

## Raising Market Rabbits for Success

### 1. Equipment Needed

- a. Cage – A 24x24 cage is ample 2 market rabbits. Make sure that the cage is in the shade. Don't place your cage in direct sunlight as your rabbits will get too hot. Think about the location and sun during all times of the day. It may be shaded in the morning but gets the hot afternoon sun and this is not a good location choice.
- b. Food dish – either one that will fasten to the cage or heavy enough so they can't dump it.
- c. Water dish or bottle – same as a food dish, I use bottles that way they always have plenty of clean water.
- d. Scales – You need to weigh your rabbit weekly to see that it is putting on weight. A rabbit should gain around a ½ pound a week. A small digital kitchen scale will work.
- e. Tote or a Container – This is to keep your feed in so that it will stay fresher and rodents can't get in and contaminate it.

### 2. Feeding and Care

- a. Rabbit feed – you should feed your rabbit a 16% to 18 % pellet. I recommend a name brand. Ask your breeder that you buy your rabbit from what they recommend. Check the label and make sure the first ingredient is either Forage Products or a type of hay.
- b. Your rabbit should never run out of food. You should have a little left over each day but not a lot as the pellets can draw moisture. Your rabbit should eat ½ cup to 1 ¼ cups per day. Depending on its size, feed should gradually increase.
- c. Your rabbit should never run out of clean water. A rabbit will drink and may not eat. But a rabbit will not eat if it doesn't have water.
- d. You can give your rabbit a good supplement. What I use is 23% protein and 1.25% calcium, it only takes 1 tsp per day.
- e. Bedding – If your cage has a solid bottom, I would use either pine or straw. I would avoid using Cedar Shavings as they stain and could cause health problems.
- f. You can give your rabbit a small hand full of dry hay once (1) a week for a treat.

### 3. Things not to do.

- a. Do not give your rabbits leafy greens. This could cause them to get diarrhea.
- b. Do not give them any type of fruit. This also could cause diarrhea.
- c. Do not let your rabbit run outside in the grass as it could pick up a disease. RHD is deadly to rabbits and can be carried by any animal.

### 4. When Buying Your Rabbit

- a. Do a health check to make sure the teeth are correct. Check to make sure they have all their toenails. Make sure the tail is straight Make sure it does not have a hernia.
- b. You are only going to have your market rabbit 4 to 5 weeks before fair. The weight of your rabbit when you buy it should be 2 ½ pounds at the lightest. Since a rabbit gains approximately a ½ pound per week, it should be around 5 pounds when you weigh in at fair. Rabbits need to be at least 3.5 pounds to 5.5 pounds to show for placings and champions.
- c. If your rabbit is going to be overweight cut back on the feed. If you are feeding them 1 cup of feed a day cut back to a ½ cup of feed and give them a small handful of hay daily to slow down their weight gain.

5. Things to do.
  - a. Make sure your rabbit always has water.
  - b. If using a dish make sure that it is cleaned out of all urine, fecal matter and feed dust.
  - c. Make sure you increase the feed as your rabbit grows.
  - d. Try and feed your rabbit at the same time every day, that way you can judge how they are eating and drinking.
  - e. Weigh your rabbit 2 to 3 times a week. Try to do this about the same time, that way you get a true gauge of how the rabbit is gaining weight. Make sure you keep a record of this.

You have any questions, problems or concerns feel free to contact me.

Dan Fisher 740-244-1699