

Treats



It is a surprise to many to learn that carrots are bad for rabbits! They are very high in sugars and should only be fed in very small amounts once or twice a week. Other fresh treats include a small slice of banana or a small piece of strawberry.

A great choice is dried forage such as plantain, nettle or dandelion. These can be sprinkled on hay to help encourage natural foraging behaviours and can be fed on a daily basis.

Avoid any treats containing whole seeds or grains, including dried maize sticks, also check ingredients to ensure they don't contain dairy products or honey.



Teeth, Tums, and Bums



Teeth - A good diet is the best way to promote good dental health. Rabbits' teeth grow continually throughout their lives and need constant wear to help keep them in good shape.

Tums - A fibre rich diet helps to keep tummies active and digestive systems moving. When the digestive system slows down this is known as stasis and is classed as an emergency.



Bums - A correct diet will help to reduce the over production of caecotropes, the sticky and smelly dropping which rabbits should eat directly from the anus. If left uneaten, these droppings can become matted into fur and greatly increase the risk of flystrike, especially during the summer.



Our Guide to



Feeding Your Rabbits

Why is a healthy diet important?



We all know the difference between a healthy option and an unhealthy one, even if we choose a chocolate bar over an apple. But, it can be a little more difficult to get it right for our rabbits. There are many treats and feeds available which are totally unsuitable for rabbits and can lead to a number of health problems. Providing them with a suitable diet is the best way to prevent these problems and keep our buns happy and healthy.

Rabbits are furry fibre digesting factories, and need to be continuously moving food through their digestive systems. It is very important for us to provide our rabbits with plenty of fibre rich foods and keep their teeth, tums, and bums happy and healthy



What should you be feeding your Rabbits

The most important part of a rabbit's diet is hay and a rabbit should be eating roughly their own body size in hay each day. Hay is packed with beneficial fibres and helps to keep molar teeth in good condition, reducing the risk of painful dental spurs forming. It is vitally important to only select a good quality long-stranded hay, many pre-bagged hays have been double or even triple cut, shortening the strands and making them less effective for good dental health. Fresh hay should be available at all times, making up between 80-90% of a rabbit's daily food intake. There are lots of different types of hay available from meadow, timothy, orchard and rye. You can mix these together or feed them on rotation to give your rabbits' variety.



Commercial Rabbit Feeds



With so Many Available - What should you Choose?

While we find muesli type mixes attractive with all their bright colours and different shaped biscuits, these are actually really unhealthy for rabbits. They are generally very high in sugars, very low in beneficial fibres and don't contribute to good general health. They also contain a number of items which rabbits can't digest and can lead to blockages. They also lead to selective feeding, where rabbits only pick out the bits they like, preventing a healthy and balanced diet.

Selecting a good quality pellet, which lists grasses as the first ingredient, is by far the best option. Rabbits only require 15g per kg of body weight of pellets a day. This roughly equates to 1 tablespoon for the average sized rabbit, making up only 5% of their daily food intake



Fresh Foods



Rabbits enjoy a variety of fresh food and this should make up between 5-15% of their daily diet. The best choice by far is fresh forage such as hand picked grass (never feed grass cuttings from the lawnmower or strimmer) and safe weeds and plants. Weeds such as dandelions, long leafed plantain, cleavers and herb robert, as well as raspberry leaves, apple leaves and hazel are all good choices. Make sure you are 100% certain plants have not been sprayed with pesticides before offering them to your rabbits.

Good choices from the supermarket include fresh herbs such as parsley, coriander and basil, as well as rocket and romaine lettuce. Kale, spring greens and baby spinach should all be fed with caution and in limited amounts as this can lead to bloat.

