

Sussex County 4-H Rabbit & Small Animal Fair 2026 Guide

Set Up & Clean Up

Cages will be set up the week before fair. If additional help is needed an email will be sent to all with dates/times and what is needed. This is a new set up for us this year so please be patient. We will have everything ready for the animals by Friday July 31.

Cages will be taken down and the area cleaned and swept on Tuesday, August 4th as the animals are removed and put into their travel cages. Please make sure to throw away the puppy pads/droppings and take all bowls, bottles, food and water home with you. Additional directions for cage cleanup will be provided at that time.

Animals Entering the Fairgrounds

All animals will enter the fairgrounds through the VET CHECK gate, present their CVI (out of state) or Animal Health Certificate (NJ) to the fair veterinarian before proceeding to the Shotwell Building for exhibition or Board of Ag BBQ Pavillion for the show.

If you are entering for a Day Visit while you are working at the Rabbit & Small Animal Info Table please proceed directly to the Shotwell Building after Vet Check. Cooping and show information please follow the instructions below.

Information for Animals Staying at Fair

After being checked at VET CHECK proceed to the Shotwell Building to coop. Check-in at the rabbit/small animal info table BEFORE placing any animals in the coops. Complete the information section in the "BARN BOOK" for each animal that is being caged at the fair and then place animal(s) in the assigned coop(s). Exhibitors must provide their own feed cups, water bottles/bowls and feed for their animal(s). Tap water is available at the fairgrounds but may be different than what your animals are used to so you can choose to bring water from home. All feed and water jugs left under the cages must be labeled with the exhibitor's name and cage number. Tags for the front of the cages will be provided by the Leader's Association and available at drop off.

We are guests in the Shotwell Building and in order to keep the area tidy, NO SHAVINGS or loose hay will be permitted. Puppy pads will be provided to go under the cage risers. Hay should be contained in a hay feeder/paper towel roll/etc. Cavies will be placed on puppy pads or pellet bedding.

Exhibitors are responsible for taking care of their animals each day they are cooped. All cages must be cleaned each day and animals fed/watered before 10 am. If you cannot be there one day, it is your responsibility to make sure that someone else knows how to feed your rabbit/cavy on that day. On very hot days frozen water bottles should be provided to prevent overheating.

Information for Day of Show Check In

This year Rabbit & Small Animal Show will be on Sunday August 2, 2026, at the Board of Ag BBQ Pavillion (Pavillion) located between the Teen Council Dairy Barn and the Shotwell Building. Check in for the show will be from 8:45-9:15 am. The Show will start at 9:30 am.

All animals must be moved to the show area in an appropriate carrier. No project animal can be carried to the show area in a member's arms. This is not safe for the 4-H member or the animal. If you do not have the proper carrier, talk to your leader.

At the end of the show all best of breed rabbits will be brought to the table for the Best of Show. Then a short awards ceremony will take place so we request that all members stay until the show is complete and then return the animals to the Shotwell Building or take them home.

“Barn” Sitting

Each exhibitor's family will be asked to spend some time “Barn” sitting during the week at the Rabbit & Small Animal Information table in the Shotwell Building. An online sign up has been sent via email for this. Please note that an adult 21 years of age or older must be present at all times.

DUTIES:

- Engage with visitors to the building by displaying your project animal and/or playing the interactive games at the table, answer questions about the animals and 4-H in general. Provide club information to potential new members.
- Friday through Tuesday there will be animals to watch as well. All animals need to have water checked every two hours. Animals with special water needs will be labeled. DO NOT feed any rabbits/cavy other than your own. Sweep floors if needed and make sure all personal items are hidden under cages and behind green skirting. Protect all animals from fair visitors. Make sure the barn-sitting logbook is completed before and at the end of your shift.

NOTIFY A LEADER OF ANY SICK OR STRESSED ANIMALS IMMEDIATELY!

Overnight Barn Sitting

Each club must make arrangements for at least one leader or a parent/adult to spend one night at the fair in the Shotwell Building during the time that there are animals cooped overnight (Fri-Mon). If a leader is not staying the adult staying must be at least 21 years of age. If the club chooses to have a sleepover, then club members and/or parents staying for the sleepover need to coordinate with the leaders of their club. Members and adults that are not 4-H leaders must fill out and return a 4-H permission slip (forms available at our Info Table) to the leader in charge of the sleepover before or at the time that they are being dropped off for the overnight.

The leader or adult staying overnight may not leave till 9 am the following day or when next shift Barn sitter arrives.