

2026 RABBIT & CAVY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Species Contact

Vacant

Important Dates & Info				
Registration	June 25, 2026	Show Rabbit Possession		N/A
Market Class	Possession Date	Age @ Fair	Minimum Weight	Maximum Weight
Fryer Class	July 1	77 days (max)	3 lbs.	6 lbs.
Roaster Class	July 1	77 days (max)	6.01 lbs.	No Max
Record Book Required for Market Youth ONLY	Saturday of Fair Week		Thank You Note Required for Market Youth ONLY	Saturday of Fair Week

Participating 4-H youth must abide by all general rules and regulations listed in the Manistee County 4-H Livestock Council's Policies & Procedures books. This includes, but is not limited to, the Code of Conducts, registration deadlines, showmanship and market requirements, record book and thank you letter requirements, etc.

Registration Requirements

- ❖ To participate in a 4-H Market Rabbit project, youth must be 4-H age eight (8) or older by January 1 of the calendar year AND completed the one year of Showmanship Only to be eligible for market.. **Cloverbud years DO count towards this requirement.**
- ❖ All 4-H Rabbit or Cavy Participants (Market, Show Only and Cloverbuds) MUST complete project registration with the Manistee 4-H Livestock Council by June 25 each year.
- ❖ Cavy (guinea pig) projects are SHOW ONLY.
- ❖ To participate in the 4-H Livestock shows and auction at the fair, youth must follow all registration requirements set forth by the Manistee 4-H Livestock Council.
- ❖ To participate in the 4-H Livestock Auction at the fair, youth must register and compete in the appropriate showmanship AND market classes.

Cloverbuds

- ❖ 4-H members who are 5-7 years of age (as of January 1st of the current year)
- ❖ Cloverbuds have their own showmanship class. It will be held on the same day as the other rabbit/cavy showmanship classes, and they will go last.
- ❖ Cloverbuds may bring their own rabbit/cavy to the fair OR they may choose to show someone else's rabbit/cavy
- ❖ Cloverbuds are not allowed to market their Rabbits or Cavies or enter breed classes.
- ❖ A parent, leader, or other adult must always be present when the Cloverbud is working with their rabbit or cavy, including in the show ring.

Cloverbuds are encouraged to complete and turn in the Cloverbud 4-H Record Book for their project for knowledge and experience.

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.

Animal Requirements

- ❖ Rabbit litters must be registered and tattooed before Fair Entry Day.
- ❖ Cavies do not require tattoos or tags; they DO require proof of origin/purchase.
- ❖ Rabbits/Cavies do not have to be born at the Exhibitor's home premises.
- ❖ **Market Pens are pens of 3 rabbits that fall within the age and weight requirements listed in the table above. They do NOT have to be the same sex.**

Fair Week Requirements:

1. General Requirements:

- Weigh-in takes place on the Monday of Fair Week
- Youth must be present or must have made prior arrangements with the species chair for someone else to weigh their animal.
- Protective boots or leather shoes are strongly recommended in the poultry/small animal barn.
- Youth are responsible for keeping their pens clean all week.
- A Rabbit Health Record must be filled out, signed, and presented to the 4-H Livestock Council to unload at the fair.
- If space allows, feed, feed bags, or supplies may be left in the barn in a Club supply stall. If space DOES NOT allow, everything must be stored at the campsite.

2. Animal Care Requirements:

- Youth are responsible for providing enough feed to care for their poultry throughout the entire week.
- Youth are responsible for feeding, watering, cleaning, and caring for their animal(s) the entire week.
- Water shall always remain full and fresh.
- Cavy Exhibitors will need to provide their own cages during Fair Week. Cages owned by Manistee 4-H Livestock Council are built for Rabbits, not Cavies.
- **Animals shall be treated humanely at all times. Any reports of unethical, inhumane, and/or abusive treatment or actions that cause distress and/or suffering to an animal will be evaluated immediately by a group consisting of at least one (1) 4-H Staff person and at least three (3) Livestock Council Members, with the possible inclusion of a Fair Board member, depending on the circumstances, and may lead to disqualification and removal from all 4-H and Open Livestock Shows held at the Fair.**

3. Show Day Policies:

- All members intending to sell an animal must also show that animal. Exhibitors may use a different show rabbit for Showmanship.
- To participate in any 4-H Market Class, a member must have first completed a year of 4-H "Showmanship Only" – that is, showing any species without selling it. Once that initial requirement is fulfilled, the member may market in any other year in their 4-H career. Any

year of participation in official Cloverbud Showmanship events also counts towards this requirement.

- All show apparel must be clean, properly fitted and free of design and advertisements. Clothing with Club names or personal names cannot be worn while showing.
- **Show Attire:** Members participating in rabbits/cavies **must** wear a white, button-down, long-sleeved shirt with black pants or jeans. A long white lab coat is also appropriate attire while showing (but not mandatory). Boots or clean, neat shoes should be worn.
- Many judges also pay attention to the member's personal grooming. It is strongly advised that members refrain from "loud" make-up. All members should make that the hair is neat and tied back if necessary. If hair obstructs the back tag, it must be put up.
- All animals will be judged by American Rabbit Breeders' Association (ARBA) standards
- NO bathing of rabbits or cavies is allowed at the fair
- All animals must have nails trimmed and be properly groomed before arriving at the fair.

4. Weather Conditions during Fair Week

- Cavies – If the weather is extremely cold or hot, all cavies **MUST** be taken to a home or camper during the night and returned to the barn the next morning
- The need for this will be determined by the species chair and 4-H Livestock Council
- Extreme Heat:
 - Frozen water bottles and cold tiles need to be provided by Exhibitors.
 - Bottles/Tiles can be placed in pens any time as needed and must be removed before barns close each day.
 - Youth are responsible for swapping their bottles/tiles as needed to keep their animals cool. The 4-H Livestock Council has a chest freezer on the Fairgrounds that is available for ALL 4-H Rabbit and Cavy participants to store/refreeze their bottles/tiles.
 - Youth need to clearly label their bottles/tiles to help prevent mix-ups or theft from the community freezer

5. Barn Decorations:

- Cages may not be altered in any way.
- Nothing may be permanently attached to the cages
- All decorations should allow for airflow through and around the entire cage.
- Any decorations hindering airflow will be removed.
- This includes solid material or large wooden signs placed on top of cages.
- If your rabbit is a biter, be sure to bring cage dividers.

6. Fair End Responsibilities:

- Completely clean and scrape down pens.
- Bars and the pen dividers need to be scrubbed and wiped down.

After Fair Requirements:

- ❖ All market Rabbit participants must turn in a completed 4-H record **book by the Saturday of Fair Week**. Electronic copies of a record book **will not** be accepted.

- ❖ A Thank You and 8x10 Auction photo must be given to your buyer. **Physical or photographic evidence of a Thank You Note having been sent to your buyer** must be provided to the Livestock Council by the Saturday of Fair Week.
- ❖ Notes that are physically submitted must be properly and correctly addressed to the appropriate buyer and bear sufficient postage. ENVELOPES MUST REMAIN UNSEALED and turned into the secure box on the Fairgrounds.
- ❖ Failure to submit a record book and/or thank you note will result in the members' participation status for the following Fair year to be suspended. If a record book and/or thank you note is not received by the November Livestock Council Meeting, the 4-H member will forfeit their participation in 4-H Livestock Show & Market for the following Fair year.

Resources

- Livestock Council's website: www.manistee4hlivestockcouncil.org
- Rabbit Resource Handbook for Breeding, Market and Pet Rabbit Projects, Ohio State University; 4-H Circular 228R
- Rabbit Learning Lab Kit, Ohio State University – owned by Grand Traverse County MSU Extension, can be borrowed with proper notice
- Resources and educational workshops offered by MSU Extension/4-H