



## Guinea Pig Advice: Bonding

*Disclaimer: These notes are only based on my own experience and are not set in stone. They have worked for me and people who have adopted a guinea pig from Windwhistle Warren, I hope they will help you too.*

### Will My Guinea Pigs Fight?

I wish I could give you a definitive answer to this question! The following are the pairings/groups of guinea pigs you may have.

- a. All female. If you have taken these on as a pair or group they are unlikely to start spitting, particularly if they have been together for a period of time.
- b. Neutered male with female/small colony. Again, if an established group it would be most unusual for discord to occur. Ideally groups should not be larger than 5 as the natural pecking order which occurs could leave some piggies at a disadvantage.
- c. Two non-neutered males. Litter brothers together from birth are the best suggestion, but even in this pairing problems can occur. Neutering one, or both, of the males can help matters. I have usually got a pair of males together of my own and they live really happily. Some males start to spat if the scent of females is around. If you have pairs of both sexes, always handle the males first so they don't get too hormonal!
- d. It is also possible to introduce a baby male to an older male. If the male has been used for breeding purposes it is unlikely he will accept another male and will need to be neutered if you wish him to have company.
- e. I have tried to pair a neutered male with females and one of the sows got most annoyed, I have even had the instance when a neutered male would not accept sows. If your piggies show signs of fighting, split them up, it is not worth the risk. As they are such social animals, if you are not able to pair them up with other pigs you may have the situation where they can still communicate with each other albeit through wire. At least this way they will not be so lonely.
- f. Introducing new members to the colony/pair. Ask your local rescue to assist in this if you are at all unsure. It is best if they initially meet on neutral territory, a grass run on a warm day is perfect! If this is not possible put plenty of juicy nibbles in their meeting place, their natural inclination to nibble will detract from the other pig(s). If the piggies 'purr' this is fine. Any chattering of teeth and you are in a no-go situation—it is best to part them immediately.

### Pairing With A Rabbit?

This combination rarely works so the easy answer is please don't! Rabbits have strong hind legs and even if they love their pig companion, if they are startled the piggy could be on the wrong end of a kick.

Some rabbits attack their companion, particularly if the rabbit is not neutered, and can actually kill them. I have also witnessed situations where the guinea pig leaves rather nasty deposits on the rabbits fur. This hardens and can cause the rabbit pain by tearing at its skin.