

Clay County 4-H



MINI 4-H PROGRAM

PET ANIMAL PROJECT MANUAL

Clay County Cooperative Extension Service

Purdue Extension - Clay County

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PROJECT EXHIBIT TAG

Mini 4-H Pet Animal

Name: _____

Age: _____

Welcome to "MINI 4-H". If you're reading this, you've probably signed up for the Pet Animal project. We're glad to have you. Mini 4-H Pet Animal is for small children like yourself who are just starting out and want to learn more about caring for their animals.



What we hope you will learn while taking Pet Animals is outlined below. They are called "Project Objectives".

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Keep your pet's cage/bedding clean.
2. Keep food/water fresh.
3. Play with your pet.
4. Take care of a sick pet.

GERBILS

A gerbil is a small, furry rodent. He has a tuft of hair at the tip of his long tail. His natural home is in the deserts of Asia, Africa, and eastern Europe. Gerbils will not bite unless you frighten or hurt them.

A HOME FOR YOUR GERBIL



You will need:

10-gallon tank wire mesh lid
food dish
water bottle & holder
5 pound bag of wood shavings
small juice can with both ends removed

CARE

1. You should have at least 4 inches of wood shavings in the bottom of your tank so that the gerbil can burrow underneath.
2. Remember that gerbils are very good jumpers so you should keep your wire mesh lid on tight.
3. Do not put your tank in direct sunlight.
4. Clean your tank once every three weeks washing your tank with soap and water and then putting in new wood shavings.
5. Never pick up a sleeping gerbil as this might frighten them and they may bite you.
6. If you hold your gerbil every day, it will become tame.

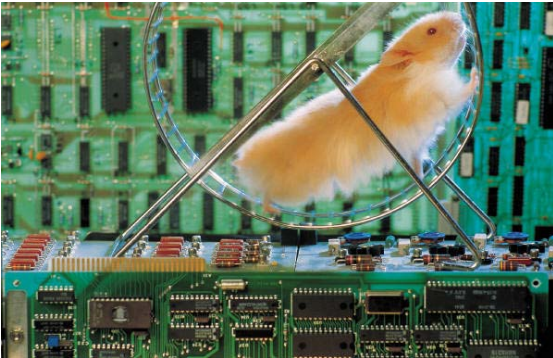
FOOD

1. A tablespoon of dry gerbil food each day is enough for a balanced diet.
2. Sunflower seeds contain a lot of fat so use these as a "treat".
3. Twice a week you can give your gerbil a small piece of apple, fresh celery or carrot. Don't give them too much or they might get sick.

HAMSTER

A hamster looks like a tiny, furry, teddy bear. He has a very short tail. His natural home is in the desert of Syria. Hamsters sleep during the day and are very active at night. They have large cheek pouches where they store food or litter.

A HOME FOR YOUR HAMSTER



You will need:

- hamster cage at least 10" x 20"
- exercise wheel
- water bottle and holder
- large juice can with one side removed
- food dish newspapers
- bedding - wood shavings, hay or hamster litter
- wood to gnaw on
- large piece of plastic or oil cloth

CARE

1. Your hamster cage has a pan that can be removed for cleaning. Put 3 or 4 layers of newspapers on the bottom of the pan, allowing the newspapers to extend up around the sides. Then fill the pan with at least 2 inches of bedding. Clean your cage once a week by washing the pan and putting in new bedding and newspaper.
2. Do not put your tank in direct sunlight.
3. Once you get your hamster and put him in his new cage, don't pick him up for at least a week. Let him get use to his new home. When you do pick him up use gloves if your hamster seems easily frightened because he might bite. Slowly place your hand in the cage and let the hamster sniff it.

FOOD

1. One-half cup of dry hamster food each day is enough for a balanced diet.
2. Your hamster also likes carrots, lettuce, celery, potatoes, apples, dry dog food, milk, peanuts, corn, soybeans, wheat germ oil and cod liver oil. Don't give him too much. They will hoard their food in their cheek pouches and could become very sick from overeating.

GUINEA PIG

A guinea pig is not a pig at all. Perhaps, they got the “pig” part of his name because his funny whistle is like the squeal of a pig. A guinea pig is not as active as a gerbil or a hamster. They are very friendly and gentle. There are several different types of guinea pigs so shop around. The easiest kind to care for is an English Guinea Pig. They have short hair.

A HOME FOR YOUR GUINEA PIG

You will need:

a cage 2 feet long and 1 foot wide with a pan in the bottom
a little house to sleep
water bottle and holder
dispenser for dry food
newspapers
bedding – wood shavings, hay, or kitty litter
wood to gnaw on
large piece of plastic or oil cloth



CARE

1. Your guinea pig cage has a pan that can be removed for cleaning. Put 4 or 6 layers of newspapers on the bottom of the pan. Then fill the pan with at least 2 inches of bedding. Your guinea pig will make a mess so you must clean the cage at least three times a week.
2. It is very important that you find a good place for the cage. It must not get much cooler than 70 degrees and it shouldn't be drafty. If it gets too cool at night, put a cover over the cage. Never put the cage in direct sunlight.
3. Play with your pet every day. He will become very tame. Scratch him under his chin and on his head.

FOOD

1. Keep a supply of guinea pig pellets in the dispenser at all times. Your guinea pig will nibble at them often. Change his water daily.
2. Feed your guinea pig vegetables and fruit (lettuce, carrot tops, spinach, clover, dandelion leaves, carrots, celery, apples, tomatoes) once a day. At night remove any left over treats.

GOLDFISH

You cannot hold and pet goldfish, but you will enjoy watching these graceful fish swim.

A HOME FOR YOUR GOLDFISH



You will need:

10 gallon fish tank with lid feeding ring
dip tube siphon
two 2-gallon pails
three 5-pound bags of gravel six water plants
goldfish food

CARE

1. Before you fill your tank with water, you should rinse the inside, even if it is new.
2. Rinse the gravel, a bag at a time.
3. A good place for your fish tank is on a table near a window. Goldfish need good light but not too much sunlight.
4. You should use your siphon and clean the bottom of your tank once a week.

FOOD

1. There are many different foods that you can buy for your goldfish. There are dried and frozen foods, pellets, pastes and live foods. Try them all.
2. Feed your goldfish once a day by placing the food inside the feeding ring.

PARAKEET

You can tame a young parakeet easily. He will learn to sit on your finger. If you are patient, you can teach him to talk. The best time to train your pet is at night.

A HOME FOR YOUR PARAKEET



You will need:

- a large cage at least 9 inches wide, 18 inches long, and 13 inches high
- feeding cup and water cup
- two or three perches that are different shapes
- swinging perch
- plastic or glass
- bird bath
- paper to fit the sliding tray at the bottom of the cage
- cover for your cage

CARE

1. Put your bird's cage in a room with no drafts. Do not put your parakeet in the kitchen as they are very sensitive to odors.
2. Always cover your parakeet's cage at night.
3. You should change the paper at the bottom of your pet's cage three times a week. Always put clean gravel on the clean paper.
4. Rinse the water dish and fill it with fresh water each day.
5. Clean out the seed dish every day even if it looks full.
6. You should give the cage a thorough cleaning once a month.
7. If your parakeet scratches a lot, he may have mites. You must take your parakeet to the veterinarian if necessary.

FOOD

1. Parakeet seed. It is important to have fresh seed, so do not buy too much at one time.
2. A cuttlebone. This is the dried shell of a cuttle fish. It helps build a strong beak and good bones for your parakeet.
3. Lettuce, carrot tops, spinach or dandelions should be fed to your parakeet 3 times a week. Be sure they are fresh. Do not put these in the bottom of the cage, tie them to the side with string.
4. Gravel. A parakeet has no teeth so he must have gravel to help him digest his food. Put some gravel on the cage floor.
5. Polyvisol (a vitamin in liquid form. Add one drop to the drinking water once a week.

CAT

A cat or kitten is a good pet for the city. He will not be unhappy in close quarters. He will get enough exercise by climbing onto high shelves, exploring all the dark closets, and playing with you! It is a big responsibility to raise a cat because he is not kept in a cage it is up to you to keep him safe.

A HOME FOR YOUR CAT or KITTEN



You will need:

a place to sleep (a basket with a soft piece of blanket or a cardboard box with one side removed)
litter box & litter

CARE

1. Fill your litter box with at least 4 inches of litter.
2. As soon as you can, take your cat or kitten to the veterinarian for a checkup. Your veterinarian will give your pet shots to protect him from cat diseases.
3. Clean the litter box frequently to avoid odors.
4. A cat must have something to scratch. Pet stores sell scratching posts.
5. Playing with your cat is good exercise.

FOOD

1. Your pet should be fed at least two times a day. Dry cat food contains the proper balance of protein, vitamins, and minerals for cats.
2. Try giving your kitten 1/2 cup of dry food moisten with 1/4 cup of warm milk. If he eats every bit and looks for more, increase the amount you give him next time. A cat should have dry food kept out all the time.
3. If your pet doesn't finish his food, place it in the refrigerator so it doesn't spoil.
4. Vary your pet's meals by giving him cooked mackerel, chicken, liver, kidney or heart at one meal every few days. Also, cooked vegetables mixed in with the meat are good for your pet.
5. Do not feed your pet any bones.
6. Be sure that you cut your pet's food into tiny pieces.

DOG

A dog is a good pet as long as it has plenty of room to grow. Dogs love a lot of attention.

A HOME FOR YOUR DOG or PUPPY



You will need:

a place to sleep (a dog bed or a cardboard box with the top and one side removed)
food & water bowls

CARE

1. You will have to housebreak your pet if you are going to keep it inside. This is a big job.
2. Your pet likes to chew on things. A large round beef bone is good to chew on or an old leather shoe.
3. Teach your pet to obey you.
4. It is important to play with your pet because it gives her exercise, it's a lot of fun and it's a good way to let her know that you love her.

FOOD

1. Dry food is cheaper than canned food and it is just as nutritious. On the outside of the bag there are directions for feeding a dog according to its weight.
2. Learn how much to feed your dog. Dogs can get sick from eating too much.
3. Your full grown dog needs 1 to 2 meals a day. A puppy should be fed 2 to 3 times a day.
4. Keep fresh water in your pet's bowl at all times.

MORE ABOUT YOUR PETS AND THEIR NEEDS

1. Remember that your pet lives all of his life in a small space. He cannot move to a new home when his cage becomes damp and dirty. It is a good practice to clean your pet's cage once a month with a liquid disinfectant. This will kill any germs that soap and water have not killed.
2. Some advice about water bottles. Check to be sure that water is not slowly dripping out of the bottle. Do not fill your water bottle all the way to the top.
3. Almost all animals bite when they are frightened. It is their way of protecting themselves. *NEVER PICK UP A SLEEPING ANIMAL!* If a pet bites you accidentally and you are bleeding, tell your mom or dad right away.
4. Pets get sick just as people do, sometimes for no apparent reason. You can tell when your pet is sick. He will look and behave differently. You will know if something is wrong if he has runny eyes, snuffles, or lies quietly refusing to eat or drink. If your parents have not had a lot of experience caring for animals, it is a good idea to take your sick pet to the veterinarian to be checked.
5. **How long will your pet live?**

The average life of each of the animals described in this manual

Cat	15 years
Dog	12 years
Guinea Pig	4 - 5 years
Gerbil	4 years
Goldfish	10 years
Hamster	2 years
Parakeet	10 years

6. ***Good luck with your pet!***

What will you exhibit...

You will exhibit a notebook or folder with a short story about your pet. This should include at least 3 pictures of you and your pet. You should include your pet's name, age, and what you feed it. Don't forget to give your story a title.



MINI4-H CHECK SHEET



 1. Is your exhibit tag on correctly?

(Place on the front cover of your notebook in the lower right hand corner)

 2. Are your records complete?

(Include your "record sheet" in your notebook)

 3. Is your work neat, clean, and your very best?

 4. Are you pleased with what you have completed?



**"PET ANIMAL
RECORD SHEET
MINI 4-H PROGRAM**



Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Please answer the following questions. Include this completed record sheet in your project. See you at the fair!!!

1. What type of pet do you have?

2. What is the name of your pet?

3. How old is your pet?

4. Where do you keep your pet at home?

5. How often do you clean your pets cage/bed?

6. What do you feed your pet?

Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____