAVY PROJECT



Did you know that a cavy is what we commonly know as a guinea pig? In the cavy project, you can learn about selecting and raising your animals, but also dive into health issues, management practices, and careers!

- Learn the basic principles of animal science by owning, caring for, and keeping records on one or more head of cavies.
- Explore knowledge of sound breeding, feeding, and management practices.
- Learn about the important breeds and varieties of cavies and their characteristics.
- Investigate marketing, project expansion, and how you can start a cavy business.

4-H THRIVE

Help Youth:

Light Their Spark

A spark is something youth are passionate about; it really fires them up and gives them joy and energy. Help youth find how this project excites them.

Flex Their Brain

The brain grows stronger when we try new things and master new skills. Encourage youth effort and persistence to help them reach higher levels of success.

Reach Their Goals

Help youth use the GPS system to achieve their goals.

Goal Selection: Choose one meaningful, realistic and demanding goal.

Pursue Strategies: Create a step-by-step plan to make daily choices that support your goal.

Shift Gears: Change strategies if you're having difficulties reaching your goal. Seek help from others. What are youth going to do when things get in their way?

Reflect

Ask project members how they can use their passion for this project to be more confident, competent and caring. Discuss ways they can use their skills to make a contribution in the community, improve their character or establish connections.

Starting Out *Beginner*

- Learn the different types of breeds and their ideal weight groups.
- Determine the use of your cavy projects.
- Develop a cavy care management plan.
- Identify cavy equipment and its uses.
- Locate and name parts of a cavy.
- Learn proper feeding techniques.
- Discover proper cavy showmanship steps.

Learning More *Intermediate*

- Learn to judge cavies and give oral reasons.
- Design a plan for preparing cavies for show.
- Learn proper grooming techniques.
- Learn proper techniques for ear tagging cavies.
- Learn about diseases and environment concerns.

Exploring Depth *Advanced*

- Learn about cavy breeding programs and genetics.
- Manage your caviary.
- Determine pregnancy and palpation techniques.
- Design a caviary.
- Identify bones on a skeleton.
- Evaluate cavy health.
- Complete a cavy pedigree and registration paper.
- Market your cavies to others.
- Expand your project into other areas.

The activities above are ideas to inspire further project development. This is not a complete list.



Expand Your Experiences!

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

- Research the nutritional needs of cavies and compare to nutritional needs of humans and other mammals.
- Explore the need for biosecurity measures when handling animals. Create a list of recommendations for competitive cavy events.

Healthy Living

- Discuss the benefits and practice of washing your hands before and after handling your cavy.
- Discuss your cavy's life expectancy, what to look for when they get older, and how you might feel when they die.
- Create a display or skit on rules for cavy safety.

Citizenship

- Share the resources from ARBA to promote awareness about cavies in your community.
- Bring your cavies as therapy for sick and disadvantage individuals.
- Become a pen pal, vlog, blog, or chat with someone who raises cavies in another part of the country.

Leadership

- Teach others the importance of caring for another animal.
- Become a role model for others by taking the position of Junior or Teen Leader.

Resources

- American Cavy Breeders Association
www.acbaonline.com/
- American Rabbit Breeders Association
www.arba.net/
- American Red Cross Pet First Aid/ CPR
www.redcross.org/pets
- Healthy pets
www.cdc.gov/healthypets
[/vetmed.illinois.edu/pet_columns](http://vetmed.illinois.edu/pet_columns)
www.avma.org/firstaid/procedures.asp
- California State Fair
www.bigfun.org

Connections & Events

Presentation Days – Share what you've learned with others through a presentation.

Field Days – 4-H members may participate in a variety of contests related to their project area.

County & State Fair - Enter your cavy or cavies and show the judge what you have learned in showmanship!

Contact your UC Cooperative Extension Office to determine opportunities available.

Curriculum

- [book] *Your Guinea Pig: A Kid's Guide to Raising and Showing*
- Official Guidebook to Raising Better Rabbits and Cavies
www.arba.net
- Rabbit (& Cavy) Learning Lab
[//ohio4h.org/books-and-resources/learning-lab-kits/rabbit](http://ohio4h.org/books-and-resources/learning-lab-kits/rabbit)
- Pet Curriculum
[//shop4-h.org/products/pet-curriculum-1-pet-pals](http://shop4-h.org/products/pet-curriculum-1-pet-pals)

4-H Record Book

4-H Record Books give members an opportunity to record events and reflect on their experiences. For each project, members document their experiences, learning and development.

4-H Record Books also teach members record management skills and encourage them to set goals and develop a plan to meet those goals.

To access the 4-H Record Book online, visit
<http://ucanr.edu/orb/>

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Publication 8603

ISBN-13: 978-1-62711-033-4

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An electronic copy of this publication can be found at the ANR Communication Services catalog website, <http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/>. This publication has been anonymously peer reviewed for technical accuracy by University of California scientists and other qualified professionals. This review process was managed by ANR Associate Editor for Human and Community–Youth Development Lynn Schmitt-McQuitty.

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