



Rabbit Advice: Nutrition

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 bunny from Windwhistle Warren, I hope they will help you too.

Getting a rabbit's diet correct is very important, an overweight rabbit will soon develop health problems, an insufficient amount of hay will lead to dental disease and a lack of fibre will lead to digestive problems.

A constant supply of fresh, clean drinking water must be provided. It is preferable that both a bottle and a sturdy large dog bowl are provided. Some rabbits prefer to use a bowl which is a more natural way to drink but some have got used to using a bottle. You must ensure they are using whatever you provide.

Rabbits' teeth never stop growing and they need to grind them down as they eat. The back teeth are ground down by the rabbit eating good quality hay. Always ensure you provide an unlimited supply of either Timothy or meadow hay. It is a good idea to top up the hay with fresh at least once a day. You should try and allow your rabbit some daily access to a run on grass. If this is not always possible you can provide dried grass and a selection of dried herbs. A selection of natural toys should be provided as gnawing objects will wear down the front teeth, which are constantly growing.

In addition to hay & grass, provide a very small quantity of pellet food and a good selection of vegetables. Rabbits should not be fed on the muesli mix type foods commonly sold in pet shops. These allow the rabbit to eat selectively leading to a deficiency in certain minerals & vitamins. Selective feeding can also leave the rabbit with a 'sticky bottom', which puts it at risk of flystrike. All rabbits should be fed on a pelleted food. Our rabbits are fed on Science Selective but you could also use Burgess Excel or Oxbow BunnyBasicT. Only a small amount of pellets, about an egg cup full, should be fed each day.

A selection of vegetables should also be given, see the following link for those that are suitable:

www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk/resources/content/info-sheets/safefoods.htm

Keep the amount of fruit you feed to a minimum. It is a good idea to keep fruit as a treat and to administer any necessary medication.

It is a good idea to feed the rabbits in the morning and in the evening. This mimics their normal feeding pattern and it is a good way to check that the rabbits are eating.