

Mini 4-H

Small Animals

Divisions I & II



Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child to the Mini 4-H program. Mini 4-H is designed for boys and girls, who are in either first or second grade during this calendar year.

Your job as a Mini 4-H parent is to guide your child in any way that you can, we suggest assisting your child in completing the projects, but not completing the projects for them. It is your child's project and will be an important teaching and learning experience for him. So guide your child, but let him do as much of it by himself as he can.

Your child will need to exhibit something in each of the project areas which he has signed up for. Please see that your child gets the exhibit to the fair during the scheduled time. Your child will receive a ribbon for completing the project. You need to pick up the project after the 4-H Fair or make arrangements for someone else to get the project if you can not.

If you have any questions, you may call the Extension Office at 736-3724. We hope you and your child will enjoy the Mini 4-H program and we will be looking forward to seeing you at the Johnson County 4-H and Agricultural Fair.

Johnson County 4-H Council

Mini 4-H Program Rules

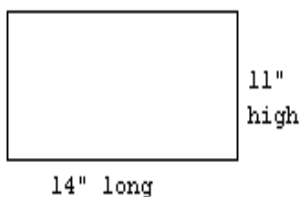
The Mini 4-H program is designed to supplement and introduce both first and second graders to the Johnson County 4-H program.

RULES

1. Mini 4-H is open to any boy or girl who is enrolled in either the first or second grade on January 1st of the current 4-H year.
2. Any first grader may enroll in one (1) or two (2) projects.
Any second grader may enroll in one (1) to four (4) projects.
3. Mini 4-H participants do not enroll in a 4-H club, but do the project at home.
4. Mini 4-H projects include: Arts & Crafts, Bugs, Clothing, Collections, Flowers, Foods, Forestry, Horse & Pony, Livestock, Models, Small Animals, and Wildlife.
5. Enrollment of Mini 4-H is done in April by distributing enrollment information to all first and second grade classes in each Johnson County elementary school.
6. **ALL POSTER EXHIBITS MUST:**

- A. Have a solid, stiff backing, which is 11" high by 14" wide (half standard poster size). This can be 1/4" plywood, HEAVY cardboard, foam board, or masonite.

Exception: Wildlife poster is 11" x 22" .



- B. Be positioned **HORIZONTALLY**.
- C. Have a total exhibit board no larger than 11" high by 14" wide. (Wildlife- 11" x 22")
- D. Be completely **COVERED BY A CLEAR PLASTIC** material.

Small Animals

Welcome to Mini 4-H Small Animals. In this project you will learn about small animals. You do not need to have an animal to be in this project. You will be introduced to four different types of small animals and a little information about each. To find out more information about specific animals you may want to get a book from the library or visit a person that raises that type of animal.

WHAT TO EXHIBIT: DIVISION I

1. Read the Mini 4-H Small Animal Handbook.
2. Do two of the activities from the Activities Page found on page 7 of this book.
3. On an 11" x 14" poster board choose one of the following topics listed below.

WHAT TO EXHIBIT: DIVISION II

1. Read the Mini 4-H Small Animal Handbook.
2. Do four of the activities from the Activities page found on page 7 of this book.
3. On an 11" x 14" poster board choose one of the following topics listed below that was not exhibited in Division I.

TOPIC CHOICES:

- a. A picture that you have drawn of one of the animals in this book.
- b. A story that you have written about one of the animals in this book.
- c. A collection of cut out pictures of one or more types of animals listed in this book.
- d. Pictures of you taking care of your animal.
- e. A combination of any of the above items.

OR one of the following on the next page

DIVISION I: A scrapbook on a topic listed below.

DIVISION II: A scrapbook on a topic listed below which was not exhibited in Division I.

TOPICS FOR SCRAPBOOK:

- a. A picture or pictures of one type of animal listed in this book and a story about that animal.
- b. Pictures and a story of you taking care of your animals.
- c. A collection of pictures of different types of the animal(s) found in this book with information listed on each picture.
- d. A story and pictures related to one or more of the activities you did to complete this project.
- e. A combination of any of the above items or information on selection, care, feeding, and equipment of an animal.

NAME _____
GRADE (as of Jan. 1) _____
PROJECT _____
DIVISION _____
SCHOOL ATTENDING _____

Mini 4-H Helper's Page

Welcome to the Mini 4-H program! Mini 4-H is designed for youth to explore a variety of project activity areas and to interact with caring adults and other children.

Children receive this project activity manual when enrolling in Mini 4-H. This manual and the manuals on various other topics will provide fun age appropriate learning activities throughout their year(s) in Mini 4-H.

As a Mini 4-H adult helper your job will be to guide and encourage each child through the activities. A wide range of activities are provided to allow you to choose the ones most appropriate for the children you are working with. It is highly suggested that you do not complete the activities for them. Instead help them, guide them, work with them, and let them do all that they possibly can. 4-H believes in allowing children to learn by doing. The Mini 4-H project activities are hands-on learning opportunities designed to provide a meaningful educational experience for youth.

Additionally, the Mini 4-H program is set up to allow children to display a project activity that is based upon information within this manual. Some children may choose to exhibit their project at the 4-H fair. The 4-H fair is an exciting week that allows community youth to showcase their enthusiasm for learning. Children may choose to display a project activity they did by themselves or one they did with a group.

Mini 4-H is fun! Children will certainly enjoy it. You can have fun too, by guiding and helping as children participate in the program. Encourage and praise the children as they have fun learning and sharing with you. If you have any questions regarding Mini 4-H or other 4-H programs, please feel free to contact your local Extension office.

Mini 4-H'ers Page

Mini 4-H'ers have lots of fun! There are many activities for you to explore. You can try new things, which you can share with your family and friends.

Here are some things to know about 4-H:

The 4-H Symbol: The symbol is a four-leaf clover with an "H" in each leaf. Clover is a plant that grows in fields, yards, and along roadsides. Most clovers only have three leaves. Sometimes, if you look closely you may get lucky and find a clover with four leaves. A four leaf clover is used as the symbol for 4-H to let everyone know 4-H is a special kind of group.



The 4-H Colors: The 4-H colors are green and white. The four leaf clover is green and the "H" in the leaf is white.

A group motto is a saying that tells people what is important to the group.

The 4-H Motto: "To make the best better." When something is better than all of the others it is the best. Think about a time when you did your best. Maybe you threw a ball farther than you have ever thrown it before. Now think about some ways you could do better. You may be able to throw farther by practicing for a while or by watching someone who can throw farther than you, to see how they throw so far. Even if you throw the ball farther than you have ever thrown it before there are still ways that you can do better the next time. 4-H encourages you to always try to do better, even if you are doing the best you have ever done.

The 4-H Pledge

A pledge is a promise you make to yourself and to the people around you. The 4-H pledge is in bold print below. Under each line of the pledge there are words telling what the pledge means.



I pledge my head **to clearer thinking.**

I promise to use my head to make good choices.



my heart **to greater loyalty.**

to use my heart to be a good friend.



my hands **to larger service, and**

to use my hands to do helpful things for others.



my health **to better living.**

to take care of my body and to show others how to live in a healthy way.



for my club, my community, **my country, and my world.**

to help my group, my community, my country, and my world be happy and safe for everyone.

Activities Page

Below is a list of activities you may choose from to complete your Small Animal Project. Division I members are to complete TWO activities and Division II members are to complete FOUR activities. List these activities on the record sheet in the back of this book.

ACTIVITY	DATE COMPLETED
1. Give one talk or demonstration to a group about the animal you are studying.	_____
2. Name the parts of the animal you are studying.	_____
3. Visit with a person who raises and sells one of the types of animals in this book.	_____
4. Attend a show where one of the animals are shown and judged.	_____
5. Visit with a veterinarian.	_____
6. Help care for one or two small animals.	_____
7. Visit a pet store.	_____
8. Introduce a friend to small animals.	_____

Information About Small Animals

RABBITS:

There is one kind of pet that is almost as popular in the United States as a cat or dog. That pet is a rabbit! Rabbits are clean, gentle, easy to care for, lovable, and great fun to watch.

You can see many wild rabbits outside. **WILD RABBITS SHOULD BE LEFT WILD!** For a pet, you should buy a rabbit at the pet store or from a breeder.

It is best to buy your pet rabbit when it is 8-10 weeks old. Your rabbit is healthy if its eyes are bright and clear and its nose is moist but not runny. (No sniffles or sneezes). It should have a plump belly, clean silky fur, and should hold its head and ears erect.

There are more than 75 breeds of rabbits. Some of the most common breeds and the breeds you can probably see at the 4-H fair are Dutch, Californians, New Zealand's, Flemish Giants, and Champagne D'Argents.

CALIFORNIANS: These do not weigh quite as much as some of the other breeds. They are white with dark brown or black ears, feet, and noses.

NEW ZEALANDS: Body color may be white, red, or black.

FLEMISH GIANT: This is the largest breed of rabbit. Mature animals weigh 13 to 16 pounds. Varieties differ in color. Steel grey, light grey, sandy, blue, white and fawn are the most common colors.

CHAMPANGNE D'ARGENT: This is a medium breed. Mature rabbits weigh 9 to 12 pounds. Their under fur is dark, slate blue, and their surface fur appears silvery.

DUTCH: These are small rabbits usually raised for exhibit. They are white with colored ears and cheeks and a colored band around the body at the shoulders.

It is best not to handle your new rabbit too much at first. Let it adapt to its new home. Soon it will want attention. Rabbits love to be pet and played with. Handle your pet carefully. Young rabbits should be picked up with one hand under the chest and the other supporting the rump. Older animals may be picked up by the skin on the back of the neck. Use your other hand to support the hind legs. NEVER pick your rabbit up by the ears. This will break the ears and cause them to be floppy and ugly.

If you feed your rabbit on a regular schedule, it will soon learn when it is meal time and be waiting for you! Do not feed your pet too much, once in the morning and once a night is enough. In the morning, feed your rabbit grains like bran or oats and stale bread. Because rabbits are active at night your pet will need more food in the evening. This meal should include vegetables and greens like romaine lettuce, dandelion leaves, spinach, cabbage leaves and of course, fresh young carrots. Greens should always be fresh and well washed and dried. Rabbit pellets (sold at many pet stores) are an easy way to give your rabbit a balanced diet. Whether you feed your pet pellets or other grains and greens, always keep some fresh clover or alfalfa hay in its cage for the rabbit to munch on.

Your rabbit will need to have fresh water in its cage at all times. A piece of salt block is also necessary. This may be set on the floor of the cage or hung on the side. If you use deep, heavy bowls to hold food and water, your rabbit will not spill them.

The rabbit cage, called a "hutch", should be large enough for your rabbit to hop and play. A hutch which is four and a half feet wide by two and a half feet high by two feet deep is a good size for one rabbit. The hutch should be made of wood and wire-mesh screen. About one third of the hutch should be closed off with wood or canvas (use a piece of burlap for a door). This will give your pet a private "bedroom". A hutch with a hinged roof will be easier to clean.

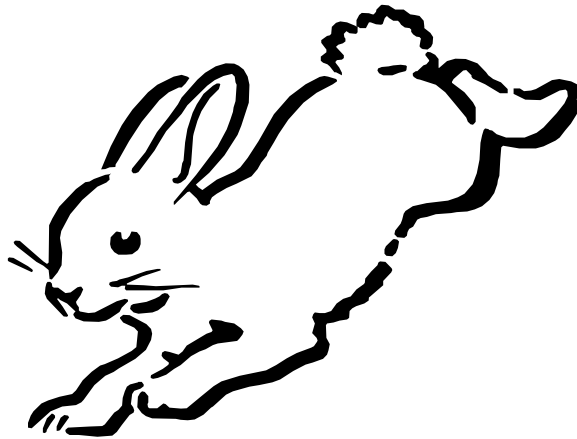
To keep the hutch clean, cover the bottom with a good layer of hay. Replace this hay two or three times each week. Your rabbit will use one corner of its hutch as a bathroom. Clean this corner everyday. Once a week wipe the whole hutch with a mild disinfectant.

Your rabbit will need plenty of exercise outside of its hutch. You may let your pet run in a fenced-in yard, but keep your eye on the rabbit or it may dig its way out, or you may take your rabbit for walks on a cat harness type leash. Do not take your rabbit out in cold or wet weather. You may let your rabbit run loose in the house (if your parents approve), put a pan of kitty litter in one corner and your rabbit can easily be house broken.

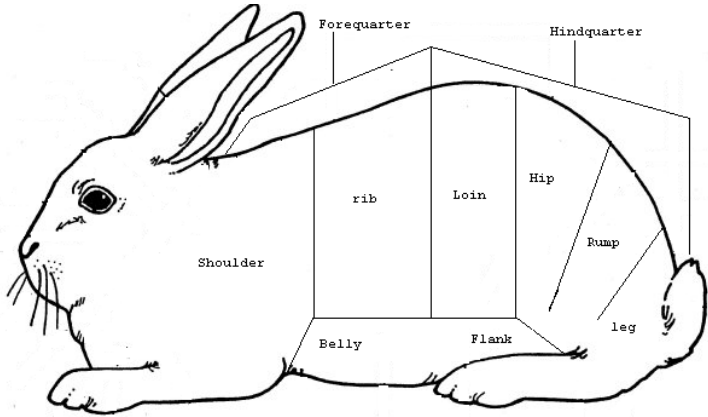
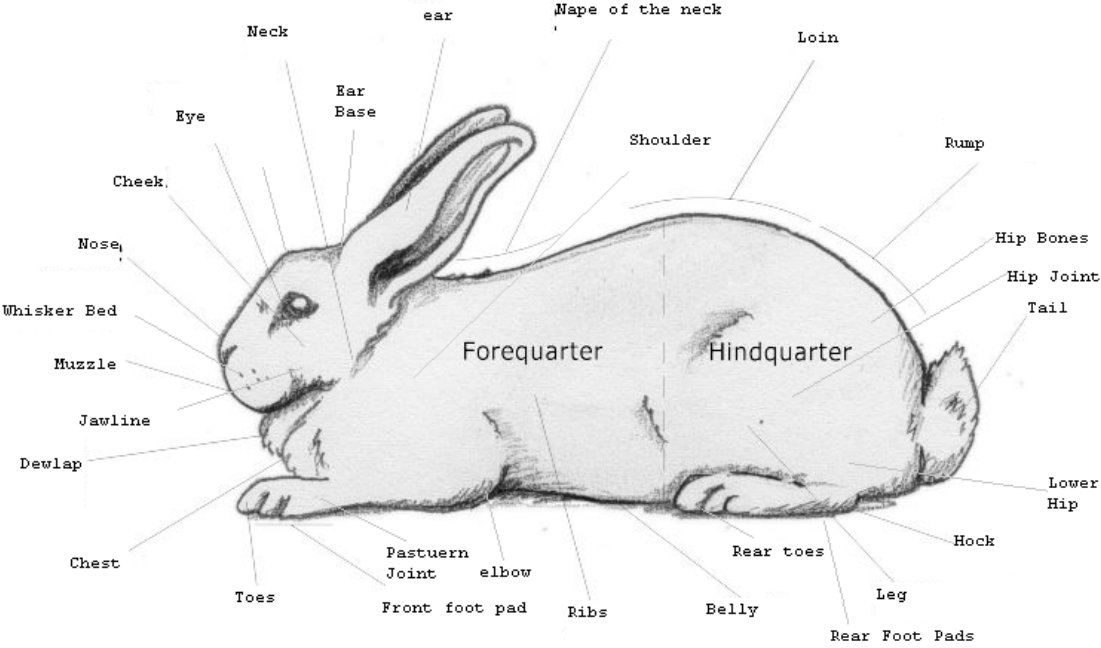
Watch for signs of colds, ear canker, or fleas in your rabbit. For ear canker and fleas DO NOT use dog prescriptions as a treatment. Rabbits lick their fur and these prescriptions may make them sick. Cat prescriptions can be used more safely.

Most important of all, give your rabbit lots of love. Your rabbit will return it. Rabbits truly are great pets.

To find out more information about rabbits, you may want to get a book about rabbits from the library.



PARTS OF A RABBIT



POULTRY:

Poultry includes chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys. People that keep a small flock, do so because they enjoy having the birds. They use the meat and eggs for their household use.

Chickens are kept for the eggs they lay and the meat. Different breeds of chickens lay different color eggs. There is no difference in the egg, only the color of the shell.

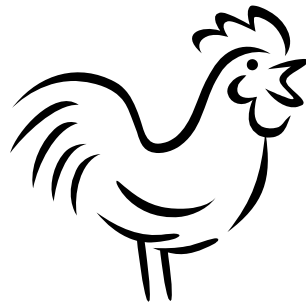
A chicken, bred to lay eggs usually lays about 225 eggs a year. They do not lay an egg every day. During the winter months she lays fewer eggs than during the summer.

When a hen makes a nest and lays eggs to hatch, she lays about eight eggs. She will then sit on them for 21 days.

During the sitting period, the hen gets off of the nest only to eat or get a drink. She is never off long enough for the eggs to get cool. After 21 days the eggs hatch and you will have six to eight little balls of fluff running around.

Ducks and geese are easier to take care of than chickens and turkeys. They require less care and less feed. They do well on a pasture, whereas chickens and turkeys require grain to help them grow. You do not need a pond to keep ducks and geese, but geese need a deep watering container because they dunk their head and neck to drink.

All poultry require shelter at night to protect them against predators. Animals such as skunks, opossums, foxes, weasels, and dogs like to eat eggs and also like to eat poultry.



CHICKENS AND EGGS:

Chickens are raised for meat and eggs. They are the only bird having a comb, which is a piece of red flesh on the top of its head. There are seven kinds of combs: single, rose (a flat wide front to a point in back found on Rhode Island Whites and Wyandotte's). Most leghorns have the single comb. Others are cushion (unusual), strawberry (unusual), pea (found on Cornish breed), the V-shaped (unusual), and the buttercup, which is found on some European breed chickens.

Chickens are covered with feathers. There are three types of feathers the pin, tail, and wing. They also have some down, which is a soft, fluffy-type feather. Chickens are not good at flying.

Their feet have three toes in front and a short one in back. They do have toenails, which are used for scratching.

DEBEAKING: This is removing a portion of the top beak. This is done to prevent chickens from picking on one another.

Chickens breathe through holes (nostrils) on their beak. Chickens have invisible eyelids to protect their eyes from dust. Their eyelids close from the bottom up. Chickens rely heavily on their sense of sight.

Chickens eat corn mashes and other small grain. They need cracked oyster shells, which contain calcium necessary for hard egg shells. Antibiotics may be added to their feed to prevent disease. The chicken stores food in its crop and grinds the food with its gizzard. Like all other animals, they must have water at all times. Feed is kept in front of chickens 24 hours a day, with lights at night to encourage eating at night.

Housing for chickens varies with the size of the flock, but most houses are as long as a football field and 1/4 as wide. Floors are covered with litter such as wood shavings to make cleaning easier. Houses must be well ventilated at all times.

Laying houses are equipped with metal or plastic cage-like nests. The nests are designed with slanted or roll-away floors to facilitate egg collection.

BREEDS OF CHICKENS AND EGGS:

Chickens of each standard breed have about the same body size and shape.

The five leading American breeds of chickens are Plymouth Rocks, New Hampshire (red), Wyandotte (white), and Rhode Island White. These are principally a meat-type chicken, laying brown eggs.

The White Leghorn is a Mediterranean Class best known for egg laying. The Leghorn may lay as many as 300 eggs (white shells) per year. Brown and white shelled eggs are nutritionally the same.

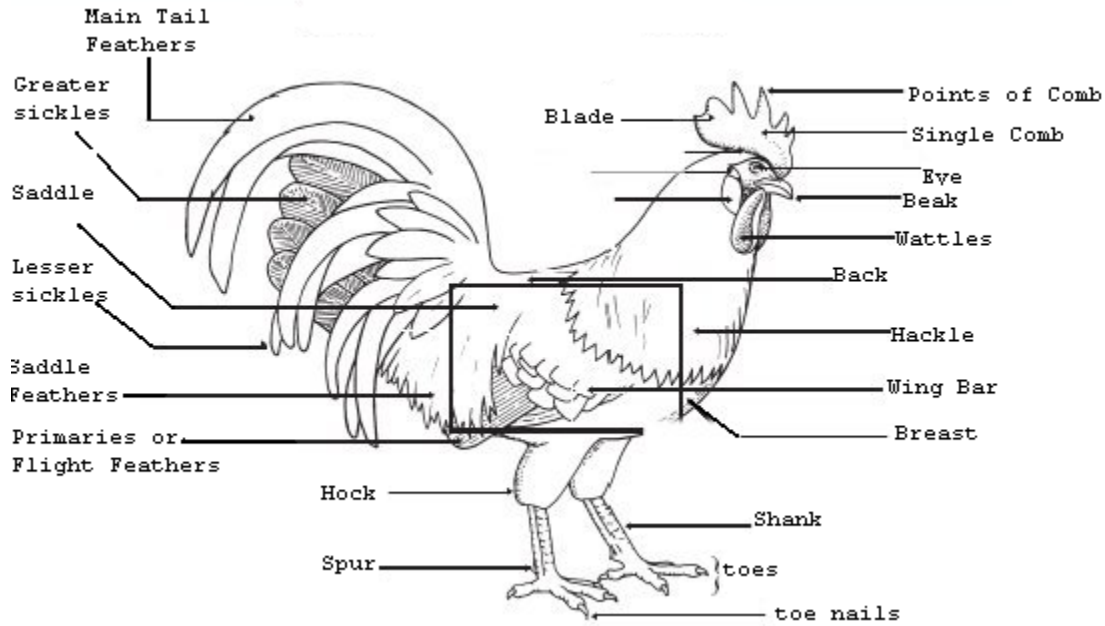
Hens are about 21 weeks old when they start to lay eggs. The hen does not need to mate to lay eggs, but only fertilized eggs will hatch chickens. Eggs will hatch in 21 days if they are kept constantly warm and turned daily. The hen used to be the one providing the heat, but now large hatcheries are used.

Chickens are used for meat and eggs. Meat chickens may be broilers, fryers, or roasters. The broiler is a heavy breed (not the Leghorn). It takes about 10 weeks from being a chick of three ounces to become a chicken of about five pounds live weight for market.

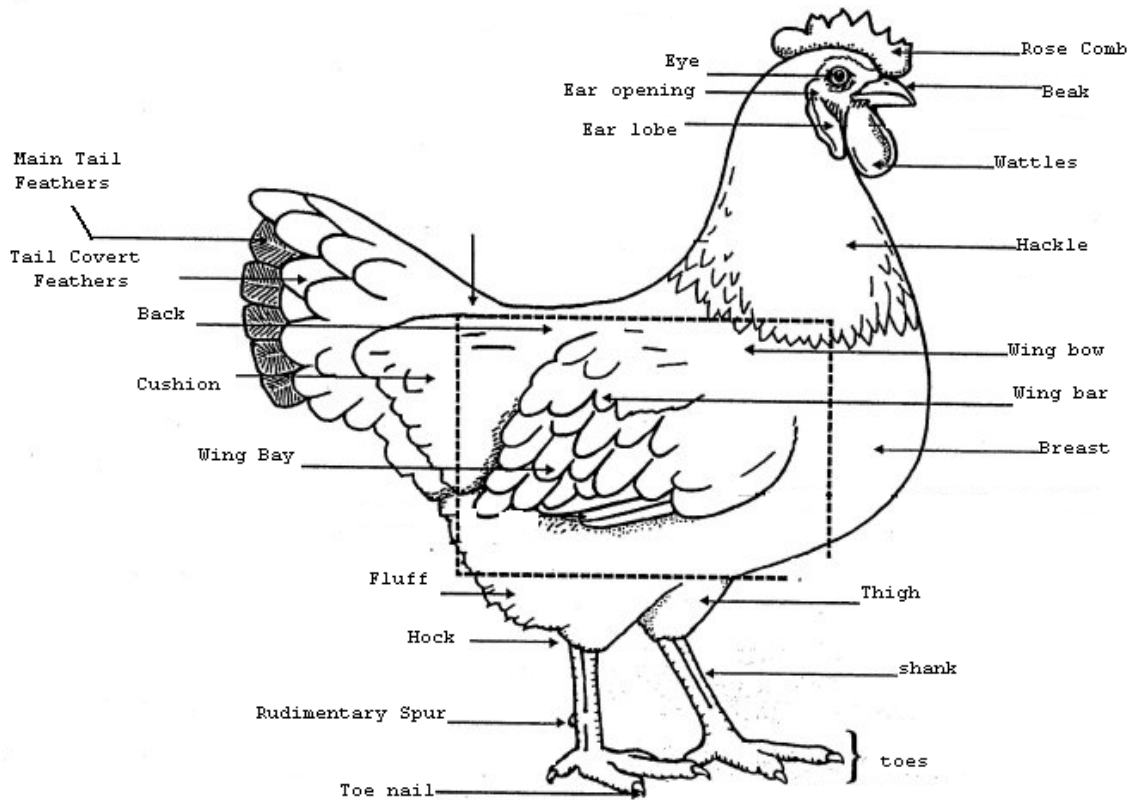
Leghorns are generally raised for egg laying. Eggs are used as is or used in preparing vaccines, animal feed, paints, ink, soap, etc. Many eggs are used in baking.

To find out more information about poultry, you may want to get a book at the library.

PARTS OF THE ROOSTER CHICKEN (MALE)



PARTS OF THE HEN CHICKEN (FEMALE)



CATS:

Cats are graceful and quick, playful and curious. These special qualities make them beautiful and fun to have as pets. But these same traits originally developed in cats to make them better hunters.

Today's house cats descended from African wild cats that had to hunt to stay alive. A pet cat's dinner may come from the supermarket but much of its nature is inherited from its wild ancestors. Its body is still a hunter's body, designed by nature to capture and kill small rodents.

The cat's special skeleton makes its body extra limber and flexible. Since it has such small collarbones and narrow chest, the cat can slip through tight places. Its forefeet almost step in each others tracks, so it can walk easily on a path only two inches wide. Creeping through underbrush, it can come up silently on unsuspecting prey.

A cat also has a super flexible spine. Unlike most animals, it can arch its back into a half circle. This flexible backbone lets a cat turn and twist in the pursuit of prey. It also gives the animal a longer stride, since the back flexes as the cat runs. So, for a short distance, a cat can go faster than a dog of the same size. The cat's powerful muscles work with its flexible skeleton to allow it to move fast. Cats can leap into the air, slink rapidly along the ground, and pounce like lightning on a tiny spot.

Strong muscles are also needed to move extra slowly. When it stalks, a cat has to move in "slow motion" so the prey will not notice it creeping up. To outwit a mouse, a cat often freezes as still as a stone for very long periods of time. Its strong muscles allow it to stay still for much longer than a person could.

After catching the prey, the cat uses its four dagger-like canine teeth to make the kill. Again instinct plays a part in this phase of the hunt. The cat always delivers the killing bite to the same spot, the nape of the neck.

The cat has other kinds of teeth too. The twelve tiny teeth in front are incisors. They are too small for biting and are used for scraping the last shreds of meat from the bones. Toward the rear of the mouth are fourteen large teeth known as molars. The molars of human beings and many other animals are flat on top and are used for chewing and grinding. However, cat molars are sharp and come together like scissor blades. Cats do not chew; instead, they use the molars for cutting meat into pieces small enough to swallow. For this reason, a cat bites a chunk of meat on the side of its mouth instead of in the front, as human beings would.

The cat's paws are also excellent tools for hunting. The soft footpads and the fur between the toes give the cat its silent walk, so necessary for hunting by stealth. Hidden within the front paws are the cat's hooked claws, used for grabbing and holding prey. These claws are sharper than any other mammals, and the cat keeps them that way by scratching them often on trees, furniture, or a post.

Usually the front claws stay safely inside the paws, where they are protected and stay sharp. When the cat wants to use the claw, it extends them with a system of muscles, tendons, and elastic ligaments. Claws that can go in and out this way are called "retractile".

The claws on the cat's back feet are not retractile, and the tips stick out of the fur. They are not as sharp as the front claws because they get worn down from walking, just like a dog's toenails do. A cat hardly ever uses its back claws as weapons, but if attacked by a larger animal, it will defend itself by rolling over on its back and clawing with all four feet.

Cats use great muscle power and energy when hunting and defending themselves. However, because their heart and lungs are small for their body size, they tire easily. Therefore, cats are not usually lively for very long periods of time. Instead, they spend time resting after each spurt of activity.

For hunting, cats rely first and foremost on their vision. However, their second most important sense is their hearing. Cats can hear many sounds that are too faint or too high for the human ear. They are most sensitive to high pitched sounds like squeaks of kittens or mice. The funnel shaped outer ears can be turned to pinpoint sounds.

The cat's sense of touch also tells it about its surroundings. The footpads and the hairless skin on the nose are sensitive to touch. You will often see a cat testing a new object by patting it with its paw then by touching it with its nose.

The cat's whiskers are organs of touch too. These extra thick hairs grow on the upper lips, cheeks, chin, over the eyes, and on the inside of the forelegs.

The chin whiskers can feel a piece of food on the ground that the cat does not see. The lip whiskers can help the cat decide whether an opening is wide enough to squeeze through, and the foreleg whiskers can signal that a mouse is trying to escape the paws.

The cat has a good sense of smell, because there are about 67 million cells inside its nose that pick up odors. Yet the cat does not use this sense very much in hunting. Instead, a cat's nose gives it information about other cats. Just by smelling, cats can tell if another cat is a stranger or one they know.

Cats and many other animals have an unusual sense organ in the roof of the mouth. It is known as "Jacobson's Organ", and it gives the animal a special sense to tell whether females are ready to mate. When a cat makes a strange face that looks like a grimace of disgust, it is actually testing an odor by pressing the tongue against the opening in the mouth that leads to the Jacobson's Organ.

A cat's body is protected from cold and wet by its sleek fur. The coat has two layers; the outer fur, which consists of longer, coarser hairs; and the under fur, is soft and downy. The undercoat is what insulates the cat against cold, and when summer comes, a cat sheds it.

The cat has a special way of grooming its beautiful coat. Grooming helps cats stay cool in the summer. They produce watery sweat only on their footpads, so wetting the fur by licking is their substitute for sweating. When the saliva evaporates, it cools the cat's body.

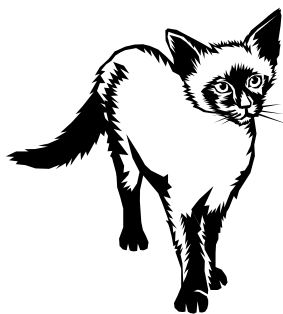
Whenever cats are together, they have ways of communicating with each other. They make faces to express feelings like anger, fear, and contentment. They also use body language. Switching the tail can mean "I am annoyed". Cats also "talk" to each other with sounds. They meow, hiss, growl, and chirp. These noises can mean many things, from "hello" to "do not come any closer".

Cats' purring is another way of communicating. It tells other cats "I am content" and "all is well".

Another way that cats communicate with each other is through skin glands that give out scent. Cats have large numbers of these scent glands on the cheeks, the temples, and the base of the tail. Although people cannot smell the scent, other cats can.

Cats use their scent to mark their territory. When a cat rubs a fence in its own yard with its cheeks and tail, it leaves a trace of its scent. This scent mark tells other cats "I was here" and "this is mine". It also reminds the cat itself "I belong here" and helps the cat feel at home.

Cats have other ways of marking too. Male cats often spray urine on objects to mark them, and when cats scratch trees or furniture they do so as much for marking as they do for sharpening their claws. The scratching leaves visible claw marks for other cats to see.



CAT CARE:

THE LITTER BOX: By the time kittens are ready to leave their first home, they are already house trained. Pet stores carry various models of litter boxes. Fill the tray with about 1 to 1 1/2 inches of absorbent and deodorizing cat litter. There is no need to change the litter everyday. Simply remove the wet places and feces with a slotted spoon or small trowel and fill in with fresh litter. The box should be washed once a week with hot water. Do not use strong disinfectants because cats do not like the smell and may look for another place to urinate. Be sure the litter box is easy to find.

FOOD AND WATER DISHES: Cats should always have fresh water and dry food available. For this, heavy glazed ceramic bowls that cannot be pushed around or knocked over are good.

DISINFECTANTS: Be cautious when using disinfectants. Most of them contain phenol, which is highly poisonous to cats. Use a mild disinfectant, safe for cats.

CARE OF THE COAT: House cats and short haired cats ordinarily do not require any special grooming. They use their tongues to wash themselves several times a day and keep their fur shiny and free of dust. But cats usually like to be brushed. This is especially important at shedding time. The cat should be brushed from head to tail and then a damp cloth used, in the same direction, to remove loose hair and shine their coat.

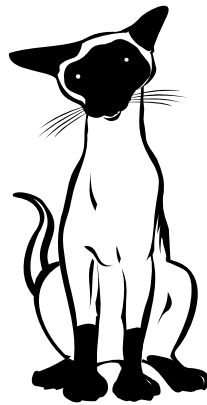
Brushing a cat is also a good opportunity to check for ticks and fleas. When your cat is lying in your lap, you can also have a good look at its ears and check them for mites and dirt. Grooming long haired cats is more time consuming.

Long haired cats have to be combed thoroughly at least once a week. In the spring and fall, when the old fur is shed and a new coat grows in, daily combing is necessary to keep the fine hair of the undercoat from getting matted. You need two metal combs for this procedure. Start with the coarser toothed comb, and then go over the whole cat again with a fine toothed comb, paying special attention to the undercoat on the belly and between the legs.

BATHING: As a rule you should bathe a cat only if it is very dirty or if the treatment of a disease requires it. Bathe your cat in a well heated room. Place it in a tub with lukewarm water. Do not scare your cat by running or spraying water on it. Scoop up some water from the tub in your hand and pour it over the fur. The head should stay dry. After the bath, you should rub the fur dry with a pre-warmed towel and let the cat dry completely in a warm room.

CLAWS: Cats that go outside take care of their claws themselves. They sharpen them on trees with obvious enjoyment. It is advisable to trim the claws on their front paws once or twice a year with special nippers. Make sure you cut off only the tip of the claw, the part that does not have any blood vessels. You should cut your cats claws two days ahead of any show out of consideration for the judges.

CHECKING THE MOUTH AND TEETH: Both ordinary and pedigreed cats have a tendency to develop calculus and inflamed gums. This causes bad breath, excessive production of saliva, and difficulties in eating. Check the teeth of your cat regularly. If treatment is necessary, you have to consult the veterinarian.



COMMERCIAL FOOD:

Canned cat food is ideal. It is always ready to use, can be stored, is easy to take along on trips, and contains all the necessary vitamins, minerals, and trace elements.

Canned cat foods contain not only meat but also grains and vegetables and food yeast. The proportions of proteins, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and trace elements are very similar to those found in the natural prey of cats.

Dry food is also a complete food and available in different flavors. The difference between it and canned food is that it contains less water. That is why it is important that a cat that is fed dry food always has fresh water available. Dry food is more concentrated and has more food value than canned food, and your cat does not need to eat as much of it to cover its energy needs.

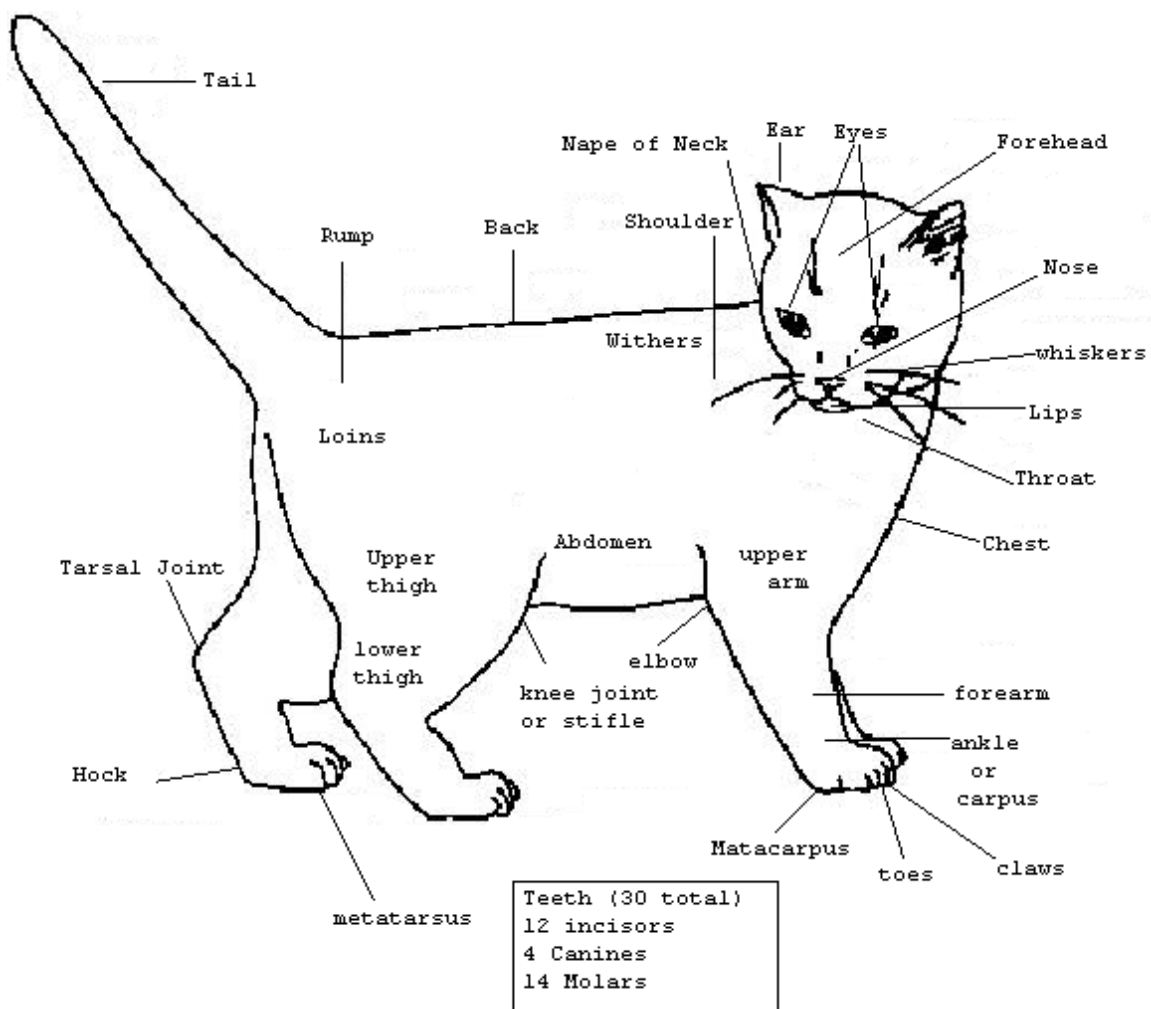
FEEDING TIMES AND AMOUNTS OF FOOD:

Cats have no regular eating schedule in nature. Get your cat used to regular meal times and uniform amounts of food. A kitten should be fed two to four times a day, a grown cat once or twice. The food should be at room temperature, never hot or cold.

Both ordinary and pedigreed cats eat what they need and as much as their appetite dictates. Male cats eat more than females, and neutered animals tend to put on weight and should be fed sparingly. The food of pregnant cats should be increased somewhat and given in three or four smaller meals a day. Give a nursing cat plenty of food and let her eat as much of it as she needs. Cats are individualists in eating as in everything else, so one cat might not eat as much as another cat.

To find out more about cats, you may want to get a book about cats from the library.

Parts of the Cat



DOGS:

Dogs are traditional household pets. They have been companions of man for thousands of years. They were even friends of the caveman.

The breeds of dogs are divided into six different groups. These groups are; sporting dogs, hounds, terriers, working dogs, toy dogs, and non-sporting dogs.

In each of these groups, the dogs are bred for a particular purpose. Many dogs serve the purpose for which they are bred, but many others have become favorite household pets.

Any of the breeds of dogs can be kept as pets. Breeding, size, and other characteristics, however, make some more suitable than others.

If you buy a purebred dog, you can select one that has traits best suited to your needs. Be sure to get the certificate that gives his date of birth, the names of his parents, and his registration number.

It is not necessary to buy a purebred dog to have a fine pet. Many mixed breeds make excellent pets. Often you can get a mixed breed dog free or for a small fee from a dog pound, animal shelter, or pet shop. Have your dog examined by a veterinarian as soon as possible, after you get him, preferably before you take him home.

The characteristics of the six types of dogs are briefly described as follows:

SPORTING DOGS:

These dogs are bred to hunt and retrieve game birds and small animals. They trail the scent that game leaves in the air. The dogs in this group are Pointers, Retrievers, Setters, Spaniels, and Weimeraners.

HOUNDS:

These dogs are usually bred to hunt by trailing the scent that game leaves on the ground, a few hounds trail by sight. They are relatively quite and friendly animals, and make fine pets and watchdogs. The Basset, Beagle, and Dachshund are among the popular breeds.

WORKING DOGS:

Bred for sheep or cattle herding, these dogs are also bred for guards, guides, and for police duty. The dogs in this group are Sheep Dog, Mastiff, Shepard, Dane, Schnauzer, St. Bernard, or Husky bloodlines. As a rule, they are quiet, good-tempered dogs. Some of the breeds are noted for their watchdog abilities; others may become ill tempered with age and require very careful management.

TERRIERS:

These dogs are bred to dig or chase small animals from their dens in the ground. They generally are active and noisy (yappy) little dogs, but the noisiness makes them good watchdogs. Some dogs in this group are Jack Russell Terriers, Scotties, and Carin Terriers.

TOY DOGS:

These dogs are the only ones bred solely as pets and companions for man. The dogs in this group have bloodlines drawn from many sources such as Chihuahua, Spaniel, Hound, Pekingese, Pomeranian, and others. They are all very small.

NON-SPORTING:

These dogs are a miscellaneous group bred for purposes not included in other groups such as Boston Terriers, Bulldogs, Chow Chows, Dalmatians, French Bulldogs, and Poodles.

You may make a more detailed study of the many breeds of dogs by reading books from the library or pet stores.

HOUSING:

Most dogs can sleep comfortably inside your home or out; however, toy breeds should be kept inside the home. They cannot keep themselves warm in a doghouse, and short haired dogs, old dogs, and sick dogs need special housing.

If you decide to keep your dog outside, you will need a doghouse and a pen. The house should be large enough so your dog can turn around inside, but small enough so he can keep it warm with his body heat. The entry way should have a windbreak.

Extend the roof over the door of the house to keep out rain and snow. The roof should be remove-able so that the house can be easily cleaned.

The floor of the house should be off the ground so water will not drain into the bedding. Provide a shutter or window that can be opened and closed for ventilation.

Give your dog a bed of old clothing, blankets, or some other warm material, or you can buy commercial bedding. Be sure to keep the bed dry and clean.

Build your dog a pen 10 feet to 15 feet long and about 10 feet wide around his house. Build the fence using wire fencing high enough so he cannot jump over it and bury the bottom edge so he cannot dig under it. Dogs should never be allowed to run free because they may damage property, irritate neighbors, or form into packs and kill or injure livestock and game animals.

Many dogs are happier if they sleep indoors. They like to be a part of your family. If you keep your dog indoors, put his bed in a quiet corner of your home away from drafts, air vents, or radiators; excessive heat will dry out his skin.

FEEDING:

Give your dog a balanced diet. Commercial dog foods usually provide adequate nourishment for a healthy dog. Dry or canned dog foods are equally good. If you feed dry food, you may add enough water to moisten it. If you feed canned food, be sure to refrigerate any food left over. Although your dog may lick his feed pan clean, you should wash it after each feeding.

Never give your dog small bones that are likely to splinter, especially bones from pork or poultry. You may give him a large joint bone occasionally.

Keep clean fresh water available at all times. Do not use the same pan for water that you do for food.

Puppies are usually weaned when they are about 6 weeks old. This is just about the same time you will want to get your puppy. From weaning time until your puppy is 8 to 10 weeks old, feed him four or five times a day. Then feed him three times a day until he is about six months old; twice a day from 6 months to a year old; and after he is a year old, follow the instructions for feeding adult dogs.

Feed your puppy as much as he will clean up at each feeding. If he gets too fat, reduce the amount. For a few days after you get your new puppy, feed him the same kind of food he was getting at his previous home. Gradually change to the kind of food you intend to feed him. Remove the feed dish after each feeding until your puppy learns to clean up all of his food.

BATHING:

Give your dog a bath only as often as necessary for his health and comfort. Bathing too often will dry out his skin. You should not bathe a puppy until he is at least 3 months old unless absolutely necessary.

Bathe your dog in warm soapy water. Use mild, unscented soap. Massage his skin thoroughly, but try to keep water out of his eyes and ears. Rinse away all the soap with warm water and dry him off with a cloth or towel. Keep him indoors until he is completely dry. You may also use commercial preparations.

BRUSHING:

You should brush your dog often, especially if he has long hair. Brushing gets dirt and loose hair out of his coat that otherwise would get on the furniture and rugs. Frequent brushing reduces dog odor and the need for bathing.

TRAINING:

You should start training your dog as soon as possible after you get him. He will be eager to please you. Puppies should be about 3 months old before you try to give them any training except housebreaking. Many human organizations and dog clubs give obedience training.

When you train your dog, never beat him; a slap on the rump or scolding is sufficient. In obedience training, use simple, one word commands such as come, sit, or down.

Give your commands in a firm voice. When your dog obeys your command, praise him in a gentle voice and reward him with a few pats on the head. Each obedience lesson should last no longer than 15 minutes; give several lessons a day.

Give your dog his first obedience training at home. Then give him lessons away from home. After a while, he will learn to obey you anywhere in all kinds of circumstances.

HOUSEBREAKING:

If you have a yard, train your dog to relieve himself outdoors, on your own property, so he will not annoy others. In an apartment, you may need to teach him to use newspapers first then to go outdoors after he has learned to control himself.

Watch your dog and when you see him showing signs of restlessness, such as turning and sniffing, take him outside. Leave him outside long enough for him to relieve himself and then bring him in immediately. When weather is bad, he may not want to go outside, but take him anyway; he will finish quickly and come back inside.

When he has had an accident, scold him and show him the accident; then take him to his spot outdoors. Scrub the floor enough to remove even the slightest odor; dogs return to the same place if they smell the odor.

Always put your dog outside before going to bed at night, when you get up in the morning, after he has played or eaten. He will have accidents, but in a week or two, he should know what you want him to do.

If you must housebreak your dog on newspapers, spread several layers in a little used part of your apartment. Train him the same way you would train him to go outdoors.

After your dog has learned to use newspapers, take them away except at night. Take him outdoors in the daytime when you see he needs to go. As he gets older, he will learn to control himself and you can remove the newspapers altogether.

BAD HABITS:

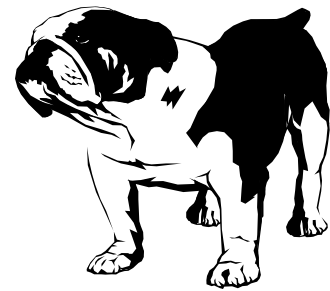
You should start breaking your dog of bad habits the day you get him. Be firm and let him know positively what he is not supposed to do.

BARKING: Sometimes dogs bark at every noise and every stranger. When they keep this up, they become nuisances.

When your dog starts barking, tell him "NO" and send him to bed or to another part of the house away from the cause. If this does not stop him, arrange with a friend to come to the door. When your dog barks, call out "NO" and throw empty tin cans near him (not at him). Repeat this a few times and he will get the idea he is not to bark.

CHASING CARS: This habit can cause automobile accidents as well as get your dog killed. Have a friend load a water pistol with water containing mild soap and slowly drive past. When your dog dashes out to the car, the friend can squirt the water in your dog's eyes. Another approach is to have a friend throw empty tin cans near your dog when he dashes out.

CHEWING: The best way to stop your dog from chewing shoes, furniture, and other things is to give him a hard rubber ball or bone. Also, several commercial products are available that are digestible. Reprimand him each time he chews on something that is not his own.

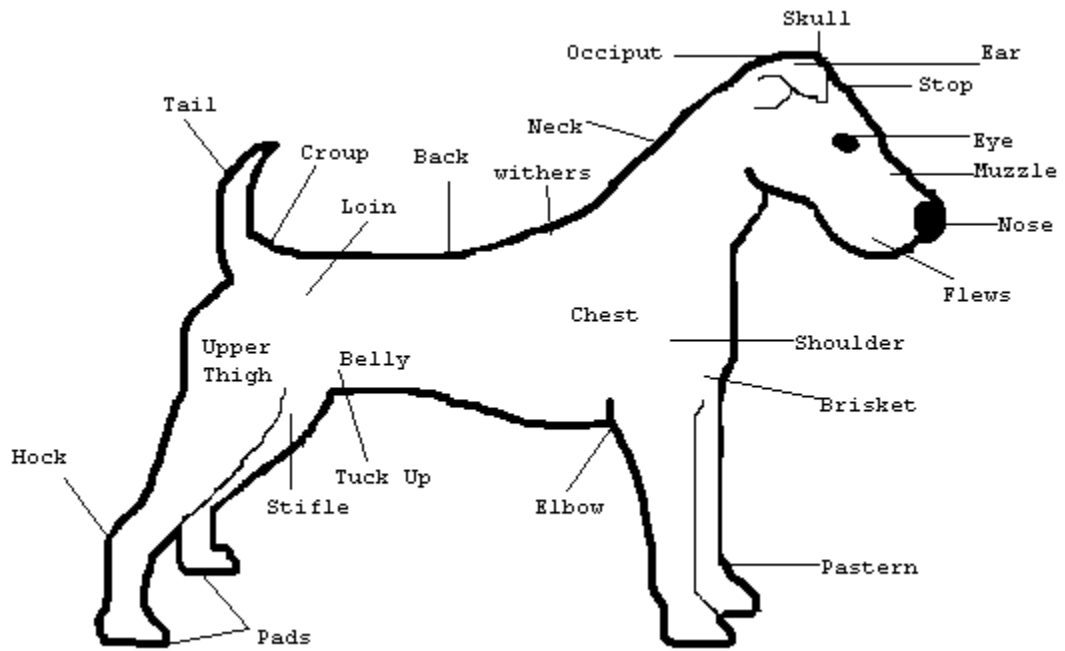


JUMPING ON PEOPLE: Your dog jumps on you and others to show affection, but this habit can be annoying. When he jumps on you, bump his chest with your knee and say "NO". If necessary, hit his nose with the palm of your hand or step on his rear toes. Repeat in a firm voice, "NO, DOWN", so he will know you are serious and not just playing.

DISEASES AND INJURIES:

When your dog is sick or injured, take him to a veterinarian. You can prevent most diseases and injuries by keeping your dog at home. When dogs are allowed to roam, they get sick and hurt, get into fights with other dogs, and females get pregnant during mating season. If you do not want your female dog to have puppies, talk with a veterinarian. Be sure to have your dog vaccinated against rabies and distemper, and also checked for worms. Heartworms are a very common type of worm that dogs get. To keep them from getting heartworms your veterinarian should give you the option of putting your dog on a preventative. They can be given orally as a pill or in a shot. The same type of thing can be done so that your dog does not get fleas. There are topical preventatives that can be done monthly to keep your dog from getting fleas.

Parts of a Dog



HAMSTERS:

Hamsters are members of the rodent family. They are about 6 inches long. These little creatures make active and playful pets that are easy to keep. Their coat is normally a reddish gold with white on the underside of the body.

Hamsters should be easy to tame, but you must work with him in order for him to remain tame. The best way to train your hamster is to quietly stroke his back without trying to lift him until he gets used to your touch. When he does, easily slide your fingers under his body and pick him up. Hold him firmly in your hand, while offering him something to eat with the other. When your hamster trusts you, he will climb over your hands, arms, feet, legs and into your pockets. You will be able to lift and handle him whenever you want.

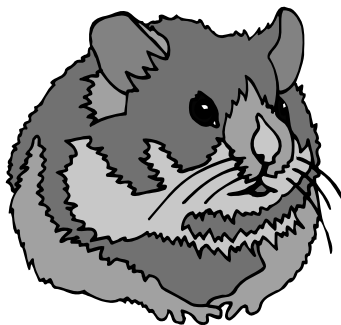
Keep your hamster in a cage inside and out of drafts. Other than fresh food and water, he should have an exercise wheel in his cage. To maintain a healthy and well-spirited hamster, some guidelines will need to be followed. For example, the cage of the hamster must be cleaned and disinfected weekly and fresh bedding should be introduced. Your hamster's water bottle should be cleaned and disinfected weekly as well. Store feed and bedding carefully to avoid contamination by other animals and insects. If you are housing more than one hamster in a single cage and one becomes sick, remove it from the cage as soon as possible. Hamsters are subject to respiratory problems and external parasites. These can be eliminated with good sanitation. Also, the environment in which the hamsters are maintained should be kept as constant as possible year-round. The temperature should remain about 65-75 degrees F, and the relative humidity at 55-60 percent. These conditions also correspond to the recommended temperature and humidity for rats. At a temperature of 45 degrees F, the animals will begin to go into hibernation. Exposure of the animals to excessive heat and/or sunlight may result in the animal's death. Try not to keep the cage next to a window.

Food is very important to maintaining a healthy hamster. Fresh food must be given to him everyday. Hamsters eat a special balance of food, mostly made up of vitamins A, D, E, and K and several of the B complex group.

Examples of deficiencies and their effects are:

1. Vitamin A- weight loss, poor hair coat, internal hemorrhaging in later stages.
2. Vitamin E- Muscular weakness, hyper irritability, and death
3. Thiamine- Polyneuritis.
4. Niacin- Weight loss, alopecia, and eventual death. There are available pellet feeds which are adequate for hamsters, and occasionally some fresh green vegetables may be provided. These vegetables help supply moisture.

Much has been said about the disposition of hamsters. They are quite docile and respond to kind treatment and a comfortable environment. Most of their fighting is directed from one animal to another. Their outstanding character is their fearlessness and occasional desire to impress the observer with its ferocity and freedom from inhibitions. Biting is an animal reflex just as it is a human reflex to jump when startled. Therefore, DO NOT mishandle or startle the animal. Working around and having animals can be a pleasure if the animals are docile.



GUINEA PIG:

The guinea pig is a quiet, gentle rodent, with a short stocky body, short ears, short legs, and no tail. Adult guinea pigs weigh about 1 3/4 to 2 1/2 pounds. They are vegetarians and are relatively easy to keep, and reproduce rapidly.

The principle types differ from one another in hair characteristics and color. A guinea pig's hair may be short and smooth, short and rough, or long and silky. The short haired English variety of guinea pig is the most common. The coat of the Abyssinian guinea pig is short and rough, and the Peruvian variety is long haired. Most guinea pigs have solid colors such as; black, white, brown, red, tan, or gold. Some have hair with mixed colors, alternating in bands of light and dark fur. Others are characterized by solid colors with white spots.

Guinea pigs should never be housed with any other species of animal. They should be kept indoors and the temperature should be kept between 60-85 degrees F. In mild climates, guinea pigs may be kept outdoors, provided some shelter is available to them. Since guinea pigs do not climb, jump, or gnaw on wood, the pens they are kept in do not need to be expensive. Most pens have screen wire or hardware cloth across the top and the sides. Cover the pen floors with wood shavings, shredded paper, straw, or similar material to absorb moisture. Clean the pen floors at least once a week.

Feed your guinea pig a balanced diet and supply them with fresh water every day. Suspend their food dish and water bottle above their bedding to prevent contamination by waste and dirt. Ground oats and wheat bran can supply the grain portion of their ration. Commercially made chows, made especially for guinea pigs, are available in pet and feed stores. They consist mainly of a mixture of grains and minerals compressed into pellets.

Guinea pigs cannot produce their own vitamin C, and without it they develop scurvy. Some pellets supply all the vitamin C requirements, but this vitamins potency lasts only a short period of time. Supplement your guinea pig's diet with fresh greens or hay.

Guinea pigs are vigorous, and can care for themselves almost from birth. They are born with their eyes open, and with hair and teeth. Within an hour after birth, they are able to move around. After 2 or 3 days they can eat solid food.

If your guinea pig starts to get a rough coat, loss of appetite, and starts to lose weight rapidly, it could be because of a disease. Since many symptoms of diseases that affect guinea pigs are similar, even a trained person might have difficulty in distinguishing one disease from another. Your veterinarian can recommend the best measures to control and eradicate diseases. To prevent diseases, here are a few tips to follow:

1. Sanitize pens and food receptacles at least once every two weeks. Wash them in hot water then apply a safe, effective disinfectant.
2. Feed your guinea pigs a balanced diet. Guard against food contamination by mice and rats.
3. Provide fresh water in clean containers daily.
4. Protect your guinea pig from drafts, cold, and excessive moisture.

Another health problem guinea pigs face is lice. The guinea pig may be deloused by dipping or dusting with powder containing rotenone. Keep a careful record of the insecticides strength and the date of treatment. Dipping is the most effective method of treating guinea pigs for lice. To prepare the dip, take soapy water and mix 10 tablespoons (2 ounces) of 3 to 5 percent rotenone with each gallon of water. A single dipping is usually sufficient; at the same time make sure to clean and dust the cage with rotenone as well. Between each dip dust the guinea pigs with 3 to 5% rotenone to control lice.

By following this simple guide of feeding, housing, and overall care, you should have a healthy little friend that could live up to seven years or longer!



GERBILS:

A popular pet for children is a gerbil. Gerbils are light brown with black tipped fur covering a slate gray undercoat. They originated in the desert and are similar to rats and mice. At their largest size, most gerbils only weigh in at about 70-90 grams.

Pet gerbils should be easy to tame and play with. These little creatures are very curious by nature and have no fear of people. Although gerbils are fun to have and to play with, you should know a few things to ensure the safety of yourself and your little friend. When picking up your gerbil, never lift him by the tail. Always slide your fingers under his body and hold him firmly with both hands so he can not jump out.

Keep your gerbil in a wooden, wire, or metal cage, or a glass aquarium. The cages should be at least 14 inches square and about one foot deep. Cages and other supplies can be purchased in a pet supply store. Be sure to keep the cage in a part of the house that is free of drafts. If the cage is put in direct sunlight, make sure to provide your gerbil with a source of shade. Put a small shelf in one corner of the cage about three inches from the floor. Your gerbil will burrow through his bedding and sleep under the shelf. Keep a block of wood in the cage for your gerbil to chew on, and also include some toys to keep him busy. Wood shaving, paper shreds, or some other absorbent material need to be in the bottom of the cage. The cage needs to be cleaned about once a week and the bedding should be replaced during the cleaning.

Fresh food and water must be kept available at all times. Gerbils eat the same kind of food that is eaten by mice, hamsters, and guinea pigs. They like commercial pellets, grains, and cereals. Also, they like fresh fruits and vegetables just like you do! Since the gerbil is from the desert, he does not always need a lot of water. Do not get concerned if it does not seem like he is drinking a lot.

Gerbils have a very low disease rate, meaning that they do not get sick as often or as easy as some pets do as far a colds and fevers.

CAGE BIRDS:

For centuries people have kept different kinds of birds in cages as members of the household. They serve as company, provide song and color, and may be taught simple tricks. Some can mimic the sounds of humans and household noises.

For a bird to be a good pet, it must be happy and content while in close contact with people. It also must be able to live on foods that you can easily obtain.

BUYING A BIRD:

1. Talk to someone who owns a bird already and find out what kind of responsibility comes with owning a bird.
2. Select what kind of bird you want and where it will be kept in the house.
3. Obtain a cage suited for your choice of bird and a supply of feed it is familiar with.
4. Do research on your type of bird. Learn its history and what it will be like.
5. Be sure to get a strong, healthy bird that is used to living in a cage.
6. The bird you are looking for should be active. Its feathers should appear smooth and should be held close to the bird's body. The scales on its legs should appear waxy and fit close to the skin. The bird's eyes should be bright and alert.
7. The bird's droppings should have some form and should not be yellow or green.
8. The floor of the cage should not contain many loose feathers.
9. Also, observe the birds in nearby cages. Birds caged close to sick birds may have become infected by them though not show signs of it.

Remember that this pet store or breeder can guarantee a bird to sing, but they can not make sure it will live. Spend enough time selecting your bird to be sure that it is normal and appears healthy. Then be careful when taking it home so that it does not become chilled or overheated in the carrier.

CARING FOR YOUR BIRD:

Any bird may be frightened and nervous. Give it time to get used to you and its new surroundings. Try not to bother it or try to play with it for a while until it starts to get used to you. Little brothers or sisters, the family cat and dog should not be allowed near the bird's cage until it has had time to adjust to its new home. Your bird will be much happier if its cage is located where there is not too much noise or traffic.

The bird should have the same amount of light each day. In some places, sunlight may prove to be too warm, if it shines directly into the bird's cage.

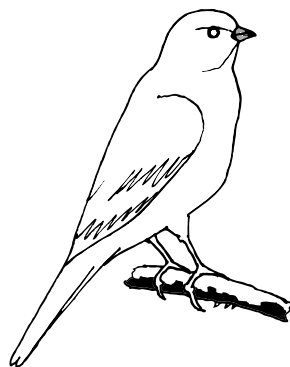
The key to keeping any pet healthy is cleanliness. Clean food, water, cages, and equipment are very important. The appearance and action of your bird will be the first sign that he is sick. A few things to look for would include: ruffled feathers, eating less, drinking more, discolored or watery droppings, and decreased activity.

In treating your sick bird, first check its feed and water supply. Has it been getting clean food and water? Has there been a recent change in diet? These are two of the first questions you should answer. Also, since most cage birds are from the tropics, it is generally wise to make sure your bird is warm enough. A hospital cage, enclosed on three sides, with a small bulb for heat, is often the only treatment needed. This cage should be kept around 85 degrees F, away from other birds, and out of drafts.

Bird diseases are very hard for the normal hobbyist to identify correctly. Therefore, consult with a veterinarian in cases of serious illness when your bird does not improve within two or three days of general treatment. The following are some possible and most common diseases and/or their treatment for most birds.

1. Diarrhea- This is usually noticed because of watery droppings and dirty feathers around the vent area. The bird may not be very active. (NOTE: soft-billed birds may have watery droppings because of their diet). Treatment usually consists of placing the bird in a hospital cage and withholding green feed. (A little Terramycin or other antibiotic may help).
2. Egg-Bound- This is a condition in female birds in which the bird is unable to lay an egg. The bird will make straining movements, attempting to lay the egg, often on or near the nest. This bird should be placed in a small box on top of a warm hot water bottle (100 degrees F). A small amount of mineral oil placed inside the vent with a cotton swab may also help. If this fails it may be necessary to break the egg and carefully let out some of the contents. Crush the shell by squeezing the vent then pick out the pieces of shell with tweezers.
3. Sore Eyes- Often this problem is noticed first by the bird's red or swollen eyelids, with the bird rubbing the side of its head against the perch or the cage. This problem can usually be relieved with a warm and weak boric acid eyewash.

4. Sore Feet- This condition is usually caused by unclean or rough perches. Clean the perches. Wash the bird's feet daily with mild boric acid solution and apply zinc oxide salve.
5. Overgrown Toenails- These should be carefully trimmed once a month if normal wear does not keep them in shape.
6. Lice or Mites- Examine the bird for these parasites monthly and treat with approved powders or sprays.
7. Feather Pulling- This may be caused by a lack of some requirement in the feed or by low humidity.
8. Unexpected Molt- Normally birds lose their feathers during late summer and early fall. Molting at other times could be due to poor management in feeding, keeping the cage too warm, or varying the length of daylight.
9. Ornithosis (psittacosis) - "Bird Fever" is the name of a virus disease that can effect all species of birds. It was originally called psittacosis, or "Parrot Fever", because it was thought to only occur in this species. The disease is important because it can affect people. (This has led to a restriction on importations and interstate shipments of birds.) The disease can be cured and is very rare in cage birds raised by individuals. Symptoms vary, but are similar to those of a very bad cold. It will be difficult for you to diagnose this disease, since it is not as common, so rely on your veterinarian to identify it.
10. Newcastle Disease- This is a serious disease that can affect any bird. In the early stages, it looks like a bad cold. Later it may cause the bird to be unable to stand or walk properly. Death may result. No medication works very well against this disease. It spreads easily and exists in many foreign countries. Because it can easily spread to chicken and turkey flocks, the government has set up strict rules for importing pet birds in order to reduce the spreading of Newcastle disease.



GENERAL NUTRITION OF CAGE BIRDS:

Some basic needs for all cage birds to have in their diets are protein, vitamins, minerals, energy, fresh air and clean water.

Soft-bills such as Robins, Mynahs, Toucans, and Nightingales have a basic diet of insects and fruits. Because of this diet their droppings are a bit messier than those of seed eaters, or hard-billed birds.

A mixture of dried insects, ant eggs, kemp meal, and suet is a good ration for soft-bills. The size of the birds you are caring for will suggest the size of mix or pellets to feed. The smaller breeds of soft-bills can be fed a mockingbird mix, while the larger soft-bills can be fed a mynah mix. These mixtures are usually very dry and are best when fed along with a grated carrot or apple added for moisture. This moisture is in addition to the drinking water. Soft-bills do not need grit or gravel.

Other than the commercial mixes, your birds will enjoy a few treats. Hard boiled eggs, bits of hamburger, insects, worms, and fresh fruit are all tidbits your bird will enjoy. These treats, and especially mealworms, can be used if you are taming your bird. Young soft-bills need generous amounts of live insects each day to be healthy, and this tends to discourage many people from breeding these interesting birds.

The "finch mixture" is the stock food for hard-billed birds. It is usually made of about one part red-millet, two to three parts common yellow millet, three to four parts small white millet, and two to three parts canary seed.

You may feed green food such as watercress, lettuce, cabbage, and alfalfa in limited amounts. Watch for loose droppings, and if they are present, quit feeding the greens for four days. Also, clover, dandelions, spinach, and fruits such as apples, pears, and oranges, can be fed in small amounts. Feed only what the bird will eat in about 12 hours. Remove uneaten green feed everyday. Seaweed is often added to egg and other mixtures to provide iodine and mineral. This is usually dried and then finely ground.

Cheddar and cottage cheese can be given in small pieces. These are good sources of proteins, especially for molting and nesting birds. For variety in the diet you can hard boil an egg for 20 minutes, and then mash the whole egg very fine and add two tablespoons of dried and crumbled whole wheat bread, crackers, and toast. Mix completely and feed as a crumbly mass.

Cuttlebone is a fish bone that birds will pick at and get some mineral from. This will give them exercise and wear their beaks at the same time, both of which are good for your bird.

Some colored foods will make the bird's feathers brighter. Feed them to birds during normal molt, or to young birds at the age of ten weeks. These foods are very effective in certain kinds of canaries in bringing out color. One colored food may be made by mixing one tablespoon of egg food and 1/2 teaspoon of paprika with two or three drops of olive oil. Give birds 1/2 teaspoon per day until feathers show color. This amount can be reduced slowly until the end of the molt. During this time, also offer the bird flax seed in addition to the regular bird seed you buy at the pet shop. To help keep this color, it is necessary to keep the bird away from direct strong light.

Hard-bills need grit to digest their food. Since they do not have teeth they eat the grit to grind the food. It stays in the gizzard. Commercial grit usually contains quartz sand, shell, bone, and salt. Grit on the floor of the cage helps keep the birds feet clean.

The following are specific diets for hard-bills

Parakeets- Use parakeet mixes; these contain only mainly millet and oat grains.

Canaries- Canary mixes contain rape and canary seed in addition to millet. Purchased mixtures are all right, but if you use one make sure it is fresh. Crack a few seeds to be sure you are feeding more than just hulls.

Cockatiels- Use parakeet mixtures plus hemp and sunflower seeds. These birds may also relish whole wheat bread, which may be soaked in milk to make a crumbly mass. Chicken starter mash can be used for young and old cockatiels and should be used in crumbled form.

Lovebirds- These can be fed cockatiel diets and given small amounts of apple or green food.

Finches- The diet should contain all of the bird's needs in the proper amounts and be thoroughly mixed. Special finch mixes should be used because these birds are so small and eat only small amounts. They also enjoy small amounts of green foods.

Doves- Mixture of milo, wheat, millet, small field peas, and small kernel corn are used. They will eat quite a bit of feed when feeding young in the nest.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF CAGE BIRDS:

When thinking of cage or pet birds, most usually three different breeds come to mind, parrots, parakeets, and canaries. There are many other kinds currently kept in homes, but these are the three most popular.

PARROTS:

Parrots are brightly colored birds that make entertaining pets. You can teach them to talk, laugh, cry, and whistle. When you teach your parrot to talk and make other sounds, stand close to the cage and repeat your sounds or words over and over again. Continue this lesson 10-15 minutes and repeat the lesson several times a day. If your parrot refuses to pay attention, cover his cage with cloth. He can still hear your voice, but other objects in the room cannot distract his attention from a lesson.

Some parrots need larger cages than most other cage birds. Cages and other equipment for parrots are available at the pet store. Parrots will not mate easily in captivity.

CANARIES:

Canaries have been bred by people since the first century, when Piney, a Roman historian, caught some and named them after the Canary Islands where he found them. These islands are off the west coast of Africa and were named Canaria in 40 BC by King Juba of Mauritania because of the large dogs that also lived on the isles. Canis means "dog" in Latin, and so one of our favorite cage birds is really named "dog").

Male canaries are normally good singers, which is why they are so favored as pets. Some females sing a little, but their song is usually shorter than the males. When buying canaries, you need to realize that there are no good physical clues to tell if it is a boy or a girl. Since only the males sing well, they are more valuable than the females. This is why it is very important to only buy birds from a reliable store or breeder. Choosing a bird that will not have to be shipped a long distance is a good idea, too.

Dealers will be able to assure you that your male canary will sing within a given length of time, and this protects you from paying male canary prices for a female that does not sing. To protect themselves, dealers will usually stamp the wings of your bird with permanent ink, so that if you bring your bird back, they can be sure it is a bird you purchased from them. Any ink that may show on the feathers is only temporary and will disappear with the bird's next molt.

Other than just being able to sing, canaries are also known for their wide range of colors they can display. These colors include yellow, orange, white, and gray. Some birds may have more than two of these colors on their feathers.

Just as the prices of the birds differ from those that sing and those that do not sing, there is a price scale based on the color of the bird. As a rule, the more red there is on a canary, the higher the price.

Some of the many kinds of Canaries include:

The Roller- This bird is noted for its songs. It sings with a closed beak, where most canaries are "choppers" that sing with an open beak.

The Yorkshire- A larger canary, over 8 inches in length, was brought over from England. It is a slender bird, and it needs a bigger cage to suit its size.

The Lizard Canary- This bird is noted for its color pattern. Its back looks like the scales of a reptile, hence the name. Besides the body coloring, this bird has a cap of solid color covering the top of the head.

Crested- The crested canary has a flat rosette of feathers that grow outward from a center point on the top of the head.

Frilled- The frilled canary has long, leaf-like feathers on the back of the head, shoulders, sides, and breast.

PARAKEETS (BUDGIES):

The most popular cage bird in America is the shell parakeet, or budgerigar. It is a colorful little bird with a clownish behavior and a love for people. It can be taught to say a few words or short phrases, as well as do simple tricks.

The normal parakeet is very active. Its busy life uses up considerable amounts of energy, so it should be given a good basic diet. Normally, this would be a packaged parakeet mix consisting of canary seed, millet, and hulled oats. Your parakeet will also need grit or gravel of "parakeet size" to help them digest their food. In addition, the parakeet will relish a small amount of green feed, such as clover, vegetable trimmings, dandelions, or fresh fruit.

Your parakeet will usually take a bath if given some water in a shallow dish at the bottom of his cage. Do not bathe your bird or allow him to bathe if the house is drafty or if its cage is near an open window or door.

Sometimes a parakeet might bring up food it has already eaten. This is an attempt to feed an imaginary mate or a mirror image and it is nothing to worry about.

The "budgie" is a very rugged little bird despite its delicate appearance. If you start with a healthy bird, give it a good diet, and keep it out of drafts and extremes of temperature, it should live for several years.



RECORD SHEET

MINI 4-H SMALL ANIMAL

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____ Division _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

School Attending _____

Please answer the following questions. Attach this completed record sheet to your exhibit or scrapbook.

I read all of this book. _____

The Small Animal(s) I learned more about was: _____

The activities from the Activity Page I completed are:

1. Activity: _____ When Completed: _____

Describe: _____

2. Activity: _____ When Completed: _____

Describe: _____

3. Activity: _____ When Completed: _____

Describe: _____

4. Activity: _____ When Completed: _____

Describe: _____

5. Activity: _____ When Completed: _____

Describe: _____

6. What did you like most learning about SMALL ANIMALS in this book? _____

7. List the people who helped you with this project: _____

We hope you enjoyed working with your Mini 4-H Small Animals project. Keep up the enthusiasm and when you are in the third grade you can have more fun by joining a 4-H club, and continue with the Small Animal project and/or enroll in other projects.

If you have any questions with your Mini 4-H project you can call or stop in the Extension Office. Our phone number is 736-3724 and we are located in the Wright Building, 80 S. Jackson Street, in Franklin.