



Fish & Feather

RABBIT CARE SHEET

HOUSING

Rabbits need a dry sleeping area which should consist of a thick layer of newspaper and straw on top. The hutch should be cleaned out at least once a week.

Wire for runs should be small enough so as the rabbit cannot put its nose through and strong enough to protect them from other animals. In extreme weather place the hutch under cover.

DIET

Rabbits need a good diet with a mixture of pellets which satisfy all the animals nutritional needs. Greens are also a nutritional food for your rabbit such as carrots, corn, celery, apples, pears, strawberry and broccoli. You should avoid feeding your rabbit raw potatoes, lettuce, cabbage as these foods may cause bloating.

Hay is essential for a rabbit's digestion. Always put enough into a hay rack to last the day. Avoid old hay which is dusty which can irritate the air passages of the rabbit, and has lost most of its nutritional value.

Fresh water should be given everyday using a drink bottle or a heavy bowl that can't be tipped over.

BREEDING

Rabbits can be sexually mature at around about 12 weeks of age. Breeding them at this age is too early therefore rabbits should be separated until they are at least 6 months.

It takes 28 to 31 days from the day of conception to the birth. In the course of the pregnancy the doe will try to build a nest. She may also become a bit nervous and shy and maybe even scratchy. You should keep the pregnant female away from other rabbits during this time. A few days before the birth extra bedding should be placed in the hutch. Two days before giving birth the mother will pluck fur from her belly to line the nest. Make sure she gets plenty of fresh food and vegies and water during and after pregnancy.

The baby rabbits or kittens are ready to leave their mother at 6 - 8 weeks of age.

It is recommended not to breed your female rabbit more than once or twice a year.

Rabbits can get fleas or mites. There are sprays available to treat these. Never use a flea collar.

Rabbits do not like the heat so make sure your rabbit is positioned in a shady spot during the summer months and plenty of cool water is available. Grass eating rabbits should be wormed every 3 months with small animal wormer and keep their nails trim. If unsure of how to do this take the rabbit to your local vet. If your rabbit scratches behind its ears, and shakes its head it may have ear mites or ear canker. The vet will prescribe some ointment or powder to clear them up.

In general, rabbits are a great pet and very affectionate for a loving family.