



New Mexico 4-H Green Top Project Guide



New Mexico 4-H Is A Program of New Mexico State University's Cooperative Extension Service

400.B-24
(New 2004)

Pocket Pets

Are you interested in gerbils, mice and rats? Do you own this kind of pet or would you like to? Do you want to know all you can about keeping your gerbil, mouse or rat healthy? Do you want to get the most out of your pet experience? This Pocket Pets project is for you!

Objective

To educate 4-H members about pocket pets (gerbils, mice and rats). You will learn about the characteristics, differences, anatomy, environments, diseases, identification, and behavior of these animals. The project is designed to teach you about how to care for a pocket pet in your home as it focuses on cage management, nutrition, grooming, breeding, and expenses associated with owning a pet rodent.

Materials included in this project

Record book 4H 300 B-24
New Mexico 4-H Greentop
Pocket Pets, Publication 4-H 278

Suggestions for completing the project

- Review the project book, record sheet, and Greentop to become familiar with the project before you begin
- Review needed materials: pet rodent, cage, food, water, bedding, toys
- Choose the areas about pocket pets in which you wish to study
- Keep a log or diary of the activities you participate in which are related to those areas. This will make it easier to complete your record sheet at the end of the 4-H year.
- Complete your record sheet for the project

To complete this project, you can

- Learn about breeds of rodents
- Learn about common rodent diseases
- Show your pet at a local or county fair pet show
- Keep records of the expenses associated with having a rodent
- Learn about reproduction of rodents, breed your pet, and raise litters
- Learn to handle your pet rodent
- Learn about the equipment available and necessary to have a healthy pet rodent
- Learn about the controversial issues surrounding rodents

What can be exhibited with the pocket pet project?

- Your pocket pet in the county fair or pet show
- Posters-breeds, photo journal of your pet, parts of a rodent, cage management, rodent diseases, reproduction/mating/genetics

If you enjoy this project, and want continue to learn about pocket pets, you can try

- Welding-build a pet cage
- Photography-take beautiful photos of your pet rodent
- Art-draw pictures or paint about rodents
- Citizenship-take your pet to a Cloverbud meeting and educate others
- Leadership-help a friend set up or clean a cage or give a presentation at your club meeting

If you enjoy this project, here are some other great projects you might like

- Hamsters
- Guinea Pig
- Small Pets
- Wildlife
- Veterinary Science

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