



# 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 selection 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 explore what they love about animals.

#### 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 taking care of an animal can make them 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, Engineering, and Technology

- Research the nutritional needs of cavy and compare to nutritional needs of humans and other mammals.
- Explore the need for bio-security 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

- Use the confidence obtained through shows and expos in all aspects of life.
- Bring your cavy as therapy for sick and disadvantage individuals.
- Use showing/raising of cavy as a cultural exchange with other nations.

## Leadership

- Teach others the importance of caring for another animal.
- Become a role model for others by taking the position of junior/teen leader.

## Resources

- American Cavy Breeders Association  
[www.acbaonline.com/](http://www.acbaonline.com/)
- American Rabbit Breeders Association  
[www.arba.net/](http://www.arba.net/)
- American Red Cross Pet First Aid/ CPR  
[www.redcross.org/pets](http://www.redcross.org/pets)
- Service Animal  
[//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service\\_animal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_animal)
- Animal Assisted Therapy  
[//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal-assisted\\_therapy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal-assisted_therapy)
- Healthy pets  
[www.cdc.gov/healthypets](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets)  
[//vetmed.illinois.edu/pet\\_columns](http://vetmed.illinois.edu/pet_columns)  
[www.avma.org/firstaid/procedures.asp](http://www.avma.org/firstaid/procedures.asp)
- California State Fair  
[www.bigfun.org](http://www.bigfun.org)

### Connections & Events

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

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

**County & State Fair** - Enter your cavy or cavy and show the judge what you have learned in showmanship! Contact your county 4-H office to determine additional opportunities available.

### Curriculum

- [book] Guinea Pig: A Kid's Guide to Raising and Showing
  - ARBA Standard of Perfection  
<http://www.arba.net/>
  - Learning Lab Kit: Rabbit
  - Pet Pals Level 1 (4H 563A)
  - Scurrying Ahead Level 2 (4H 563B)
  - Scaling the Heights Level 3 (4H 563C)
- Available from <http://www.4-hmall.org/Product/4-hcurriculum-pets/06374.aspx>
- Pocket Pets Guinea Pig

### 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 personal 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 [www.ca4h.org/4hbook](http://www.ca4h.org/4hbook).

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