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 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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Research the nutritional needs of cavies 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 cavies 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/
- American Rabbit Breeders Association
  www.arba.net/
- American Red Cross Pet First Aid/ CPR
  www.redcross.org/pets
- Service Animal
  //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Service_animal
- Animal Assisted Therapy
  //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Animal-assisted_therapy
- Healthy pets
  www.cdc.gov/healthypets
  //vetmed.illinois.edu/pet_columns
- Animal Assisted Therapy
  //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Animal-assisted_therapy
- Healthy pets
  www.cdc.gov/healthypets
- California State Fair
  www.bigfun.org

Connections & Events

Presentation Days – Share what you’ve learned with others through a presentation.

Field Days – At these events, 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 county 4-H office to determine additional opportunities available.

Curriculum

- 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 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/

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