

## Rabbit Showmanship: Breaking it Down

By: Travis West

Hopefully you have plans to purchase the Rabbit Resource Handbook as a resource for preparing for rabbit showmanship (if you don't already have one). This will be the best resource especially for those in their first 5-6 years of the rabbit project. Unlike many other livestock species, the majority of showmanship success is based on the knowledge of the exhibitor because you are not moving your rabbit around the ring for the judge to see. Handling of your rabbit is the first basic mechanic that you need to learn in order to be successful as a rabbit showman. Working with your rabbit at home is the first step in making sure that your rabbit cooperates on show day. I will break down the parts of showmanship and some sample expectations based on age to help you study of your county fair rabbit showmanship competition. We don't expect you to know everything in that Rabbit Resource Handbook the first year OR the third year.

### Dress

- *Remember you fair might have a dress code and that overrules anything listed here. Please check your fair rules to see if there is an already established dress code for exhibitors.*
  - ✓ Long sleeve white shirt or lab coat
  - ✓ Blue or black jeans or pants
  - ✓ NO open toes shoes (boots and tennis shoes are okay)
  - ✓ Clothes should be clean (no stains other than those you might have obtained in the barn getting your rabbit ready!)

### **What do I need to know for showmanship?**

- *Keep in mind this ages are just guides and every county breaks their classes differently, these are ONLY guidelines of where you should start and are by no means the ONLY things that a judge would expect you to know.*

### Beginners (typically age 8-11)

- ✓ Breed and variety of your rabbit
- ✓ What you feed your rabbit (type of food, protein and fiber percentages and how much you feed your rabbit)
- ✓ 3-5 breeds of rabbits
- ✓ 1-2 diseases
- ✓ Be able to handle your rabbit (including picking up, carrying and turning it over for examination)
- ✓ The more detail you give on examination, the better score you get
- ✓ Basic body part identification

### Intermediates (typically 12-14)

All of the above PLUS

- ✓ Detailed examination (including why you examine that part)
- ✓ Definition of terms
- ✓ 6-8 breeds
- ✓ Varieties and details about the breed you are showing



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



**Ohio4h.org**

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: [go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity](http://go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity).

Seniors (typically 15-18)

All of the above PLUS

- ✓ Body Types
- ✓ Fur Types
- ✓ Classes of Rabbits
- ✓ Advanced terms
- ✓ Some knowledge of genetics and breeding terms and concepts

In summary, there is a lot of information to study so break it down and don't try to overdo it. You want this to be a fun learning experience, not another school related test you stress about for days. Keep a positive attitude and always remember "I don't know" doesn't kick you out of the awards. The judge will keep asking questions until you miss something in order to place the class, so not knowing the answer to all the questions is NOT the end of the world for showmanship.

Updated 2/2018