Rabbit Show Changes for Wabaunsee County Fair 2020 (6/17/20):

Due to the emerging Rabbit Hemorrhagic disease concerns, the agents and superintendents/county project leaders for the Rabbit project met via Zoom and have decided to NOT have rabbits at the fair this year. We WILL be having the judge come to the fair to talk with the kids, and the kids will have several ways to still participate at the fair in the project.

Concerns that led to the decision involve:
- Rabbits can be perfectly normal (no clinical signs) and dead in 24 hours (Time from exposure to signs vary from 1-9 days.) It has a very high mortality (death) rate.
- All parts of the rabbit—fur, meat, feces/urine, oral and nasal secretions—can spread the virus in rabbits who harbor the disease, or it can be on hands, clothes, shoes, carriers, cages, insects, etc.
- KDAH recommendations include a veterinary inspection certificate within 48 hours of a show, and then veterinary inspection at check-in. We have two vets as superintendents, but none of these checks would catch most infected rabbits (the dead in 24 hours thing).
- Other recommendations include 3-4 feet between rabbits, and anyone who has spent time with rabbits know it can be challenging to keep urine and feces contained, and keep kids (and adults) from touching one rabbit and then another without washing hands, and disinfecting thoroughly all surfaces touched between every rabbit.
- The virus is extremely hardy, and will survive freezing and high environmental temperatures, and is resistant to many common disinfectants.
- It can infect the wild rabbit population, leading to a more permanent disease issue for our rabbit producers.
- IF we had a positive case at our fair, there would be a good chance that one or more families would lose ALL their rabbits (as deemed necessary by the Kansas Department of Health) to stomp out the disease.

Plans for Fair 2020:
- NO RABBITS AT THE FAIR.
- No conformation or fur classes. Judging relies heavily on a hands-on evaluation of the rabbit, and does not go virtual very well.
- Showmanship: Kids will upload a video via Flipgrid of themselves performing showmanship with their own rabbits at home. This works well for the way showmanship is done in rabbits. The judge will then watch the video with the 4-Her AT THE FAIR, and ask knowledge questions, much like a regular show.
- A notebook and/or poster can be submitted about some aspect of the rabbit project. (We did something similar during the avian influenza outbreak in 2015.)
- Costume Contest: 4-Hers can bring or submit pictures of themselves and their rabbit in costume (AT HOME) and then can wear their costume (without rabbits) in the show ring and talk to the judge, much the same as usual.
- Rabbit Knowledge Bowl will be moved to run concurrently with the Rabbit Show on Monday.
- The Rabbit Show will be moved to the South Barn to enjoy the A/C for a change, since live animals are not present.

Questions?
Jenny Howe, DVM: mypetvet@gmail.com
Lindsay Banks, DVM: lindsaybanks11@gmail.com
Bernadette Trieb, Extension Agent: btrieb@ksu.edu
Stephanie Melhus, Extension Agent: smelhus@ksu.edu