



# So you want to take Market Rabbits

Exhibitors are responsible to read and comply with all rules  
from ODA, Senior Fair Boards and Livestock Committees



**Project Book:** #226 Market Rabbit for 1<sup>st</sup> year members, or Washington County Livestock Record Book for 2<sup>nd</sup> year members and beyond, (required for Skillathon). FFA exhibitors see your advisor for requirements.

**ALL project books must be in print form.**

**Resource Guide:** #228R Rabbit Resource Handbook

**Enrollment Form Due:** April 15 – completed enrollments turned in between April 15 and May 1 will be accepted with a \$10 late fee. After May 1 **NO LATE ENROLLMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED**

**Project Animal Requirements:** \*May come from exhibitors own doe(s) or purchased from a breeder  
\*Possession by tattooing (first Saturday in August)  
\*Born between June 20 & July 1, year of fair  
\*Fair weight limits: Min. 3.5# Max. 5.5#

**Pre-Fair Tattooing:** Maximum of 9 fryers tattooed  
\*Washington County Fairgrounds

**Quality Assurance:** Exhibitor and one parent/guardian **must** attend one of the sessions offered in Washington County or any other Ohio County.

See Important Market Livestock Dates in the Junior Fair Activities Guide or 4-H Calendar available at the Extension Office or online at <http://washington.osu.edu> for dates, times and locations.

**Skillathon:** Skillathon is **required** for exhibitor to be eligible to show and/or sell at the fair

See Important Market Livestock Dates in the Junior Fair Activities Guide or 4-H Calendar available at the Extension Office or online at <http://washington.osu.edu> for dates, times and locations.

**What Fair will I show at?** Washington County Fair (always Labor Day Weekend)

**Fair Pen Reservations Due?** Mail directly to the Fair Board Office – 922 Front St., Marietta, 45750  
Forms available from the Extension Office, Junior Fair Activities Guide and/or website  
<http://washington.osu.edu>

## **What happens at the Fair?**

**Check in** – 6-7:30pm-Friday (all rabbits must be checked to be free of disease by committee before weigh in)

**Buyer Thank you posters** – make a Thank You poster to thank previous buyer. Hang it in the barn. See Jr Fair Guide for details and size

**Classes** – To be eligible to **SELL**, exhibitor **must do both** Showmanship and Market Classes. (Saturday)

**See Fair Schedule for dates and times of showmanship and market classes**

## **What is the Premier Exhibitor Award?**

High scoring exhibitor from skillathon (100 points), showmanship (100 points) & market class placing (50 points)

**Sale** – Tuesday, Multipurpose building **See Fair Schedule for time and location**

## **What happens after the Sale?**

**Thank/contact buyers** – thank buyers by note, call or in person

**Sale Checks** – checks are mailed directly to the exhibitors after payment from buyers has been made. If you have questions about your checks call a 4-H Livestock Committee member.



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For Further information or Questions contact OSU Extension Office at 740-376-7431  
visit our web site at: <http://washington.osu.edu>

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# Market Rabbit Basics

## Step 1. Purchasing Market Rabbits or Buying rabbits for breeding your own doe.

- You now may purchase market rabbits instead of breeding your own doe. Members may choose to breed their own rabbits and should follow steps 2-4. If you are purchasing market rabbits, they should be born between June 20<sup>th</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> the year of the fair.
- When buying rabbits buy a trio. A trio consists of 1 buck and two does. They must be at least 6 months old to breed them. Most judges prefer a white market rabbit: New Zealand or Californian are good examples. Other breeds are considered commercial/meat quality – please see the Rabbit Resource Book, pages 11-26.

## Step 2. Breeding rabbits.

- Take the doe to the buck's cage. Do not go off and leave the rabbits alone. Breed at least 2 does in case one wouldn't take. May have better success if your doe has had a litter before, but not required. Need to breed does from May 23 – June 3. It is important to keep track of the date bred.

## Step 3. Ready for babies.

- The gestation period lasts from about 28-35 days. This is why it is important to keep track of when your does were bred so you know what their due dates are. Make a nesting box for the doe to have her babies in – see page 39 of the Rabbit Resource Book. It should be big enough for the doe to turn around in but not extra big. You need to put the nesting box in on day 28 of the gestation period. But before you put the box in you should put some absorbent material such as straw, pine wood shavings, or shredded paper in the box. Place the box in a clean corner of the cage and make sure she has plenty of food and water for the next couple of days.

## Step 4. Their first week of life.

- The doe should pluck her own fur to keep the babies warm but remove extra fur if it's a warm summer. Don't bother the doe while she's having the babies but make sure she has **plenty of water**. Before handling the babies, pet the doe so you have her scent. If there are babies alive on the wire replace them in the box right away. Later check for dead or deformed babies so that they may be removed from the nesting box. Check nesting box daily. Give doe unlimited feed and water for her milk.

## Step 5. Next few weeks...

- They should get some fur by day 2 and will open eyes about day 10. Save the cleaner fur but replace the absorbent material to keep the babies from getting diseases if the nesting box becomes too soiled. Between days 14 and 21 you will remove the nesting box. Rabbits should be weaned by 60 days – see page 69 in the Rabbit Resource Handbook.
- Keep plenty of feed and fresh water available for the babies
- Keep rabbits in a shaded area away from the summer heat. Frozen water bottles are a good way to keep rabbits cool on a hot summer day
- Weights need to be recorded and monitored regularly. Fair weight is a minimum of 3 lbs. and a maximum of 5 lbs
- You are responsible to get your own buyer
- Rabbits are to be kept fed and watered throughout each day of the Fair

More information is available in the Rabbit Resource Handbook. Rules and Regulations are found in the Washington County Junior Fair Activities Guide.

This is very basic information. We recommend you speak with a rabbit resource person.

Don't forget to have fun while you learn!!!!