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 caviaries.
- Explore knowledge of sound breeding, feeding, and management practices.
- Investigate marketing, project expansion, and how you can start a cavy business.

### 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 caviaries and give oral reasons.
- Design a plan for preparing caviaries for show.
- Learn proper grooming techniques.
- Learn proper techniques for ear tagging caviaries.
- 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 caviaries to others.
- Expand your project into other areas.

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

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### 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.
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 column
  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
- Pet Curriculum
  //shop4-h.org/products/pet-curriculum-1-pet-pals

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/

University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

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