CATS, SMALL ANIMALS, PET RABBIT & CAVIES

2026
Committee Chair: Rhonda Burton

March 15	**Member Enrollment Deadline**
May 1	**Possession of Cat and/or Small Animal**
May 1	**Fair Entries Due to OSU Extension Office**
May 1	**Small Animal Ambassador Applications Due to OSU Extension Office**
May 19	**Small Animal Ambassador Contest: Thursday, 4:30 p.m. Interviews, Contest at 7:00 p.m. OSU Extension Office**
July 15	**Cage Decoration Contest for Cats & Small Animals, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m., Peterson Building** (The Cat Committee provides all cages. Cages will be available to decorate on July 8, 4-7:00 p.m. or on the day of the show from 8-9:00 a.m. in the Jr. Fair Building and will remain on display throughout the fair. See ***Cat Cage Decoration Contests for Cats and Small Animals*** below.)
July 15	**Cat & Small Animals Show: Cat Show & Showmanship, Pet Rabbit & Showmanship, Cavies, Small Animals & PetPal, Immediately Following Cage Decoration Contest., Peterson Building Cat Skillathon will be offered for members the day of the show. (Optional)**

Cat Project Requirements

1. Cat entries and cage decoration contest entries must be turned into OSUE Clinton County by May 1.
2. Visual displays are required and must be brought to the show with your cat and project book.
3. Members must be currently enrolled in Cat 1-Purrfect Pals, Cat 2, Climbing Up! Or Cat 3, Leaping Forward
4. Members must have possession of cat by May 1 and complete Jr. Fair entries by May 1.
5. Each project book is meant to be completed within three years. Complete different activities each year according to your interest and experience.
6. The Junior Fair program reserves the right to combine classes based on participation/exhibitor entries, including skillathon.
7. **Cats must be a minimum of 15 weeks old by July 11, 2026.** Kittens less than 15 weeks old are not permitted on the Fairgrounds.
8. Cats must be immunized against Feline Panleukopenia (FPL), Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR), and Feline Calcivirus (FCV), OR vaccinated according to the veterinarian's vaccination protocol. All cats MUST be immunized against Rabies. (Note: Immunization against Feline Leukemia (FeLV) is strongly recommended for the protection of your cat, however, not required.) All vaccinations must be current.
9. **Proof of vaccinations must be turned into OSUE Clinton County by June 1, 2026.**

Purr-fect Pals, Level 1
Learn about being a good cat owner by taking this beginning-level cat project. You also learn about cat breeds, behavior, good health, grooming, and feeding. Designed for youth in grades 3 to 5 but can be taken by any youth in the first three years of this project. Complete at least 7 activities each year in the project. Exhibitor must have a visual display that could consist of a scrapbook or poster, etc.

Climbing Up! Level 2
Build on what you learned in Cat 1 by taking this intermediate level cat project. Learn more about cat identification and characteristics, training and showing cats, health and nutritional needs of cats, and responsible cat ownership. Designed for youth in grades 6 to 8 but may be taken by youth in any grade after they complete Cat 1. Cat 2 can be taken for three years. Complete at least 7 activities each year in the project. Exhibitor must have a visual display that could consist of a scrapbook or poster, etc.

Leaping Forward, Level 3
Delve deeper into some of the cat topics you've already explored in Cat 1 and Cat 2 (breeds, nutrition, health, and behavior) and meet some new topics (genetics and aging cats). Investigate various cat-related careers and practice your organization and presentation skills. Designed for youth in grades 9 to 12 but may be taken by any youth after completing Cat 1 and Cat 2. Complete at least 7 activities each year in the project. Exhibitor must have a visual display that could consist of a scrapbook or poster, etc.

Helper Supplement for Cat Projects
The Cat Group Helper's Guide for club helpers provides ways to involve everyone in learn-by-doing cat project sessions. Available from the National 4-H Council Source Book and at www.4-Hmall.org.

Cage Decoration Contest for Cats and Small Animals
The Cat Committee provides all cages to be decorated. Please do not decorate the cage or carrier containing your animal. The dimensions of the cages provided are 18"L x 12"W x 14"H. The contest is open to junior fair cat and small animal exhibitors only. The exhibitor must not receive assistance when decorating the cage. Cages will be available to

decorate on July 8, 4-7:00 p.m. or on the day of the show from 8-9:00 a.m. in the Jr. Fair Building and will remain on display throughout the fair. Cages must be completely decorated and ready for judging by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the show. All decorations should be safe for the animal. Judging will be based on safety and creativity.

Cat Show

1. Only one cat per exhibitor.
2. Any exhibitor showing a cat that creates a threat to people or other cats will be asked to take the cat home.
3. Cats must humanely wear a harness or an attached leash during activities.
4. Exhibitors are responsible for their own cats.
5. Nursing queens will not be shown.
6. Females in season will not be shown.
7. Cat show is open to junior fair cat exhibitors only.

Cat Show Classes

- Cat 1 & Visual Display
- Cat 2 & Visual Display
- Cat 3 & Visual Display
- Cage Decoration Contest
- Cat Interview Class for 1st year cat project members without a cat(s).
- Cat Showmanship

PetPAL Project Requirements

- More information on 4-H PetPALS can be found at: https://ohio4h.org/statewide-programs/animal-sciences/companion-animals
- See Family Guide for basic project guidelines.
- *Youth taking 4-H PetPALS must belong to a 4-H club with a master 4-H PetPAL volunteer leader.

Cavy (Guinea Pig) **Project Requirements**

1. Project Requirements-
    a. Study project book and learn characteristics of breeds, feeding and management practices, grooming, etc. of the animal you are studying.

2. Exhibit Requirement -
    a. Participate in personal interview.
    b. Exhibit guinea pig on judging day only.
    c. Bring completed project book

Small Animals (Gerbils, Hamsters, Mice, Rats, Chinchillas, Ferrets, and Hedgehogs) **Project Requirements**

1. Project Requirements –
    a. Study project book and learn characteristics of breeds, feeding and management practices, grooming, etc. of the animal you are studying.

2. Exhibit Requirement –
    a. Exhibit one animal from project on judging day only.
    b. Participate in personal interview.
    c. Bring completed project book

3. Small Animal exhibitors may bring in a poster to exhibit at the fair. Please bring posters to Junior Fair Building on **Wednesday, July 8, 4 p.m.-7:00 p.m.**

4. Youth exhibiting small animal projects such as chinchillas, hedgehogs, ferrets, caged birds, pot-bellied pigs, hermit crabs, etc. should sign up for the *Self-Determined* Project, No. 365.

Pet Rabbit Project Requirements

1. Pet Rabbit Class-This class is designed for 4-H members that are taking the Pet Rabbit Project & Record Book. Rabbits will not be shown in breed classes.

2. Pet rabbits do not stay in the barn during the week. They are brought in for the show only.

3. Pet Rabbits may participate in Rabbit Skillathon. (Optional)

4. Pet Rabbit exhibitors may bring in a poster to exhibit at the fair. Please bring posters to the Junior Fair Building on **Wednesday, July 8, 4 p.m.-7:00 p.m.**

For a sample judging sheet and project information please refer to the state 4-H companion animals website at: https://ohio4h.org/statewide-programs/animal-sciences/companion-animals/companion-animal-resources