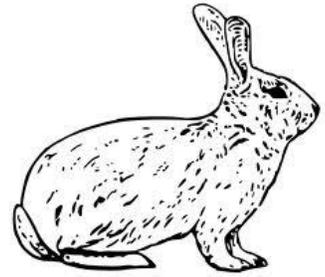


Brick House Acres Rabbitry

Rabbit Owner's Guide



Congratulations on the purchase of your new rabbit!

This is an exciting time for you and your bunny. The next few days are critical in helping your rabbit feel comfortable and safe, as well as beginning to develop a relationship with him. Please take a few moments to read this booklet to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Settling in

Your new rabbit is going to be a bit nervous for the first few days. Try to minimize handling and keep their area as quiet as possible. Wait to introduce other pets until your rabbit feels comfortable and is eating and drinking well.

Rabbits can make wonderful pets. Treated with kindness and care, they can become a loving part of the family. Most Champagnes are very friendly and outgoing, but some are more reserved. Your rabbit will become more relaxed and confident over time with gentle handling and petting.

Rabbits are fairly easy to take care of. They need basic shelter, food and water in addition to some exercise and occasional grooming (especially during molting).

Housing

Each rabbit requires its own cage or hutch. That means if you have two rabbits, you need 2 cages! Keep the cage in a dry, shaded, well ventilated area. Keep your bunny safe from cats, dogs, raccoons, owls, etc. Never leave your rabbit unattended with other pets. Their cage is the safest place for them when you are not around.

Purchase the largest cage possible for your rabbit(s). A 24"x36"x18" cage is the minimum size for large breeds such as Champagnes, larger for does with litters. Good cages are made out of 1"x2" galvanized cage wire. The easiest cages to clean are the ones with a wire bottom (1/2"x1" wire) and a pull out tray or a hanging all-wire cage or rabbit hutch. Avoid wood where possible since it absorbs urine and is hard to clean.

You will need to clean the cage regularly to keep their living conditions clean and sanitary. Some owners train their rabbits to use a corner litter pan. Disinfect the cage a couple times a year. To clean: Remove rabbit from cage. Scrape all droppings from the wire. Scrub, then spray with one part bleach to 10 parts water. Rinse & let dry.

Food & Water

You received a bag of food with your new rabbit. Use it to transition him gradually to the food you are using. On the first day, feed him his original food, then mix in a little more of the new food each day until it is fully switched over (7-10 days). Your rabbit's diet should consist of rabbit pellets and grass or timothy hay. Young bunnies should be allowed to eat all they want. We feed

MannaPro PRO & Country Feeds 16% Rabbit Feed at our rabbitry. Refresh their water bottle daily and check to make sure water level is going down.

Most people have a tendency to overfeed their adult rabbits. Rabbits over 6 months should receive a daily ration of pellets and free-choice hay and water. Feed 3/4 - 1 Cup of pellets/day for an adult Champagne. Reduce portion if there is still some left at the end of each day.

Greens & weeds from the yard make a healthy addition to your rabbit's diet. Be sure they have not been sprayed before picking. Collect dandelion greens, long grass, plantain, raspberry leaf, etc. and offer a handful daily. Remember to make any changes to your rabbit's diet slowly! Once greens are introduced, they should be fed on a regular basis so your rabbit's digestive system stays accustomed to them.

Never feed iceberg lettuce or celery to your rabbit! They can cause serious diarrhea and dehydration. In case of mild diarrhea, feed a tablespoon of dry oatmeal, reduce pellets, and offer free-choice hay. If the stools haven't firmed up in 24 hours, call the vet.

Behavior

Rabbits do some things that people don't expect. Here is an overview...

Since rabbits are prey animals, they get scared easily. Loud noises and quick movements can startle them. A scared rabbit will either hunker down or run. A frightened rabbit is also more likely to bat you with its paws or even nip or bite. If your rabbit lunges or bites when you reach into the cage, it might be defending its space, very common with pregnant does. If you have a "cage territorial" rabbit, reach one hand in up high and push your rabbit's head to the cage floor, then use your other hand to service the cage. Spaying/neutering will usually solve this problem in pet rabbits. That being said, our Champagnes are usually very happy to welcome us into their cage area, especially if we are bringing them pats or treats!

Most rabbits are wary of being picked up and will kick if they don't feel secure. To pick up a rabbit, press your right hand over his ears/shoulders. Slide your left hand under his front legs and lift his chest upward maintaining a good grip on his front legs. Once his head is higher than his haunches, slide your right hand down his back and scoop up his hindquarters. With regular handling a rabbit can learn to be calm while being held. Expect to get scratched sometimes. It is helpful to wear long sleeves and a light pair of gloves when handling your rabbit until you both become accustomed to it. A small towel can also be used.

Occasionally, rabbits struggle when you are putting them back into their cage. If this happens, cover your rabbit's eyes when approaching the cage and try to put your rabbit into the cage backwards to prevent him from pushing off of you.

Once a day, rabbits pass a soft, sticky stool called cecotropes. These droppings resemble a moist cluster of grapes. Cecotropes are full of vitamins and are usually consumed immediately by the rabbit. This is normal and helps re-introduce B-vitamins & beneficial bacteria into their digestive system. Occasionally, you may see this soft cluster of droppings in their tray. Don't confuse these with diarrhea. Cecotropes only occur once a day. Normal rabbit droppings are round and dry.

Rabbit manure is the world's best fertilizer for your garden! It can be applied fresh and will not burn your plants like other manures can. Earthworms love rabbit manure and quickly break it down into rich humus. Add it to the garden and compost pile or use it to mulch your shrubs.

Health

Rabbits need exercise just like you do! Let them out of their cage occasionally in a safe area such as a bathroom or outdoor run (shaded). Be sure to remove all electrical cords/hazards from the area. You can also train rabbits to a harness and take them for “walks”.

Rabbits love to chew and their teeth grow continuously. Feeding hay will keep their teeth worn down naturally. Some rabbits also like a pinecone or untreated wood block to chew on. You shouldn't have any tooth problems as long as your rabbit has proper tooth alignment (top teeth overlap bottom teeth) and you offer free-choice hay. All of our rabbits for sale have been checked and are free of malocclusion.

Heat stroke kills more rabbits a year than anything else. Keep your rabbit in a cool, shaded area in the summer. During hot months, a frozen soda bottle filled $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water will keep them cool. A big ceramic tile works well too. Be sure to protect rabbits from moisture and drafts in the winter.

If your rabbit will be a house pet, we recommend having it spayed or neutered. Female rabbits can develop uterine cancer when not kept bred and can get territorial or destructive (trying to build a nest). Un-neutered males are notorious for spraying urine. Seek out a vet that is experienced with rabbits and talk with them about the pros and cons of spaying/neutering.

Trim your rabbit's toenails periodically so they don't get too long. Use nail clippers designed for cats. Long nails on the hind feet can lead to sore hocks. Also, provide a resting pad or board in the cage for your rabbit to sit on. This gives their feet a break from sitting on the wire all the time. Keep their pad clean to prevent sore hocks from developing. We use slotted plastic resting mats.

Rabbit urine can range from clear to dark orange. All colors are normal. It is also very high in calcium, so don't be surprised if it leaves a chalky white residue.

Rabbits do not require any shots.

Toys & Treats

You can offer your rabbit treats occasionally. We recommend a small piece of carrot, apple, banana, rolled oats, black oil sunflower seeds, mini shredded wheat biscuits, or a few cheerios. Feed treats sparingly to avoid a fat rabbit.

Occasionally, provide your bunny with toys to ward off boredom. Some simple toys are paper towel rolls, pinecones, a cardboard box, dry leaves/twigs, metal canning jar rings, or a hard ball. And the all-time favorite boredom buster... an old phone book to shred - just be prepared for the mess as they enthusiastically send paper flying everywhere!



Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. We hope you enjoy your new rabbit!

Brick House Acres Rabbitry: Sales Policy

To ensure the best possible care for our rabbits and the protection and satisfaction of both parties, we have put the following guidelines in place. Please familiarize yourself with our sales policy before seeking to purchase a rabbit...

By New York State law, we do not sell any rabbits under 8 weeks old.

All rabbits for sale are in excellent health and are free from congenital defects such as malocclusion (misaligned teeth) at the time of sale.

A non-refundable deposit of \$20 is required to hold a rabbit. Balance is due at pick-up. If the rabbit is not picked up at the agreed-upon time, you forfeit your deposit and the rabbit will be placed back up for sale.

Each rabbit comes with a small bag of food, Rabbit Care Booklet, and 48-hour health guarantee. If your rabbit becomes sick or dies during the first 48 hours, you can return it to us for a full refund or replacement. Please notify us immediately by phone or e-mail if this is the case. We cannot be held responsible for complications that arise after 48 hours, though we will work with each customer on a case by case basis to help and offer assistance.

We do not ship rabbits at this time. They must be picked up at the farm or arranged meeting place. Rabbits must be paid in full before leaving our care. We accept cash, checks, and all major credit cards.

Youth under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent/guardian at the time of purchase. You will be given basic instructions on handling, feeding, and nail trimming at pick-up. Bring a cat carrier or box with ventilation holes to transport your rabbit home.

You, as the buyer, are responsible to care for your rabbit(s) after purchase. This means that you will provide each rabbit with a clean cage/hutch, fresh food and water daily, regular nail trimming, and provide appropriate attention and exercise.

If you are no longer able to care for a rabbit purchased from us, we will gladly take it back if we have cage space available. No refund will be given. You can donate the cage/hutch back with the rabbit to increase the likelihood of it finding a new home.

Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. We know you will be delighted with our beautiful Champagnes and look forward to working with you to make your rabbit-keeping adventure a success!

Brick House Acres Rabbitry
BHArabbitry.weebly.com
rabbitry@brickhouseacres.com
(315) 737-5635 - Frankfort, NY 13340