

Ideas for Cavy Learning Activities Intermediate Level

Need more ideas for your cavy project? There are hundreds of things you can do! This list is organized by topics that match the chapters in the 4-H *Cavy Resource Handbook*. You are being asked to complete **at least five** activities each year. Use this list and your imagination, and then write your ideas in your *Cavy Project and Record Book*. Have fun!

General

- Donate a new book about guinea pigs to your local library.
- Research information about guinea pig rescues or animal shelters and humane societies that take unwanted guinea pigs. Describe ways you can help as a volunteer.
- Become a 4-H PetPAL. Teach your cavy to pass the Socialized PetPALS Test. Visit people in healthcare facilities with your cavy.

Animal Care and Well-Being

- Contact a current cavy owner and ask about the successes and challenges with owning and caring for a cavy.
- Spend the day with a local veterinarian.

History

- Select five biodata from the chart. Compare the selected biodata with that of humans. List any similarities and differences.
- There are several theories about how guinea pigs got their name. Which theory do you support and why?

Anatomy

- Describe the dental structure of a cavy.
- Define malocclusion and explain how to correct and prevent it.
- Teach your club members the parts of a cavy. Be creative in your teaching methods.
- Compare the coat types of Peruvian and Texel cavies. Explain which coat type you prefer and why.

Selection

- List five signs of a healthy cavy and five signs of an unhealthy cavy.
- Describe why good temperament is important in a cavy.
- Help a younger member select a cavy.
- Discuss the care involved in selecting a long-haired cavy versus one that is short-haired.
- Discuss the pros and cons of selecting a short-haired cavy versus one that is long-haired as a first guinea pig.
- Describe the characteristics of each of the following groups of cavies: self, agouti, solid, and marked.



Housing and Equipment

- Build a carrying cage for your cavy.
- Design a cavy proof area in your house, garage or outbuilding where your cavy can explore, play, and exercise under supervision.
- Litter train your cavy.
- Design your own cavy cage using cubes and Coroplast.
- Help another 4-H member design his/her own cavy cage using cubes and Coroplast.
- Using bedding suitable for caviae, experiment with two or three kinds to see which is most absorbent, which is less dusty, which is easiest to clean, and which your cavy likes the best. Chart your findings. Share at a club meeting.

Records

- Ear tag your cavy.
- Discuss the various records you should keep when breeding a cavy and explain why each is useful.
- Help a younger 4-H member ear tag his or her cavy.
- Create a poster or PowerPoint slide set on how to properly ear tag a cavy, finding or taking pictures of this process.
- Present 4-H recordkeeping at a 4-H club meeting or clinic, discussing the importance of keeping accurate and complete cavy records. Use visuals to emphasize important aspects.

Nutrition

- Make a matching game of cavy diets. Find pictures of appropriate and inappropriate feedstuffs. Attach pictures to poster board. Make separate labels, and ask other 4-H members to match the label to the feedstuff. Discuss with them why some are good to feed caviae and why some are not.
- Visit a pet store carrying a variety of cavy feeds. Make a list of the various brands of grains/pellets and hays. Record the prices. Discuss the pros and cons of each type sold.
- Discuss with your project helper why rabbit pellets should not be fed to caviae.
- Research five Vitamin C supplements for your cavy. Discuss the pros and cons of each supplement. Talk with a cavy breeder to learn how s/he improves his herd through selective breeding.

Health

- Learn how to trim a cavy's toenails.
- Help a younger 4-H member learn how to trim a cavy's toenails.
- Describe the process of bringing a new cavy into a caviary. Set up a quarantine protocol.
- Help a younger 4-H'er make a checklist of the steps recommended to ensure a healthy cavy.
- Select four diseases and/or health problems of caviae and learn more about them. Research these conditions in relation to your cavy.
- Find a picture of three types of external parasites that might be found on caviae. List the health problems each parasite causes and the acceptable treatments.

Reproduction

- Interview a cavy breeder, or experienced 4-H member who has caviae, about the care of caviae.
- Describe the appearance of newborn caviae to your project helper. Record the newborns' growth, in weight and pictorially, for one month.
- Describe two breeding and parturition concerns.

Grooming and Showing

- Describe any faults and disqualifications, according to the ARBA, found in your cavy.
- Teach another 4-H member how to wrap a long-haired cavy for show.
- Teach another 4-Her how to properly bathe a cavy.
- Properly groom a Teddy.
- Properly groom an Abyssinian.
- Describe the terminology of cavy show awards.

Marketing

- Discuss the various ways to market cavies, and which way(s) are best suited for you to market cavies.
- Develop a marketing plan for a caviary.
- Using the Internet, research information about cavies used for medical or scientific research. Discuss your findings.

Careers

- Become a member of ARBA.
- Become a member of ACBA.
- Select and research three careers in animal sciences.
- Interview someone who has a career in the animal sciences field. Report on what you found at a club meeting. Send them a thank you note.