

# AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUR RABBIT

Congratulations, you are now the proud new owner of a rabbit! To help you keep your rabbit healthy and happy, we have produced this fact sheet. If you should have any further questions, do not hesitate to give us a call or send an email.

## **Accommodation**

A large hutch or enclosure is needed to house your rabbits and keep them warm, dry, and safe. If outside, the house should be raised from the ground, which helps to keep the damp and predators away, and ideally placed away from direct sunlight or harsh winds. Within the enclosure, there should be a general living area and a sleeping area - both should have either a thick layer of shavings, if outside, or a comfy layer of fleece bedding, which holds less dust and is washable and reusable, if inside. Hay is essential and should be readily available for both eating and sleeping in. Make sure to include lots of toys, hideaways, and enrichment in the rabbits' enclosure too.

Your animals' enclosure should be cleaned of any droppings daily and should be fully cleaned and disinfected weekly. If the rabbits live outdoors, they will need additional heat sources in the winter months such as heat pads, hutch covers, extra hay, or even a move into a warmer area. All animals appreciate an extra run to explore and exercise in, but it is even more beneficial to rabbits, especially larger ones. Larger breeds of rabbit are best suited to a base hutch with a permanently attached and open run, or a free-roam lifestyle.

## **Feeding**

A nugget-based food is better for your rabbits as every single pellet contains the same blend of ingredients, whereas with a mix your rabbits will be selective and eat the treats, leaving the healthier options and therefore some of the nutrients that they need. Fresh fruit and vegetables are just as important to their diet, in addition to their hay and pellets. Hay is essential for rabbit health as it keeps their whole system moving; they will eat it continuously throughout the day. Clean, fresh water must be always available either in a bowl or a bottle.

## **General care**

Rabbits are social animals and are best kept with a companion. The best combination for rabbit pairs are one boy and one girl, with the boy being castrated, but two girls are also a good combination. Regular and gentle handling will ensure friendly pets. Remember to scoop them up, never grab, which will cause fear and discomfort. Your pets will groom themselves but may like to be gently brushed, especially if long-haired. Assuming they are well looked after, your rabbit will live up to 7 years, or more and will provide you with plenty of love, companionship, and fun.

## **Farm Shop**

You can purchase hay and pellets from the Longdown Farm Shop - just click through from the farm's website address below:

**Longdown Activity Farm**  
**Ashurst, near Southampton, Hampshire SO40 7EH**  
**E: [enquiries@longdownfarm.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@longdownfarm.co.uk)**  
**W: [longdownfarm.co.uk](http://longdownfarm.co.uk)**  
**T: 023 8029 2837**

