Rabbit Glossary of Terms

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Alfalfa Hay

Alfalfa Hay is a hay that has more protein and calcium than other hays. Young rabbits should be given alfalfa hay every day when they are growing. Once they become adults, alfalfa should be limited to a treat once in a while so your rabbit doesn't gain too much weight.

Bedding

Bedding refers to the wood shavings or wood fiber shavings that you can put in the bottom of your rabbit's cage and can also be used in her litter box.

Breeds

There are more than 45 rabbit breeds in the United States. Every breed has a different coat color, fur length, and is a different size. Some rabbit breeds will weigh only 2-1/2 lbs, and other breeds can get up to 16 lbs!

Cage

You should keep your rabbit in a cage when you are not home to be with her. You should find as big a cage as possible because rabbits need plenty of room to sleep and play. Many bunnies like to stretch out, so make sure there is enough room for your rabbit to do that in her cage. Cages can be made from plastic, wire, and wood.

Chew toy

Rabbits have teeth that keep growing their whole lives, so they need chew toys to wear their teeth down. Chew toys can also prevent your rabbit from getting bored.

Daily Diet

This refers to the food your rabbit eats every day. A rabbit's daily diet should be made up of a high quality, pelleted rabbit food, hay, fresh vegetables, and fresh water.

Food bowl

Your rabbit will eat her food out of a food bowl. Food bowls that attach to the cage are best because your rabbit won't be able to make a mess by tipping it over.

Hay

Rabbits need hay all the time. The hays you should feed your rabbit are Timothy, oat, and grass hays. Rabbits need a lot of fiber in their diet, and hay provides that. It also helps to wear down their teeth. Keep hay clean and off the floor with a hay manger.

Herbivore

A "herbivore" is an animal that eats only plants (fruits and vegetables) and no meat. Rabbits are herbivores.

Hutch

A hutch is another name for a cage. "Hutch" usually means a cage made from wood and wire.

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Litter
Litter refers to what you will put in your rabbit's litter box. Some of the litters you can use are recycled newspaper litter, alfalfa pellets, and paper litter.

Nest box
A nest box is a dark, enclosed space where your rabbit can sleep, hide, and play. You should always put a nest box in your bunny's cage so she feels secure. The nest box can be made from wood, plastic, or cardboard.

Nocturnal
A nocturnal animal is one that is awake mostly at night. A bunny is nocturnal.

Pellet diet
Rabbits eat a pellet-shaped food, called a pellet diet. Look for a food that has a lot of fiber. Younger rabbits eat more pellets than older rabbits.

Timothy Hay
Timothy Hay is a grass hay. Your bunny depends on this to stay healthy, so she should be given lots of fresh Timothy Hay every day.

Toys
Rabbits love to dig, burrow, chew, toss, hit, shred, and climb on things to stay happy and healthy. It is very important to be sure you have toys to fulfill these needs.

Treats
A treat is something you should only give your rabbit once in a while. A treat is a special food that is not included in your rabbit's daily diet. There are lots of different treats to choose from, so make sure you choose something healthy. The best treats are hay and grass treats.

Water bottle
This is a plastic or glass bottle that you hang on the side of your rabbit's cage so she can get the water she needs. Make sure you change your bunny's water daily to keep it fresh.

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