Nest Boxes

- Rabbit raisers use many types of nest (kindling) boxes for baby rabbits. Among them are apple boxes and nail kegs that have been modified. However, the present trend is away from modified nest boxes to those that can be bought or to kinds that are built at home by the breeder. A good design takes into consideration size and shape, warmth, ventilation and sanitation.

- The size of the nest box may vary, depending upon the breed you are raising. As a rule-of-thumb, provide a nest box about 10 inches high by 10 inches wide by 14 inches long for small breeds like the Dutch. For larger breeds like the New Zealand provide an area about 14 inches high by 12 inches wide by 18 inches long. Remember, it is best to provide a ramp as part of the box since it permits young rabbits to return more easily to the nest, reducing mortality (death losses) during freezing weather.

- You can make nest boxes from wood. Or you can buy the throwaway kind. You can also buy all-metal nest boxes with wooden floors.

- A nest box 18 inches long and 12 inches wide and at least 12 inches high is a size that is generally recommended. One end should be full height and the other should have an opening at least 10 inches wide and 6 to 8 inches from the floor. Through this opening the doe enters and leaves the box. You can tack a board across the back of the box to form a top and something to hold on to when you take the box out of the hutch. If you want a lid over the entire box in very cold weather, be sure to leave some open space in the back for ventilation and add three inches to the height of the box.

- Place the box so that the opening is not facing the front of the hutch. It is best to put it beside the back wall. In cold weather, place a piece of good insulation board under the nest box. This protects the litter against chilling when the rabbits burrow down to the floor of the box.

all about feeding and watering equipment

Once you have your hutches, start thinking about what you need to feed and water your rabbits.

Feeders

You may want to build your own feeders. However, remember that wooden feed hoppers are not recommended because rabbits chew on them. All metal feeders are better, either made from a can or purchased. The kind that you buy — gravity flow feed hoppers with small openings in the bottom — are best.

- Any feeder — homemade or purchased — should have a screened bottom or have many 1/4 inch holes in the bottom to allow fines (very small food particles) to sift out. Accumulations of feed dust in the feeder may cause respiratory irritations leading to unhealthy rabbits with sinus ailments.

- Once you are experienced with rabbits, you may want to use self-feeders, mounted to the side of the cage about 2 inches above the floor. These reduce the time needed for rabbits to feed and also reduce feed wastage, especially with young rabbits. Young rabbits tend to hop into the feeder when they eat and foul it with their droppings.

Water Containers

Automatic-type watering systems are best. In the winter you must protect them from freezing by using inside water line heat tape. Aluminum pans or crocks are probably best for year round use if you have a very small rabbit herd.
Feeding

You must feed your rabbits properly to get top returns from them. Rabbits need a well-balanced ration that meets their nutritional needs and tastes good. They are herbivorous which means they like to eat plant material. Rabbits do not like feeds that contain animal products.

A good rabbit ration must supply the proper amounts of protein, energy, minerals and vitamins. Almost all feeds contain each of these nutrients. Some feeds, however, are high in one nutrient and low in another. For example, corn is high in energy and low in protein, while soybean oil meal is high in protein and low in energy. The ideal ration is the one that supplies the proper balance and amount of each nutrient at a minimum cost.

Remember these things when you are feeding your rabbits:

- You can feed good, clean, cured, leafy hay to rabbits daily.
- Do not feed young rabbits cabbage or lettuce. It causes diarrhea and/or scours.
- Use about four ounces of a feed with at least 16 percent protein each day to keep rabbits in good shape.
- A doe with a litter needs all the feed she will eat.
- You can lower feed costs by feeding some good, clean hay and oats.
- Use some suitable sized container to measure your feed.
- You should get a booklet on feeding rabbits from one or more feed companies. They have good suggestions on what to feed rabbits at different weights and ages. These books tell about different rations and their proper uses.

A regular feeding schedule is important. Try to feed at about the same hour each day. Some breeders feed night and morning; others feed just the does with litters in the morning and then feed all rabbits, including the does with litters, at night.
Salt and Water
Commercially prepared feed pellets contain salt. However, if you prepare your own ration, you need to provide salt in a free choice form. You can do this by supplying each hutch with a salt spool that your rabbit can lick any time he wants. If you use salt spools, be sure to keep them away from the cage wiring because the salt can cause rusting.

Have fresh, clean water in front of your rabbits at all times. Clean all water bowls every day. Rabbits that eat dry rations need a lot of water. During the winter, give rabbits water twice a day. During warm weather, a doe and her litter will drink about one gallon of water each day. Water your rabbits several times a day during the summer. Crock's and secured coffee cans make good water containers.

Mating
You can breed most rabbits when they reach 6 or 7 months. You must separate and individually house rabbits at least 18 days before breeding. Since the doe objects to having another rabbit in her hutch, take her to the buck's hutch. Usually mating occurs immediately, after which the buck falls over on his side. Return the doe to her hutch immediately. Five to eight hours later, breed the doe a second time to insure maximum litter size.

One of the best symptoms that the doe is bred is her continual moving of the bedding on her hutch floor, especially clawing it from the back corners of the hutch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breed In</th>
<th>Pre-Jr. Meat Pen</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>6-8</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The normal length of gestation (pregnancy) for a doe is 31 days. Occasionally, a doe does not become bred, even though it seemed that a normal mating occurred. Therefore, 18 days after mating, return the doe to the buck for "testing." If she is pregnant, she will run from the buck and actively resist him.

**Kindling**

The birth process in rabbits is called "kindling." The care of the doe at this time is important. The young are usually born 30 to 34 days after the mating of the buck and the doe.

About three days before kindling time, the doe may begin to carry straw in her mouth. This is a good sign. Give her a nest box immediately. **Never** leave the nest box out of the hutch later than the third day before the doe is to kindle.

In fact, plan to put the nest box in the hutch on the 27th day after breeding. If the doe does not give birth, remove the box on the 34th day and rebreed her. If the doe does not become bred the second time, think about disposing of her.

When you put the nest box in the hutch, be sure it has a small amount of straw pressed in the bottom. Place a large handful of good, clean straw in the hutch. The doe will carry this material into the nest box and prepare her nest. It is best to let her handle the birth as much as possible. After the babies are born, the doe will cover the nest with fur.

During kindling, the doe is usually thirstier than usual. She should have a good supply of water. If a doe does not have enough water at this time, she may even kill her babies or desert them soon after birth.

Check the nest daily and remove any dead. Only the person caring for the rabbits should check the nest. Otherwise, the odor of a strange hand in her nest may upset the doe and she may not pay proper attention to the babies. If this happens, some of the babies may die.

The day the doe kindles, cut her feed down to almost nothing. Gradually return to the regular amount of feed by the third day. Then, at the end of the first week, begin increasing her feed slightly until you double her regular ration. If she begins getting too thin, give her slightly more, but be careful. Always keep clean, fresh water in front of a doe with a litter. During the winter months it is a good idea to use lukewarm water — just lukewarm, not warmer. Rabbits drink more water when it is lukewarm than they do when it is ice cold. This helps produce more milk for nursing the litter.

When you check the litter, remove the nest box from the hutch so that the doe cannot see you looking at the babies. Be sure not to handle other rabbits immediately before handling these babies. If there are more than five or six babies, you need to do some culling. If there are some good show specimens, it is wise to cut the litter to four or five babies. Culling gives the remaining rabbits an extra start. And you have unusually nice development by the time you show them.

Do not be too disappointed if you have a litter with no outstanding specimen. The very best parents sometimes produce just a plain "meat litter." However, keep this in mind when you make your next mating.

After checking the litter, return the nest box to the hutch.

**Weaning**

Leave the doe in the hutch where she kindled until the babies are coming out of the nest box regularly. If she refuses to go into the nest box after you have moved it out to check the litter, don't worry. The babies will come to the doe for nursing. It is better to leave them unmolested until they are old enough to wean. If there is an outstanding baby in the litter, leave it in the original hutch as long as possible, even after you have weaned the rest.
Do not wean the litter until the babies are at least eight weeks old. Some people prefer to breed the doe on the fifty-sixth day after kindling and then leave her with the litter another week. If you do this, you can be sure that the doe has stopped her milk supply, thus preventing caked nipples.

If you separate the doe from the litter without putting the babies in individual hutches immediately, be sure it is the doe you move. Babies go longer without fighting if they stay in their original hutch than if you move them to new quarters. You can seldom leave bucks together more than two months if the mother is not with them. Occasionally two or three does will get along in a large hutch until they are almost six months old, but don’t count on it.

**Re-breeding the Doe**

Success in the rabbit business requires that the doe not only produce large litters of rapid gaining rabbits but that she produce four to five litters a year. Most rabbit raisers re-breed the doe 56 days (eight weeks) after kindling.

It is absolutely essential that you tattoo any rabbits you are raising. Tattooing is the acceptable method for keeping accurate breeding information. Keep your herd book up-to-date and record all identification marks of the offspring against the actual sire and dam. Be accurate and truthful with all pedigree records.

Place the permanent identification tattoo mark in the left ear of the young rabbit. At the same time, make out pedigrees for all you plan to keep. Do this while the bunnies are still with their mothers.

The rabbit’s right ear is reserved for use by an official A.R.B.A. registrar who places a permanent tattoo number in the right ear if the individual rabbit merits registry. Merit is determined in accordance with the A.R.B.A. Standard of Perfection for rabbits, published by the American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc.

When tattooing a rabbit, you can hold it on a training table. However, the rabbit will struggle to get away. It is best to keep the rabbit quiet by using a box especially designed to hold rabbits. In this kind of box, the compartment for the rabbit is adjustable and holds rabbits of various sizes. See Figure 7.

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Figure 7
how to have healthy rabbits

Rabbits are healthy normally. A good experience with rabbits depends upon their continued good health. Disease is often the reason a rabbit enterprise fails. Infectious disease results from either of two causes or sometimes a combination of both.

- A large invasion of disease organisms greater than the animal can fight off. These include mites, bacteria and viruses.
- A decrease in the ability of the animal to fight off invading disease organisms.

To prevent the buildup of large numbers of disease organisms, practice proper sanitation. Clean hutches, feeding dishes and nest boxes thoroughly after you wean each litter. Use hot, soapy water and a scrub brush. Periodically brush a household bleach or disinfectant on the inside of the wooden hutches.

Guard against the introduction of disease into a herd, especially when you buy new animals. It is a good idea to have an extra hutch where you can isolate new animals from the remainder of the herd until you are certain that they are free from disease.

Disease can also come from using old hutches or nest boxes discarded by breeders who are no longer raising rabbits. It is better not to use equipment from such sources.

Young rabbits are more susceptible than mature rabbits to disease caused by environmental stress. Rabbits can tolerate low temperatures and excessive cold, but wet and drafty conditions can weaken their resistance to disease organisms.

raising the young

The objective of successful rabbit production is to raise a litter that averages about 4 pounds per rabbit (3 to 3½ pounds for smaller breeds such as the Dutch) at the weaning age of 8 weeks. Newborn rabbits grow on their mother’s milk alone for about the first three weeks. Then, in order for the rabbits to grow rapidly, they must have access to feed and water at all times when they leave the nest box and start to feed with their mothers. This happens at about three weeks, until the time you market them. Because rabbits inherit growth and carcass muscling characteristics, it is important to select good parent stock if you are to get maximum profit from the sale of your rabbits.

If you plan to sell any of these young rabbits, be sure to check each animal carefully and represent him truthfully to your prospective buyer. Do not sell rabbits until they are at least two months old. Then the transfer from your rabbitry to that of the new owner is likely to be more successful. Always indicate the kind of feed you use and your feeding program so that if it is not the same as the new owner’s he can make the change gradually.
Place hutch es where cold rains will not blow in, chilling the rabbits. Face them south for the best protection. Baby rabbits may develop infected eyes if they are exposed to rain. Often an eye ointment that contains an antibiotic used in human eye treatment works satisfactorily.

It seldom pays to treat disease in rabbits. It is better to sacrifice a sick animal and prevent infection of the entire herd than to attempt lengthy or costly treatment. However, when signs of continued illness develop, you may want to check with your local veterinarian.

**Careful Sanitation**
One of the best ways to protect against disease and parasites is to follow a careful sanitation program. It takes less money to prevent an outbreak of disease than to try to get rid of disease once it is in the rabbitry.

These simple rules of sanitation help keep the herd free from disease and infection:

- Never loan bucks to other rabbit breeders.
- Isolate new rabbits or those returning from shows.
- Quickly get rid of rabbits that die. If you suspect disease, disinfect all equipment thoroughly. Burn the droppings and bedding of sick animals.
- Clean cages regularly and keep droppings and moisture from collecting.
- Disinfect feed and water bowls regularly.
- When loose hair on cages and other equipment becomes a problem, burn the hair off with a gas torch. Move the flame quickly so that the wire will not get red hot. This rapid burning of hair does not kill the disease organisms, so you also need to sanitize the equipment. **Remove any rabbits before burning.**
- Always make sure that the nest box is as clean as possible. After scrubbing it with soap and water, disinfect it and set it in the sun to dry.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Treatment*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abscesses</td>
<td>Bacterial infection.</td>
<td>Enlargements under skin near jaw. Can occur on other parts of body where there are wounds or scratches.</td>
<td>Minimize fighting. Eliminate sharp objects that can injure the rabbit.</td>
<td>Clip the fur around abscesses, then lance and remove the pus. Disinfect with peroxide and use an approved antibiotic ointment or powder to promote healing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caked Mammary Gland</td>
<td>Milk production is in excess of utilization. Too few young or the young are not nursing.</td>
<td>One or more of the mammary glands may become swollen, hot and firm. Often mistaken for mastitis.</td>
<td>Reduce ration by one-half the day the doe kindles and gradually increase to full feed in 7 days.</td>
<td>Relieve some congestion by partial milking. Massage gland with an anti-inflammatory ointment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocciidiosis</td>
<td>Five different species of protozoa (one celled animals) that can injure the bile ducts, intestines or cecum.</td>
<td>Affects primarily young rabbits. In severe cases, symptoms are diarrhea, loss of flesh, pot belly, loss of appetite, rough fur coat. Liver may be white spotted and enlarged and there may be small hemorrhages in the intestines.</td>
<td>Keep pens clean and prevent fecal contamination of feed and water. Use wire floor pens.</td>
<td>Sulfamethazine in feed or drinking water continuously for 2-weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctivitis “Weepy Eye”</td>
<td>Inflammation of eye lid. Can result from irritation by dust, sprays, fumes or by bacterial infection.</td>
<td>Excessive tear formation and fluid runs down cheek. Rabbit rubs eyes with its front feet which further aggravates the condition. Rabbits with sniffles frequently have &quot;weepy eye&quot;.</td>
<td>Minimize sources (dust, dirt) of irritation. Remove chronically affected rabbits.</td>
<td>Use a commercial eye-washing product to remove dust, dirt or other foreign object. If inflammation persists, an ophthalmic ointment containing antibiotics may be helpful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ear Canker</td>
<td>Ear mite</td>
<td>Scabs or a crust start forming at base of inner ear. Mites cause considerable irritation and rabbit will shake its head and try to scratch ears with hind feet.</td>
<td>Do not let unaffected rabbits in contact with rabbits that have ear canker.</td>
<td>Use a cotton swab to apply mineral, vegetable or olive oil over all visible crust. Usually one or two treatments is sufficient.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enteritis: Diarrhea</td>
<td>Likely caused by cocciidiosis or other intestinal inflammation. In young rabbit excessive &quot;greens&quot; will cause diarrhea.</td>
<td>A watery diarrhea may be only symptom.</td>
<td>Develop a program to control cocciidiosis. Do not feed &quot;greens&quot; to rabbits.</td>
<td>Keep rabbits comfortable and encourage feed consumption. A medicated or vitamin fortified feed may be helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mucoid</td>
<td>Thought to result from an irritant, a toxin or other stress factors such as dietary changes, antibiotics and travel stresses. Not thought to be contagious.</td>
<td>Characterized by sub-normal body temperature, loss of appetite, depression, rough fur coat, tooth grinding, dehydration, bloated abdomen and diarrhea containing mucus material.</td>
<td>Prevent or reduce stress factors and have strict sanitation of hutch, feeding and watering equipment.</td>
<td>No successful treatment known, but mortality may be slightly reduced by feeding a medicated or vitamin fortified feed. Eliminate all affected rabbits, and purchase breeding stock that are free of the disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Infection</td>
<td>Several types of bacteria.</td>
<td>The eyes of baby rabbits may stick shut and pus around the eyes may be noticed.</td>
<td>Prevent cold drafts and other stress conditions.</td>
<td>Apply an antibacterial ophthalmic eye ointment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fur Block “Hair Ball”</td>
<td>Rabbit ingests a large amount of its own hair or that from another rabbit in a short period of time.</td>
<td>Rabbit will sporadically eat small amounts of feed. A firm mass can be palpated in the stomach.</td>
<td>Fur block is noted more often in Angora rabbits.</td>
<td>An oral dose of 1/2 oz. mineral oil may be effective. If the fur block is too large, surgical removal is necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Prevention/Instructions</td>
<td>Notes/Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fungus Infection</td>
<td>A dry scaly skin (dandruff) on the shoulders and back.</td>
<td>Prevent contact with infected rabbits. Apply tolnaftate to affected area. Other medications are available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat Exhaustion</td>
<td>Excessively high temperatures (above 85°F) and high humidity (above 70%), obesity, poor ventilation, insufficient water and crowding.</td>
<td>Increased respiration rate (panting) prostration, and excessive saliva discharge. Pregnant does and young in the next box are most susceptible. Provide shade, adequate air movement, and plenty of cool water on a hot day. Wet burp in cage will aid in cooling. Rabbits suffering from heat exhaustion can be immersed in lukewarm water to reduce body temperature to the normal 101-104°F. Aply a cool compress to the ears.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hutch Burn</td>
<td>Usually associated with wet and dirty hutches. Urine and fecal material cause the skin to become irritated and infected.</td>
<td>Usually, a brownish crust covers the infected area and a bleeding exudate may be seen. Do not allow fecal material to accumulate in the hutch. Clean affected skin with a germicidal soap and keep the area clean.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ketosis</td>
<td>Obesity, large litter, lack of exercise.</td>
<td>Usually occurs just before or just after kindling. Does go off feed and will not eat. Prevent young does from getting too fat and make sure the does are eating at kindling time. Obesity can be prevented by limiting feed to 4 to 6 oz. daily for does.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastitis</td>
<td>A bacterial infection in the mammary gland caused by an injury from nest box, cage or a bite from nursing young.</td>
<td>The mammary gland will become red in color, swollen, tender and dark blue streaks may appear. Reduce any chance of injury to mammary gland as the doe enters the next box. Do not transfer the young to another lactating doe. Penicillin is effective against staphylococcus or streptococcus organisms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malocclusion</td>
<td>An inherited condition characterized by excessive growth of of the front teeth. Lower teeth protrude and upper teeth curve into the mouth. Do not use rabbits with &quot;buck teeth&quot; for breeding purposes. Teeth on young rabbits can be trimmed until they reach slaughter weight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasteurellosis</td>
<td>A chronic upper respiratory ailment caused by bacterial infection. Typical early signs are a nasal discharge, watery eyes, head shaking, sneezing or rattling noise in breathing and a loss of weight. Continuous infection may cause rabbits to become sterile. Quarantine all new rabbits for a 3 week period. Cull rabbits that show continuous chronic symptoms of the disease. Reduce stress factors and have good management and sanitation practices. Tetracycline in feed may be effective in an uncomplicated case. For accurate treatment, the organism needs to be cultured and identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pneumonia</td>
<td>A bacteria or virus infection usually associated with other respiratory diseases or stress factors such as damp, drafty and unsanitary huches. Elevated temperature, labored breathing, nasal discharge and loss of appetite are symptoms. Control of &quot;Snuffles&quot; reduces chances of pneumonia. Eliminate drafts and wet conditions. Treatment may vary depending upon the causative agent. A broad spectrum antibiotic may be helpful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ringworm</td>
<td>A fungus infection that can appear on any part of the body but most often will occur on the head. This fungus infection can be transmitted to humans. Loss of hair in circular patches. A yellowish crust forms and sloughs off in about 3 weeks. If infection goes untreated, considerable scratching will occur. Do not allow infected rabbit in contact with other rabbits. Wear gloves when handling the infected rabbit. Clip the fur around affected area and treat with tolnaftate. Other medications are available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salmonellosis</td>
<td>Several members of the Salmonella group of bacteria can affect rabbits. General symptoms are diarrhea, loss of weight, conjunctivites, and rapid breathing. Good husbandry practices and a quarantine of new rabbits. Tetracycline in the feed may be effective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Prevention/Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skin Mange</td>
<td>An infestation of mites that burrow through the skin and cause considerable irritation. Mange mites that affect dogs and cats can infect rabbits.</td>
<td>There will be some loss of hair, scaly skin and intense itching and scratching. Infected rabbits should be separated and treated. The premises should be disinfected. Dust with an insecticide approved for the purpose. Treatment should be repeated in 7-days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sore Hocks</td>
<td>A bruised or infected area on the underside of the hock joint. Related stress factors are a dirty hutch, rough surfaces on the floor, or a floor constructed with the wrong size wiregrid. Scabs usually appear on the bottom of the rear feet. Pad and toes of the front feet may become infected. Nervous and heavy rabbits are more susceptible to the sore hock condition.</td>
<td>Scabs should be removed. Do not let wet litter and manure accumulate. Eliminate sharp objects on the floor. Wash the hock with a germicidal soap and apply an antiseptic such as tincture of iodine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spirochetais</td>
<td>Infection by a spirochete and can be transmitted by mating.</td>
<td>Blisters or scabs occur on the sex glands. Always check the breeders before mating. Isolate all new rabbits. Injection of penicillin is the best treatment. Do not breed until all lesions disappear.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyzzer’s Disease</td>
<td>A bacterial infection usually associated with stress conditions and poor sanitation. The acute form results with diarrhea, dehydration and death within 48 hours. The best preventative measures are clean stock and good husbandry practices.</td>
<td>Treatment with antibiotics is not very effective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warbles</td>
<td>The growth of the botfly larvae under the skin. Warbles can be observed as enlargements under the skin with a small hole in the center. The condition is painful and the rabbit may lick the area. Screen the area to keep the botfly away from the rabbit.</td>
<td>Remove the larvae without crushing it. Clean the wound with a germicidal soap or apply an antibiotic powder or ointment to prevent infection.</td>
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</table>

*Ask your local veterinarian for dosage levels when using antibiotics and for names of antibiotic powders and ointments.*

**When antibiotics are a part of the treatment program, a withdrawal period of 10-days must be allowed before the animal is slaughtered for food.**

**This information on diseases and treatment was reviewed by Dr. David J. Black, University of Tennessee, College of Veterinary Medicine; and by Dr. T. J. Lane, University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine.
how to keep records

Records are an important part of raising rabbits. Records represent the “backbone” of your rabbitry. They keep things in order, tell how your rabbits are doing and can help make your business profitable. Keep your records up-to-date and accurate.

Good records include the following:

- Beginning inventory.
- Total operating expenses.
- Total marketing receipts.
- Closing inventory and a profit or loss financial summary statement at the close of the project or at year’s end.
- Doe and buck performance records, including growth records of litters at:
  a. Four weeks of age — individually weigh all rabbits. The average is a good indication of the lactating ability of the doe.
  b. Eight weeks of age — individually weigh all rabbits. Make first selections for herd replacements at this time. For commercial meat-type rabbits, all animals should be ready for fryer marketing.
- Herd book.
  a. Complete pedigree of each rabbit.
  b. Performance record on service of bucks.
- Show record.
  a. Record the shows entered by date and place.
  b. Record information on classes entered, number in competition and awards received.

You can get record forms, free of charge, from many commercial rabbit feed companies. Write to the A.R.B.A. for additional information on keeping a herd book and show record.

The Florida 4-H Rabbit Record, publication 4-H 9A, goes with this manual. Fill it out regularly and turn it in to your 4-H club leader at fair time. You can get a copy of the 4-H Rabbit Record at your County Extension Office.
SOLD TO ___________________________  PRICE $ __________

ADDRESS ___________________________  DATE __________

Breed New Zealand White
Sex Doe  Born 3-5-77
Origin Smith
Diet Formula 18% Protein
Rabbit Pellets
Remarks: ___________________________

SIRE Jack
Reg. 10321 B  Ear 341
Wt. 10½  Color White
Winning: B.O.B. All
Southern Grand
Final - Nashville - 10-6-76

DAM Jill
Reg. 1473 G  Ear 665
Wt. 11  Color White
Winning: YO Knoxville

SIRE Mighty
Reg. 7945 C  Ear K41
Wt. 9  Color White
Winning: YO Knoxville

DAM Comet
Reg. 3241 D  Ear A64
Wt. 10½  Color White

SIRE Lucky
Reg. 2951 B  Ear 26
Wt. 10  Color White
Winning: YO Columbus

DAM Fairy
Reg. 1432 K  Ear 163
Wt. 11  Color White

SIRE Hot Shot
Reg. 4244 E  Ear E
Wt. 9½  Color White

DAM Hilda
Reg. 6443 E  Ear A6
Wt. 10½  Color White

SIRE Harry
Reg. 3441 G  Ear 64
Wt. 9½  Color White

DAM Hope
Reg. 3865 C  Ear K6
Wt. 11  Color White

SIRE Best
Reg. 1476 A  Ear 91
Wt. 9  Color White

DAM Eady
Reg. 6921 E  Ear K6
Wt. 9½  Color White

This is to certify that above Certificate of Pedigree is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and is compiled from best records available.

Signed ___________________________
Street ___________________________
City ___________________________
State ___________________________

REVERSE SIDE FOR LAST GENERATION WINNINGS
kinds of production

You may want to think about raising pedigreed rabbits as you get experience or as you want to get a start in this business. To get pedigree forms, contact your local rabbit feed dealer, your 4-H Rabbit project leader or the A.R.B.A. Good pedigrees help to sell stock.
Suggested Procedures for Rabbit Shows at Fairs

If you want to put competition into your 4-H rabbit raising program, both county and state fairs can provide you with a good opportunity to experience competition and learn more about showing your rabbits.

Here are suggested procedures for showing.

- When the show superintendent decides which breed to judge first, the judge will judge each variety (color) within each breed separately.
  
  **Example:** If he starts with the New Zealands, he judges the whites first, then the reds and then the blacks.

- Within each color, he judges the separate classes.
  
  **Example:** He starts with senior bucks, then senior does; 6-8 bucks, then 6-8 does (if the 6-8 months applies to the breed); junior bucks, then junior does; and finally pre-junior bucks and pre-junior does (if applicable).

- The judge then determines best of variety from rabbits within the separate classes. This is done by placing all of the first place winners in each class, in the same variety, on the judging table.
  
  **Example:** In New Zealand Whites, the judge saves the first place winner in the class of senior bucks, senior does, 6-8 bucks, 6-8 does, junior bucks and junior does (pre-junior rabbits are not eligible for placement). If each class has been filled, he has six rabbits from which to choose a best of variety and the best opposite sex in that variety.

- The judge follows the procedure outlined above for each of the other varieties within a breed.
  
  **Example:** To continue judging the New Zealands, he would next judge the reds followed by the blacks, selecting the best of variety and best opposite sex of each variety.

- Then he judges all first place rabbits for each variety for the Champion or Best of Breed and Reserve Champion or Best Opposite Sex of the breed.
  
  **Example:** In the New Zealands, the Best of Breed or Champion could be a white buck and Best Opposite Sex or Reserve Champion may be a red doe.

- All rabbits to be shown are required to have a tattoo number in their left ear. The numbers are what the judge calls off when he places the rabbits.

- When the judge places the rabbits, he orders the last place animal off the table first. The first place winner stays on the table until last.

  **Example:** There are five New Zealand White senior bucks in the show and their ear numbers are — A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4 and E-5. After the judge decides how to place them, he says A-1 is fifth, then gives comments on the rabbits. In this way the owner learns exactly what is wrong with the rabbit, information which will help in culling future litters. This also gives the owner a better guide to go by when adding to his original stock. When the judge says B-2 is fourth, D-4 is third and E-5 is first, he gives comments on each rabbit as he places it. Rabbits are removed from the judging table after the judge completes his comments on that rabbit.

It is a good idea to show your 4-H rabbits in other shows sanctioned under A.R.B.A. rules to gain experience and knowledge. Rabbits shown at county and state fairs should be judged only by licensed A.R.B.A. judges, registrars or knowledgeable rabbit breeders.

Preparing Rabbits for Show

Talk to older 4-H'ers, junior leaders and your 4-H rabbit leader about how to prepare your rabbits for showing at county and state fairs. Cleanliness is very important in the appearance of a rabbit. If you keep clean hutches and give good daily care, you will have clean rabbits when it is show time. To remove loose hair, use a soft brush or your moistened hands. Remove any hutch stains on the feet with dry cornstarch.

In some county and state rabbit shows, rabbits are expected to have a pedigree. In other shows this is not a requirement. The A.R.B.A. registration number must be in the rabbit’s right ear. The owner’s private registration number is in the left ear.

Regardless of the kind of show, you must be sure you have the correct sex for the class into which you put your rabbit. Check with your leader or other experienced rabbit raisers on how to determine the correct sex.
### Sample 4th Rabbit Score Card

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<th>ENTRY NO.</th>
<th>FUR CLASS</th>
<th>BREED and VARIETY</th>
<th>CLASS and SEX</th>
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<th>PATTERN</th>
<th>BALANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

LOSES TO: __________ ON: __________

REMARKS: __________

### Glossary of Show Room Classes

#### Small Breeds

- **Junior Bucks and Does** — under six months of age
- **Senior Bucks and Does** — over six months of age

#### Intermediate and Giant Breeds

- **Junior Bucks and Does** — under six months of age (weight limit on some breeds)
- **6-8 Months** — intermediate six to eight months of age (weight limit on some breeds)
- **Senior Bucks and Does** — eight months of age and over
- **Pre-Junior Bucks and Does** — three months old or under (weight limit by breed)

### For Additional Information

For more information about raising and showing rabbits, write to:

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc.
1925 South Main Street
P.O. Box 426
Bloomington, Illinois 61701