

2026 Rabbit Guidelines

Rabbit Committee

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Rabbit Projects: 228BR Breeding Rabbit (includes Breed Rabbit and Doe and Litter projects)
228M Market Rabbit Project (includes Fryer, Meat Pen, and Roaster project)
228PR Pet Rabbit Project (**DOES NOT EXHIBIT AT FAIR**)
228R Rabbit Resource Handbook for Market Rabbit, Breeding Rabbit, and Pet Rabbit Projects (REQUIRED)

Market Rabbit Weigh-In: Tuesday, September 1, at check-in – Barn #35

Market Rabbit Judging: Wednesday, September 2, 9:00am Barn #35

Rabbit Doe & Litter Judging: Wednesday, September 2 (To follow Market Rabbit judging) - Barn #35

Market Rabbit Sale: Thursday, September 3, 5:30 PM – Event Center (following Goat Fudge Sale)

Rabbit Breed Judging: Saturday, September 5, 8:00 AM – Event Center

Rabbit Showmanship: Saturday, September 5 (To follow Breed Judging) - Event Center

Wee Ones Show: Saturday, September 5, 6:00 p.m. Event Center

Rabbit Costume Class: Monday, September 7, 11:00 a.m. (To follow Pocket Pets) Barn #35

*** Mahoning County Junior Fair Rabbit Committee youth shows are judged by judges who are officially licensed by the American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA) and thus, shows must be held according to ARBA standards.**

1. **Membership:**

- A. Open to any Mahoning County youth aged 8 and in the third grade to 18 years old, inclusive on January 1 of the current year. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the committee.
- B. Members must be enrolled in their youth organization by March 15, 2026.
- C. Member must be enrolled with the Rabbit Committee by April 7, 2026.
- D. To exhibit in the Junior Fair, members must submit an Entry Form by August 1, 2026.

2. **General Project Requirements:**

- A. Mandatory – Member taking the rabbit project must attend one registration meeting and one health check/tattoo clinic to be able to participate at the fair.
- B. Previously tattooed projects must be registered at a tattoo clinic of the current year.
- C. All Rabbit Club members and at least one parent/guardian taking a rabbit project must attend one of the following: Mandatory Meeting, February 18, 2026, or the Meet the Committee session at the Mahoning County Quality Assurance Program, March 28, 2026, to exhibit and show rabbits in the Junior Fair Rabbit Show.
- D. If members are unable to attend these dates, they may attend a make-up meeting April 8, 2026, prior to the scheduled county rabbit meeting.
- E. All Rabbit Club members taking market rabbits and at least one parent/guardian must attend the Mahoning County Quality Assurance Program or fulfill the optional requirements for Quality Assurance to exhibit in the Junior Fair Show. The member will receive a Quality Assurance Certificate for proof that this program has been completed.
- F. Small and Exotic Interview judging/Rabbit Skillathon is mandatory. Skillathon will be June 23, 2026, at the Event Center. Rabbit participants will participate & compete for placing in the Rabbit Skillathon.
- G. The Skillathon make-up is August 22, 2026, at Barn 35. This make-up is written, and only a participation ribbon will be given for this make-up.
- H. Each exhibitor shall be responsible for the continuous care, grooming, and preparation of their animal(s) prior to and during the 2026 Mahoning County Fair and to comply with the “Exhibitor Only” policy, which encourages youth to be the primary individual responsible for their project animal(s).
- I. Animal(s) are to be removed from cage **only** by the member, a family member, the member’s advisor, a club member designated by the member, a committee member, or Junior Fair Management. Unauthorized removal of an animal by another member, parent, or advisor will be subject to disciplinary action.
- J. No padlocks or likewise are permitted on cages. Committee will remove any locking device found on a cage.
- K. Project Book Requirements:
 - Breed Rabbit: Book #228 (Rabbit Project and Record Book) Complete this required project book every year a breed rabbit project is taken. Use in conjunction with the 228R Rabbit Resource Handbook.
 - Doe and Litter: Mahoning County Junior Fair Doe and Litter Record Book (provided by committee) Complete this required project book every year a doe and litter project is taken. Use in conjunction with the 228R Rabbit Resource Handbook.
 - Market Rabbit: Mahoning County Junior Fair Market Rabbit Record Book (provided by committee) Complete this required project book every year a market rabbit project is taken. One book covers all three market projects (fryer, meat pen, and roaster). Use in conjunction with the 228R Rabbit Resource Handbook.

- Pet Rabbit: Book #228 (Rabbit Project and Record Book) Complete this required project book every year a pet rabbit project is taken. Use in conjunction with the 228R Rabbit Resource Handbook. This project is intended for 4-H members whose rabbits, like a dog or cat, are intended to be their companions. This project is not intended for members who plan to breed rabbits or show at fair.
- Book #228R (Rabbit Resource Handbook for Market Rabbit, Breeding Rabbit, and Pet Rabbit) Required for all projects. (Order only once and use for several years)

3. Exhibition Requirements:

- All members must follow the General Junior Fair Guidelines, Small and Exotic Animal Guidelines and General Market Livestock Guidelines.
- No animal projects will be permitted on the fairgrounds or in the Rabbit Barn without a health check on Entry Day.
- Exhibitors must be present during breed judging, or the project will be considered incomplete, **unless arrangements were made prior to judging.**
- No pregnant animals are permitted at the fair.
- Members are responsible for his/her animals. Failure to comply with this rule will result in consequences listed in the "Exhibitor Only Policy" and will result in losing premium.
- No animal may be removed from the Livestock Area by an exhibitor after 8:00 PM Entry Day through 9:00 PM Monday, unless approved by the Rabbit Committee or Fair Vet.
- Each exhibitor, as an individual, may register back-up animal(s). **No club back-up rabbits may be registered.**
- Members will be responsible for cleaning their own pens.** See the General Junior Fair Guidelines for After Fair Clean – Up Policy.
- No personal scales shall be in the junior fair area during check-in and for the duration of the junior fair show. The only scales permitted in this area will be the junior fair official certified scale and the scale to be used by the rabbit committee. After 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday of the fair, the only scale to be used will be the junior fair official certified scale. **The weights recorded by this scale and the weighmaster will be final.**

4. Selling and Showing:

- Dress Code (During show, showmanship, and sale night):
 - Long sleeve white shirt or white lab coat (during breed judging and showmanship), nice long pants, clean comfortable shoes (no sandals or open toed shoes).
 - No jewelry (post earrings are permitted), no rings, no necklaces, and no bracelets are permitted.
 - No gum.**
 - Sale Night: Club logos are permitted. Clean conservative clothing and clean comfortable shoes (no sandals or open toed shoes are permitted).
 - Show/Sale Attire: All exhibitors are required to wear appropriate dress for both handling and showing of animals. For safety reasons, all youth must wear closed toe shoes/boots and jeans. As we are in the public view, dress code while working with animals should be reflective of the agricultural industry. During weigh-in, the show, and the sale, exhibitors are expected to dress in their best jeans/show pants, Market Livestock shirt for weight classes; and/or Market Livestock shirt, clean t-shirt or collared shirt, or nice button show shirt; closed toe shoes/boots. No casual footwear such as sneakers, sandals, flip-flops, or rubber barn boots may be worn in the show ring. Low cut shirts, tank tops, torn clothing, novelty t-shirts, cut-offs, low cut jeans, and like-style clothing will not be tolerated and will not be considered appropriate show attire. Exhibitors dressed in such clothing shall not be permitted to enter the show/sale ring.
 - All youth will be provided with a market livestock club shirt by the Junior Fair. This t-shirt will be required attire in each market class. This t-shirt will not be required in showmanship or during the sale.
 - No individual club shirts may be worn to show Market Livestock. Individual club shirts may be worn during the sale.
- Rabbits in poor condition shall not be shown or sold at the fair. Any exceptions must be approved by the committee.
- Members must show and sell their own project animals. Exceptions will only be made for exhibitors who have submitted and received permission from the Rabbit Committee. Substitute exhibitors must be 8 and in the third grade, through 18 years old as of January 1, and must be a current 4-H member enrolled with a rabbit project.
- No market animals can be used for showmanship.
- Animals tagged/tattooed to be shown at the Mahoning County Junior Fair may not have been exhibited in any other **county** Junior Fair Show.

Breed Rabbit Guidelines

- Member must have rabbit(s) in their possession by May 15.
- Member may register up to four rabbits.
- No club back-up rabbits may be registered.
- First-year members may take one breed rabbit to fair.
- After their first year, members may take two breed rabbit projects at fair **if space permits.** The rabbits must be in different classes (e.g., one sr. buck and one sr. doe of the same breed; one senior buck and one senior doe of the same breed; two sr. does of different breeds). Members will be notified one week before fair if they will be permitted two breed rabbits or not.

6. Members must complete Project Book #228. This book must be brought to Skillathon to be checked by a committee member. Books should be as complete as possible for the stage of the project in June.
7. Breed rabbits must be four months old by entry day of fair.
8. Rabbits used in a doe & litter project or market project are not allowed to be used as a breed rabbit or showmanship rabbit.
9. Breed rabbits must be registered, tattooed, and health checked at one of the first three mandatory tattoo clinics. If the rabbit for a breed rabbit project is already tattooed, it must still be registered and health checked at one of the first three mandatory tattoo clinics.
10. Any breed is allowed for the breed rabbit project. Purebred rabbits are highly recommended (due to ARBA breed standards), but not mandatory. Mixed Breed rabbits will be shown in the utility class and are not permitted to complete for Grand or Reserve Champion Breed Rabbit.
11. Rabbits that have been altered (spayed or neutered) will be shown in the utility class and are not permitted to complete for Grand or Reserve Champion Breed Rabbit.

Doe & Litter Guidelines

* **The purpose of the Doe and Litter Project is to promote the breeding of purebred rabbits that meet ARBA standards.**

1. All members taking the Doe & Litter project must have completed one year in the breed rabbit project. Members must currently be enrolled in the project #228 and exhibiting a breed rabbit at the fair.
2. Only purebred brood does are acceptable in the doe & litter project. Purebred brood does must meet the breed standards according to the ARBA and must be bred to a purebred buck of the same breed.
3. Brood doe(s) must be in member's possession by May 15.
4. Doe(s) used for breeding must be **registered at one of the first two tattoo clinics.**
5. Three does may be registered at these clinics, but only one doe and litter will be exhibited at the fair.
6. Litter(s) must be registered, tattooed, and health checked, and doe(s) must accompany litter and be re-health checked at the last tattoo clinic.
7. The litter must be between the ages of 6 to 8 weeks old on entry day of the fair.
8. All babies should be out of the nest box by fair time. No nest boxes will be permitted at the fair.
9. Doe and Litter projects are to be in good condition to be exhibited. Condition reflects the care and management practices of the breeder. All animals are to have a definite appearance of health and vigor. They are to be bold and bright of eye. All animals are to have good coat. They are to be firm in flesh covering, neither too fat, with soft, flabby flesh, nor too thin in flesh, creating a bony effect when examined.
10. Member's brood doe(s) must not be used as your Breed Rabbit project.
11. All members taking a doe and litter project are required to submit a **completed Mahoning County Junior Fair Doe and Litter Record Book.** These books must be **submitted to the Rabbit Committee in Barn #35 at the time of check in (by 8:00 pm).**
12. **Record books will be made available to the judge at the time of judging. If a record book is not submitted at check in, the project will not be judged.**
13. Members who submit a properly completed doe and litter project book, along with all the required supplemental materials, will be allowed to advertise their doe and litter project kits as "for sale." No rabbits may leave the barn before 9:00 pm on Monday of the fair, unless an alternate release time is announced by the Senior Fair Board. Members are required to take home all rabbits after fair for a quarantine period of at least one week before letting kits go to new homes.
14. Committee members and the Junior Fair are not responsible for any transactions or sales. All communications and transactions are the member's responsibility.

Market Rabbit Guidelines

RABBIT MEAT PEN

1. Meat pens must consist of three rabbits of the same breed and variety.
2. If one rabbit in the pen weighs more than 5½ lbs. or less than 3 ½ lbs., then the pen will be disqualified.
3. If the judge disqualifies any one rabbit in the pen, the entire pen is disqualified.
4. A total of six rabbits may be registered at a scheduled clinic: however, only three rabbits may be shown at the fair.

RABBIT FRYER

1. Fryer project will consist of one animal per pen.
2. Fryer rabbits weighing more than 5½ lbs. or less than 3½ lbs. will be disqualified.
3. A total of three rabbits may be registered at the scheduled clinic; however, only one rabbit may be shown at the fair.

RABBIT ROASTER

1. Roaster project will consist of one animal per pen.
2. Roaster rabbits weighing more than 9 lbs. or less than 5 ½ lbs. will be disqualified.
3. A total of three rabbits may be registered at the scheduled clinic: however, only one rabbit may be shown at the fair.

1. A member may take one meat pen project, one fryer project, and one roaster project if desired.
2. **All market rabbit projects are terminal**, and all will be processed by a designated processor voted on by the Small & Exotic Animal Committee. This will be announced prior to the auction.

3. Members must be enrolled in project number 228M (Market Rabbit).
4. Meat pens & fryers should be 60-90 days old on entry day. Roasters should be 90-150 days old on entry day.
5. All meat pens and single fryers must be bred by the exhibitor. The doe(s) must be in the member's possession by May 15. Members may register up to three does at one of the first two tattoo clinics.
6. Roasters may be purchased by the exhibitor rather than bred by the exhibitor. If purchased, roasters must be in exhibitor's possession a minimum of 60 days prior to entry day.
7. All rabbits will be weighed on entry day at the time of check-in in Barn #35.
8. Weights will be available to the judge at the time of judging.
9. All roasters **must be registered, tattooed, and health checked** at the third tattoo clinic for identification purposes. The Rabbit Committee will designate ear numbers for all market rabbits.
10. All fryers and meat pens **must be registered, tattooed, and health checked** at the final tattoo clinic for identification purposes. The Rabbit Committee will designate ear numbers for all market rabbits.
11. Fryer and meat pen does must accompany their litter at the final tattoo clinic.
12. Final market rabbits must be brought to Barn #35 during Junior Fair Check-in for final health check & registration for the Junior Fair Show.
13. **Market Rabbit projects are terminal.** All qualifying entries must be sold at the fair auction.
14. Meat pens with any rabbits under 3 ½ lbs., a roaster under 5 ½ lbs., or a single fryer under 3 ½ lbs. will not sell at the auction; all other disqualified entries may be sold at the end of the auction, in non-placed order. **Rabbits or meat pens underweight will be sent home immediately from the weighing station.**
15. All members must be present by cage 30 minutes before sale begins. Members not present at start of sale, without prior approval of rabbit committee, will not sell or be permitted to take a rabbit market project the following year.
16. All members taking a market rabbit project are required to submit a **completed Mahoning County Junior Fair Market Rabbit Record Book**. These books must be submitted **Sunday of the fair between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. to the Rabbit Committee in Barn #35.**
17. Members must write a thank you note to the buyer of each animal. The committee will provide thank you notes and the postage.
18. Buyers will pick up their rabbit purchases Tuesday after fair at a time specified by the committee.

CLEAN AREA AWARDS WILL BE PRESENTED TO YOUTH MAINTAINING A CLEAN PEN, CLEAN AREA AROUND THE PEN, FRESH CLEAN WATER PROVIDED, & ANIMAL KEPT CLEAN IN APPEARANCE.