Now that you have decided to take a cavy project we would like to give you a month by month idea of what you need to do with your cavy project. This is for first time members as well as previous cavy project members.

**January**

\* Sign up for 4-H cavy project and purchase cavy project and resource books. (Order through your 4-H club advisor).

\* If you do not already have your cavy, research all the breeds (13) to see which one is right for you. Consider how much space you have for a pen, the temperament of the cavy, if you want it to be cuddly or mainly just observe it, how much time you will have for grooming, if you want a cavy with long hair or short hair or if you will use it as a pet, for show or for breeding. You can go to the ARBA website (www.arba.net) or the ACBA website (www.acbaonline.com) to get information on the breeds. Contact local breeders to see if they have the breed you have chosen. If they do not, they can usually help you find someone that does. **No pet store cavy.**

\* If you have your cavy already, continue to work with them. The more you handle them, the better they will behave. Trim toenails monthly.

\*Make sure your cavy is getting plenty of fresh water which has Vitamin C added to it or feed plenty of fruits and vegetables high in Vitamin C. Make sure the bottle is working correctly and is not plugged up with slime. Change water daily.

\*Make sure your cavy is getting the proper amount of food. Check the feed

lable to see how much you need to be feeding. Feed a good quality cavy pellet.

\*Clean pens weekly and maintain a good sanitation program.

Do not forget to wash food bowls and water bottles.

\*Do monthly health checks as you are practicing showmanship with your cavy.

\*Plan your breeding program for the year. Maintain good breeding records.

If you breed now you will probably have seniors for the fair or older intermediates.

**February**

\*Purchase your animal anytime between now and **May 25** if you need one.

\*Continue to work with cavy and practice showmanship. Continue doing the monthly health checks. Trim toenails monthly.

\*Maintain good feeding and watering program. Provide plenty of fruits and vegetables that are high in Vitamin C or make sure you put a Vitamin C supplement in the water.

\*Clean pens weekly and maintain good sanitation program. Don’t forget those bowls and bottles.

\*Plan breeding program (advanced members). Keep good breeding records.

If you breed in February you will probably have intermediates for the fair.

\*Attend Stark County Rabbit and Cavy Breeders ARBA sanctioned show

(third Saturday in February).

**March**

\*Make sure you are signed up to take a 4-H cavy project by **March 15.**

\*Check Junior Fair website (www.starkcountyjrfair4h.com) for cavy rules.

\*Start working in your 4-H project books. It’s not too early to start studying for skillathon and showmanship.

**\***Continue working with cavy and practicing showmanship. Do monthly health checks and trim toenails.

\*Maintain a good feeding and watering program. Don’t forget the most important nutrient for your cavy is water. **Don’t forget that Vitamin C.**

\*Maintain good sanitation program for the health of your animals. Clean pens weekly. Clean bowls and water bottles.

\*If you breed now you will probably have young intermediates or juniors for the fair. Keep good breeding records. Remember do not handle your sow the last month of her pregnancy. Make sure you know when to wean your litters.

\*Research possible ARBA sanctioned rabbit and cavy show dates to see if you can attend and show your animals for experience or just attend to see different

breeds for breed id practice.

\*Evaluate breeding stock to see if you need to make a change. You must have your animals in your possession by May 25. (This is for advanced members).

**April**

\*Attend Junior Fair rabbit and cavy clinic. It is **extremely important for all first year** **members to attend**. All taking a rabbit or cavy project should attend. Very important handouts and information will be passed out at this clinic.

\*Continue working in 4-H project books. Make sure you read the member project guidelines to see what is required. Start working on poster for the poster contest. Don’t forget there is a cash prize.

**\***Continue working with cavy and practicing showmanship. Do monthly health checks and trim toenails.

\*Maintain good feeding and watering program. Don’t forget the most important

nutrient for your cavy is water. Make sure they are getting some form of Vitamin C, either in their water or fruits and vegetables.

\*Maintain good sanitation program for the health of your animals. Clean pens weekly. Clean bowls and water bottles.

\*Breed for junior aged animals for the fair. Make sure you keep good breeding records. Wean at the appropriate time.

**May**

\*Must have project animal(s) by **May 25.**

\*Attend OSRBA Mini Convention the first weekend in May (Ohio State Fairgrounds Columbus, OH). See many breeds that you generally don’t see in this area. You have the opportunity to show, practice breed id, participate in a judging contest, and participate in educational contests. Contact a committee member if interested.

\*Breed for junior aged animals if breeding wasn’t successful earlier. If you breed now they will be young juniors and they may not make weight. Make sure you

keep good breeding records.

\*Continue working in project books. Study for skillathon. View website (starkcountyjrfair4h.com) to practice for skillathon and showmanship.

\*Continue working with animals. Practice showmanship, trim toenails,

groom cavy, bathe cavy if necessary (make sure you are allowed to bathe your breed) and do monthly health checks.

\*Maintain good feeding and watering program.

\*Continue good sanitation practices. Clean pens weekly. Don’t forget to clean

food bowls and water bottles. If you have cages that can be taken outdoors to clean and sanitize, scrub them well and leave them out in the sun for an hour or two to dry. Remember the sun is the best natural sanitizer.

**June**

\*Check into showing at the Ohio State Fair (there is a special small animal day at the fair). Entry deadline is June 20th. This is a one day show. Call a committee member for information.

\*Maintain good sanitation practices. Clean pens weekly. Sanitize food and water bowls and bottles. Provide good ventilation in your caviary to prevent odors and overheating. Do not have any drafts.

\*Maintain good feeding and watering practices. Make sure cavy have plenty of clean, fresh, cool water. Don’t forget Vitamin C.

\*Continue working with animals. Practice showmanship. Trim toenails. Groom, removing loose hair. Do monthly health checks.

\*Continue to keep good breeding records.

\*Continue working in project books. Study for skillathon and showmanship. Utilize website (Starkcountyjrfair4h.com).

\*It is too late to breed for junior aged animals for the fair. They will be too small and the mothers will not be in condition to go either.

**July**

\*Attend pre-registration clinic. You can get your animal tagged for free if your animal does not already have one. Have your entry form with you (it is attached to your cavy rules) and fill out as much as you can. At the clinic the rabbit and cavy committee will check over your cavy and help you enter it into the correct breed, age, variety, and sex class. We will also help you determine which showmanship class you will enter. You can turn in your entry form here.

\*Entries must be turned in, in **July to the Jr. Fair Office to be able to show at the fair. Check calendar for the exact date.**

\*Provide good ventilation in your caviary to prevent urine smells and overheating. If using fans, do not blow them directly on your animals. Clean more frequently to reduce odors. Make sure there are no drafts.

\*Water frequently. Cavy need clean, fresh water at all times during hot weather. Keep water bottles very clean. They will drink better from a clean bottle.

\*Groom animals more often to ensure their coat is in good condition for the fair. Remove loose hair and check for any matting and stains they may have. Do this in the cool part of the day. Bathe your cavy if necessary (only if it is recommended for your breed, there are some breeds that water will ruin their coat and take out all the natural oils).

\*Practice showmanship more often. The more you work with your cavy the better they will be. Practice in the cool part of the day.

\*Finish up project books. Prepare to have them judged at skillathon. Study for skillathon. Make your poster for the educational poster contest.

\*Continue checking website for project updates.

\*Continue monthly health checks. Trim toenails.

\*Maintain good feeding program. Animals may eat more in the hot weather. Feed them later in the day when it is cooler. This is when the animals are more active. Cavy will not eat feed if it is affected by humidity. Only feed as much as they will eat in one day. Give plenty of fruits and vegetables high in Vitamin C.

\*Keep good breeding records.

\*It is too late to breed for junior aged animals for the fair.

**August**

\*Check the website the 1st week of August to see what stations will be on the skillathon this year.

\*Participate in showmanship and skillathon contests. Skillathon is mandatory for

project completion. Check rules for date and time.

\*Turn in educational poster at skillathon that you made for the poster contest.

**\***Continue monthly health checks. Do this as you are practicing for showmanship. Trim toenails. Groom your animals.

\*Maintain good feed and watering program. Feed later in the day when animals are more active. Make sure water is clean and fresh. Sanitize food bowls and water bottles weekly.

\*Make sure ventilation in caviary is good to prevent urine smells and overheating. Don’t blow fans directly on cavy. Clean more frequently if necessary to prevent urine smells and good sanitation.

\*Trim cavy toenails and make sure your cavy is groomed for skillathon and again for the fair show. (Do in the cool part of the day). Bathe your cavy if necessary (only certain breeds can be bathed).

\*Get your animals to fair check in on the Monday before the fair starts between 12:00pm and 8:00pm. **Check in closes at 8:00pm.**

\*Make sure you are at the fair on Thursday to put your animal on the show table.

\*Make sure you clean your cavy’s cage while they are at the fair. You are responsible for feeding and watering your own cavy while at the fair.

**September**

\*Feed, water, and clean your cavy while they are at the fair.

\*When taking your animal home from the fair, you **MUST** take your animal to the **check out** table. There we make sure you are leaving with the correct animal.

\*Come to the rabbit and cavy barn for tear down. Help clean and put away the equipment that has been your cavy’s home for the week. This is the first Wednesday after Labor Day at 6:00pm.

\*Write a thank you note to the person that donated the trophy you were lucky enough to win.

\*Don’t forget to thank all the people that helped you have a successful 4-H year.

(Parents, siblings, advisors, extension office staff, committee members, fair staff)

\*Maintain good sanitation practices at home. Clean cages, food bowls and water bottles weekly.

\*Attend Stark County Rabbit and Cavy Breeders ARBA sanctioned show

(third Sunday in May).

\*Continue proper feeding and watering program.

\*Make sure you have proper ventilation in your caviary.

\*Continue monthly health checks. Properly groom your animals. Trim toenails.

Practice showmanship (keep your animals use to you handling them).

\*Plan breeding program for the rest of the year. Keep good records. If you breed now you will have seniors for next year’s fair.

\*Evaluate breeding stock to see if a change is needed for next year.

**October**

\*Attend ARBA sanctioned cavy shows to learn more about raising and showing cavies.

\*Maintain good feeding and watering program. Keep good feed records.

\*Continue with good sanitation practices. Clean pens weekly. Sanitize food bowls and water bottles weekly.

\*If possible take cages outdoors, scrub and sanitize them. Leave them in the sun to dry for about an hour or two. The sun is the best natural sanitizer. This may be the last good month for this type of cleaning.

\*Continue monthly health checks while practicing showmanship. Trim toenails.

\*Continue grooming your animals.

\*Breed your cavy if your breeding program requires it. If you breed now you will have seniors for the fair. Make sure your breeding records are up to date.

\*Continue to check website for updates.

**November**

\*Maintain good feeding and watering program. Keep good feed records. Evaluate your feed to see if it is doing a good job for you.

\*Continue with good sanitation practices. Clean pens weekly. Make sure food bowls and water bottles are clean. Rabbits eat better and drink more when the bowls are clean. Would you drink or eat out of a dirty bowl or bottle?

\*Continue monthly health checks while practicing showmanship. Trim toenails.

\*Continue grooming your animals.

\*Breed your animals if your breeding program requires it. As it gets colder and the days get shorter it becomes much harder to get your animals bred. If you do want to breed as the days get shorter you will need to leave a light on in your caviary so they get 14 hours of continuous light.

\*Continue to check junior fair website for updates (starkcountyjrfair4h.com).

**December**

\*Maintain good feeding and watering program. Keep good feed records.

Don’t forget your cavies need water at all times. Make sure they are getting their Vitamin C.

\*Continue with good sanitation practices. Clean pens weekly. Make sure food bowls and water bottles are clean. Make sure they do not have slime in them.

\*Continue monthly health checks while practicing showmanship. Trim toenails. Groom your animals.

\*Breed your animals if your breeding program requires it. You will probably have seniors or old intermediates for the fair.

\*Continue to check junior fair website for updates (starkcountyjrfair4h.com)

\*Consider what projects you will take next year. Will you expand into a second breed, if allowed in project rules? Do you want to try a long haired breed?