



THE Rabbit Advocate SM

PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO THE LIVES OF HOUSE RABBITS

FALL 2009



To Your Rabbit's Health

This issue of The Rabbit Advocate salutes rabbits and their health. Because rabbits are prey species they are particularly adept at hiding illnesses or conditions until sometimes drastic remedial measures are necessary. An indoor home is the best way to ensure your pet rabbit's good health. If a pet rabbit lives inside with their human family, the bunny's subtle behavior changes are more easily noticed. And noticing small changes in your pet provides clues that medical attention is required.

An important barometer of a rabbit's health is simply petting the rabbit. But more than a pat on the head, stroking the rabbit's entire body can help turn up skin conditions, abscesses or other problems. Elizabeth Olson volunteers to trim rabbit toe nails and brush coats during Rabbit Advocate monthly



adoption outreaches held at Western Pet Supply. When trimming rabbit nails at Western Pet, the volunteer groomers (who call themselves "pawdicurists") perform tactile welfare checks on their adorable clients. The groomers, including Elizabeth, Audra Busey and Dawn Iveane-Curell, are not medical professionals. But as they groom the rabbits, their touch can sometimes give a picture of the rabbit's general health. They've noted long toenails, discovered broken toes, found an abscessed and rotten tooth that needed surgical intervention, and taken note of overweight rabbits and other assorted problems.

Feel your buns to find out how your buns are feeling

By Elizabeth Olson

In most cases, the rabbit owners were unaware that anything was amiss, which illustrates the importance of examining your rabbit often and touching him or her everywhere. Your rabbit may not like to be touched all over; no prey animal does. Touching can be scary, especially if it's in a place the rabbit isn't used to being touched. However, if your rabbit is comfortable with being touched all over, a veterinary exam and subsequent treatment likely will be less stressful, treatment will be easier, and the outcome will be better than if your rabbit is scared to death of being handled.

Following are some tips for training your rabbit to submit to, and enjoy, regular physical exams.

Be the alpha bunny

Prey animals like rabbits, llamas, horses, and other mammals with eyes on the sides of their faces are naturally afraid of being touched. Why wouldn't they be? Being touched often precedes being eaten, so escape from predators is a key to survival. Prey animals also hide their illnesses because predators tend to snack on the sick and the weak.

As caretakers of companion rabbits, we often experience the double-whammy of pets that are sick and are also afraid to let us touch them. (Humans, with eyes in front of their faces, are perceived as predators, regardless of whether they eat meat.) Fortunately, with patience and proper handling, our fuzzy long-eared friends can be desensitized to touch while they are healthy.

"Impossible!" you say. "My rabbit won't let me touch anything but her back." In most cases, you can overcome the rabbit's aversion to touch by being the "alpha" bunny, by showing your rabbit that you are confident. Much of what our rabbits can or cannot accomplish is due to our own expectations, not the rabbit's ability. So if you think the rabbit won't let you touch it, the rabbit won't allow it. Be persistent, firm, and gentle so that you can help your rabbit become more comfortable, confident, and trusting over time.

Performing a touch exam

The best time to examine your rabbit is during a grooming or petting session. Practice every day if you can, because catching health problems early is essential to a better treatment outcome.

Speak to your rabbit in low, soothing tones or not at all. High-pitched "it's okay, it's okay" reassurances actually make the rabbit more fearful due to tension in your voice.

Work in a small enclosed space such as a bathroom or exercise-pen so the rabbit feels more secure and cannot run away. Sit on the floor, put a towel in your lap, and place your rabbit on the

Raccoon roundworm common in U.S.

The larva have a very nasty preference for lodging in the liver, eyes, spinal cord and brain of the infected animal.

The scientific name for roundworm in the intestines of raccoons in North America, Japan and Germany is “*baylisascariasis procyonis*,” and a majority of raccoons are thought to carry this parasite.

Raccoon are simply carriers of the parasite, it does not harm them. The parasite’s eggs are passed in raccoon feces and can stay in the ground for years, withstanding both heat and cold. The parasite can infect another animal species when the eggs are ingested and the larva hatches in the intestine. The larva have a very nasty preference for lodging in the liver, eyes, spinal cord and brain of the infected animal. As it finds a home in the new host animal it can cause significant damage to its organs or systems, including the neurological system.

It is important to know that the new host animal does not pass the parasite along, it is not shed in the feces as it is shed from the raccoon.

Rabbits are not the only animal species affected by the raccoon roundworm. Dogs, squirrels, guinea pigs, mice, rats, birds and even humans (usually children) can be affected. Earlier this year two children in New York were treated for the parasite. The teenager suffers blindness in one eye from the condition.

Because the parasite prefers spinal and brain tissue, the most obvious sign of an infection is a neurological change, including loss of muscle coordination, head tilt, blindness or paralysis. Medical opinion is divided on how to treat the condition, with some professionals suggesting a corticosteroid to reduce inflammation and some suggesting an anti-parasitic drug like the one that Butters was successfully given. (see story next page)

Prevention is a key for controlling the spread of the parasite. The House Rabbit Society cautions to never keep raccoons as pets and against feeding raccoons in your

yard. The organization notes raccoons tend to defecate at the base of trees, on decks, wood piles and on roof tops. If raccoons are known to inhabit a back yard, don’t let rabbits play in the same area. Raccoon feces looks like that produced by a medium-sized dog, is dark in color, and may include undigested material like berry seeds. When removing the feces, use gloves and be careful not to step in the material and spread it.

The eggs of the raccoon roundworm parasite can survive for years and are resistant to common disinfectants including bleach. Eggs can be killed by fire with careful application of a weed-killing torch or by pouring boiling water over the soil. Application of these treatments may or may not be completely effective.

Information gathered from the House Rabbit Network and the Centers for Disease Control.

Ancient treatment can help modern day bunnies

Because animals, especially prey species like rabbits, hide symptoms of illnesses from their caretakers, they can be difficult patients. Veterinarians are at a disadvantage because pets can’t say where it hurts, for how long, or why. Furthermore, sometimes illnesses are not easily treated with standard western medicine. When injuries or illnesses fail to respond to traditional treatments, acupuncture can be a valuable resource.

One day Rabbit Advocate Tonie Calabrese discovered her bunny Barley could not use his back legs. A series of x-rays showed that Barley had a luxation of his spine, so the vertebrae had moved against each other and were pinching his spinal cord. Desperate to help her bunny,

Tonie treated Barley with medications to alleviate pain and discomfort and offered him a variety of foods to keep his digestive system going. Stable in every way except for his inability to pull his legs underneath him and hop, Tonie found Dr. Becky Prull at the Dogwood Veterinary Hospital in Gresham.

Dr. Prull is a doctor of veterinary medicine and is a certified veterinary acupuncturist. She treats many rabbits with traditional medicine, and has had some success with rabbit acupuncture as well. Dr. Prull uses acupuncture to treat a variety of illnesses and injuries in other



Barley receives an acupuncture treatment.

Photo: Tonie Calabrese

pets, and has treated spinal injuries in dogs. She confirmed that Barley’s spinal luxation is frequently seen in rabbits.

Barley, while unable to use his back legs, maintained an upright posture and had feeling in his back feet. Dr. Prull

Butters saved by her bunny godmother

By Lori Lacell

Years after they were first rescued from the Glendoveer Golf Course, Rabbit Advocates learned in June 2008, that more domestic bunnies had been abandoned there. Volunteer Valerie Madison and I tried several times to catch these abandoned rabbits before a small, fawn-colored bunny let me pick her up. I called our work "Operation Got Buns?" because it was through this rescue effort I became a first-time bunny mom to our new pet rabbit, Butters.

Butters' veterinary exam proved that outdoor living had taken its toll. Butters' vertebrae felt like a bicycle chain, and her hip bones and ribs were visible under her fur. A slight increase in her white blood cells indicated a minor infection, probably from bite and scratch wounds on her back that were already healing. She started taking an oral antibacterial medication.

For a week and a half Butters' condition improved. Then she suddenly lost her balance and fell sideways while cleaning her face. I assumed that the uneven pile of magazines she was sitting on had caused

her to tip over, so I shooed her onto the floor. Again she fell over. Within an hour, she was falling straight over backwards. Horrified, I noticed a slight head tilt. A panicked telephone call to Valerie confirmed my fears; she advised me to take Butters to the vet immediately. Valerie reminded me to mention that Butters had spent time where raccoons frequent.

By Butters' second exam, the vet spotted a few miniscule black specks in one inner ear canal. I breathed a sigh of relief—just an inner ear infection. Butters started two antibiotics, Baytril, antibiotic ear drops, and Panacur, an anti-parasitic drug. I was cautioned that she might get a bit worse before improving.

Steadily, new frightening symptoms appeared. She swayed drunkenly as her hind legs lost coordination. Violently thrashing to right herself gave way to "moon gazing," during which she lay or sat still with her nose pointed skyward. Volunteer Jan Hutto advised me to call the veterinarian whenever Butters' condition changed. After one such call, Butters was referred to a specialist.

administered about 12 sterile acupuncture needles along his back, in his hind legs and one in his forehead. The needles were left in place for about 10 minutes and then removed. Barley was nervous but tolerated the needles and after two treatments was able to stretch out his back legs which he was not able to do before. (Sadly, little Barley died from unrelated illnesses before the full potential of his acupuncture treatments could be seen.)

Acupuncture is an ancient treatment originating from China that uses small, thin needles to pierce the skin at specific locations of the body. Traditional Chinese medicine describes the concept of Qi (pronounced "chee") that is the flow of energy in the body. Qi is moved by the opposing forces of Yin and Yang that are necessary to balance the energy and sustain life. If a patient, whether human or animal, experiences illness, Chinese medicine would say the Qi is blocked or somehow

imbalanced. Acupuncture can help restore the Qi's flow, restoring health. Dr. Prull studied acupuncture in the medical sense, and describes the placement of the needles along nerve channels. The nerve channels are located in the same place as Qi channels; the ancient Chinese just didn't know about nerves yet. Stimulation of the nerves with the needles sends complicated signals to the brain that help alleviate pain and expedite healing.

Acupuncture may be particularly helpful for several conditions, including the treatment of pain, inflammation, blood pressure and hormone level imbalance. In rabbits, acupuncture can be used to treat arthritis, neurological conditions, chronic illness and pain.

To learn more about veterinary acupuncture or to find a certified veterinary acupuncturist, visit the web site of the American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture at www.aava.org.



Photo: Lori Lacell

Butters recovered fully from raccoon roundworm.

Neurological tests ruled out an inner-ear infection. Brain damage from parasitic infestation from two possible parasites was suspected: encephalitozoon cuniculi (*E. cuniculi*) or baylisascaris procyonis (raccoon roundworm). While Butters' blood was drawn, I excused myself from the exam room. Tears blurred my vision. Was it possible Butters could die?

Miraculously, Valerie was in the waiting area and counseled me when I walked out of the exam room. Valerie explained that when caught and treated early, parasitic infections aren't always fatal. She once had a partially paralyzed rabbit that had lived a happy life with a few special accommodations. Valerie didn't know it, but she saved Butters' life and became her Bunny Godmother that day. My spirit renewed, I returned to the exam room.

The vet agreed that Butters was very sick but that she had a lot going for her. Shortly after her symptoms began, she was given Panacur, an effective treatment against parasites. Her appetite, bowel and bladder functions all remained normal, as did her affection for me and her will to live. Ultimately she tested positive for baylisascariasis procyonis. At her worst, she lay almost lifeless, cradled in my arms. Thankfully, her recovery followed the same rapid changes to motor skills, only in reverse.

Today Butters is a happy, energetic rabbit thanks to the guidance she and I received from other Rabbit Advocate members as well as the outstanding care from her veterinarians and their staff. My optimism was restored by one small bunny and her powers of healing.

Prevention the key to keeping your rabbit happy and healthy

By Katrina Ramsell Ph.D, DVM

Rabbits are intelligent, friendly and quiet house pets. Like most pet owners, rabbit owners want to take the best care of their pet, and they want their fuzzy friend to enjoy a happy, healthy life. You can help ensure that your rabbit has a good, long life by educating yourself about rabbits, proper care of rabbits, and common diseases of rabbits, and by trying to prevent health problems. In order to recognize if there is something abnormal about your rabbit, you must be familiar with what indicates that a rabbit is normal and healthy.

Meet environmental needs

Many things can be done to help prevent health problems in rabbits, and it is often easier to prevent health issues than to try to fix them. Minimize stress; feed an appropriate diet; provide safe, comfortable housing with adequate space; keep the rabbit's environment clean and sanitary; provide socialization and exercise regularly; groom your rabbit as needed; and monitor your rabbit for changes on a daily basis. Dirty environmental conditions are stressful and encourage disease. It is important to ensure that your rabbit's environment is not too hot or too cold. The optimum environmental temperature range for a bunny is 60-70 degrees F. Bunnies are sensitive to heat, and temperatures in the upper 80s and above can lead to a fatal heat stroke, especially if the humidity is also high.

Meet dietary needs

Providing a high-quality diet (e.g. timothy-based pellets, unlimited timothy or orchard grass hays, and a variety of leafy greens low in calcium) is very important. I encourage owners to give their pets a small, healthy treat on a daily basis. The day your rabbit doesn't want his or her favorite treat is the day you know there is likely something wrong with your rabbit. Fruits (especially bananas and grapes which are high in sugar) should be used with caution and given in only very small

quantities if given at all, as they can encourage gastrointestinal upset and are fattening in rabbits. Some foods such as salty or sugary snacks, nuts, chocolate, breakfast cereals, or other grains are generally discouraged because of their potential to cause gastrointestinal upset and obesity.

Behavior an indicator of general health

A normal rabbit should be bright, alert, and responsive, and the activity level should be normal for that particular rabbit (some rabbits are more active than others). The rabbit should be eating, drinking, urinating, and defecating normally. If a rabbit has not eaten or defecated for 12 hours or more, is having problems eating, or has abnormal fecal output (diarrhea or pellets are small in size or number,) the rabbit should be taken to a rabbit-knowledgeable veterinarian as soon as possible to be examined for a potential health problem.

Eyes, ears, teeth are critical

A rabbit's eyes should be bright and the eyes and nose should be free of any discharge. Discharge from the eyes and/or nose can indicate a respiratory infection. The ears should be clean and have little or no debris inside. The rabbit's head should be straight; a head tilt often indicates an ear infection or a disease caused by a parasite that affects a rabbit's balance. A rabbit owner usually can see only a rabbit's front teeth (incisors), and these teeth should be even, about the same length on the top and bottom (approximately 1 cm), and free of odor or discharge. Incisors that have been worn at an angle often



Photo: Courtesy of Katrina Ramsell

Dr. Ramsell holds Nacho one of her patients.

indicate that there is a problem with the cheek teeth. Dental problems are relatively common in rabbits and can be potentially life-threatening if not treated appropriately and in a timely fashion.

Check heart and respiration rates

Although an owner usually would not be listening to their rabbit's heart, the normal heart rate of a rabbit has a range of 130-325 beats per minute. The normal respiratory rate of a rabbit is 30-60 breaths per minute, but this rate can be considerably increased when a rabbit is excited, stressed, overheated, or has one of several health problems. A rabbit that is having a difficult time breathing (increased effort, slow and deep, using abdominal muscles to breath, has congested sounds, etc.) may have a severe respiratory infection, pneumonia, or heart disease.

Gastrointestinal problems are emergencies

A rabbit should have a good body condition (too thin usually indicates a nutritional deficiency or a health problem; too heavy often indicates overfeeding

Take Immediate Action If Your Rabbit Stops Eating

or an inappropriate diet), and the coat should be healthy looking, with no lumps, bumps, flakes, or parasites present. Although pets can lose weight rapidly when they are not eating, weight gain is generally a more gradual phenomenon. If your rabbit suddenly seems to have a distended abdomen it should be seen by a veterinarian, especially if the rabbit is not eating well, not defecating normally, or is acting abnormally (quiet, less active, hunched posture, etc.). Most rabbits with an intestinal obstruction and many rabbits with a gastrointestinal ileus (decreased motility of the gastrointestinal tract) have an enlarged stomach which can make the abdomen seem distended. A rabbit's stomach should generally feel soft and somewhat doughy, not enlarged and turgid like a balloon. Gastrointestinal problems in rabbits are considered an emergency. If there is an intestinal foreign body present or if an ileus is severe, you may have only a matter of hours to save your rabbit. This situation should be considered an extreme emergency.

Feed rabbits low-calcium diets

Rabbits excrete much of their dietary calcium into their urine, and many rabbit owners observe this calcium as white, creamy, thick or sludgy urine from their rabbits. Rabbits that have a lot of calcium in their urine are often fed diets relatively high in calcium (e.g. alfalfa pellets and/or alfalfa hay), often have limited exercise, and tend to be obese. This can lead to calcium-based bladder stones, which unfortunately are often painful, have the potential to cause a urinary obstruction, and require surgery to be removed. Feeding rabbits a low-calcium diet (timothy pellets, timothy or orchard grass, low calcium greens, etc.), encouraging exercise, and maintaining a healthy body condition therefore can help prevent formation of bladder stones and subsequent surgery.

Spay, neuter pet rabbits

Up to 80 percent of older, unspayed, female rabbits will get uterine cancer. Although many rabbits normally have

By Sarah Yasutake

One day you give your rabbit his usual meal, and instead of diving in with gusto as he usually does, he doesn't touch it. What should you do?

If you were dealing with a dog or cat instead of a rabbit, you might wait and see if other symptoms of illness developed. With rabbits, however, the situation is different. A rabbit that stops eating may be near death in a short period of time. Any time a rabbit stops eating, it should be treated as a medical emergency. Seek assistance from a rabbit-savvy veterinarian immediately.

Rabbits' bodies are designed to eat frequently. They should not go for long periods of time without eating. At the same time, rabbits are hardwired to stop eating in response to stress and pain. A rabbit with an underlying medical condition (for example, dental disease, gastrointestinal disorder, or respiratory disease) may stop eating in response to the stress or pain caused by the condition. The underlying condition itself may not be an emergency, but the rabbit's anorexia is. When a rabbit stops eating, bad bacteria can produce toxins in the rabbit's cecum, which can

somewhat discolored or pigmented (often orangish-brown) urine, one of the first signs of uterine cancer is blood in the urine. Spaying female rabbits can prevent uterine cancer and can prevent potentially unwanted litters of babies. Neutering males can prevent testicular cancers, help with behavioral issues (including obnoxious urinating behaviors), and again, help minimize unwanted litters.

Try to provide your rabbit with the best care you can to help ensure that your rabbit has a long, healthy life. Try to educate yourself to know what is "normal" so that you will recognize when something is "abnormal." Remember that bunnies are relatively fragile and easily stressed. They often conceal signs of illness, so their situation may be more critical than it appears. In addition to trying to prevent

lead to extremely painful gas and life-threatening liver damage.

Of course, not every rabbit dives into her food immediately every time. Pay attention to your rabbit's eating habits so that you will notice if your rabbit ever stops eating. One idea is to give your rabbit a treat, such as a papaya tablet, every day. That way, if she ever refuses to take the treat, you'll know right away that something is wrong.

For more information:

Rabbit GI Physiology and Nutrition

Susan A. Brown, DVM (<http://www.hrschicago.org/gitractfr.html>)

Approach to the Anorectic Rabbit

Susan A. Brown, DVM (<http://web.archive.org/web/20011007071654/http://www.therabbitcharity.freeserve.co.uk/anorectic.html>)

Nursing Your Rabbit through Gastrointestinal Stasis

Alexandra Logsdon (http://www.mybunny.org/info/gi_stasis.htm)

Gastrointestinal Stasis, The Silent Killer

Dana M. Krempels (<http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/ileus.html>)

illness, have a plan and a veterinarian you are comfortable working with so that you know what to do and where to go if you are faced with a critical situation. Give your bunny plenty of love and attention. Spending time with your little friend will allow you to become familiar with his or her personality, habits, and routines.

Dr. Ramsell's practice is Northwest Exotic Pet Vet and she can be found at the Beaverton Pet Clinic, 11876 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway, phone (503) 646-6101. The clinic's web site is www.beavertonpetclinic.com. Dr. Ramsell serves on the board of the Cascade Ferret Network

KUDOS

Rabbit Benefactor

Keith and Elizabeth Olson in memory of Bandit and Suzie and in appreciation of RA volunteer Amelia

Rabbit Rescuer

Sheila David and Erik Bakkom
Patrick and Karen Stelter in memory of A.B.

Rabbit Sponsor

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Val Rullman in memory of Juniper and Molly
Thornton with love for and in honor of Floppy
Karen Wilson in memory of Angel
The Flowerday family
Karen Corsini

Donations received after July 22, 2009 will be gratefully acknowledged in the next newsletter.

Medical fund helps deserving rabbits

The Rabbit Advocate's unique medical fund has helped nearly 200 rabbits since it was established almost five years ago. The fund was established because bunny medical treatments can be expensive. The medical fund reimburses bunny caretakers up to \$100 per rabbit per year for medical expenses recently incurred. Caretakers aren't required to provide an income or "needs" statement but the fund is limited so only people who have trouble paying for the bunny's care are encouraged to apply for reimbursement.

The medical fund has contributed to nearly 40 bunnies' medical care this year alone. The fund's primary purpose is to make sure bunnies are spayed and neutered, but the fund has also contributed toward procedures like tooth extractions, abscess treatments and surgeries.

The fund is maintained through generous donations and profits from the sale of Bunny's Best Bites hay products. Neither Rabbit Advocates nor the medical fund exist without donations from generous contributors. Here's how you can help:

Donate to Rabbit Advocates—As a non-profit organization, Rabbit Advocates' activities are funded only through donations. Programs like the printing and mailing of this newsletter happen only through our benefactors' generous donations.

Donate to the Rabbit Advocate medical fund—All profits from Bunny's Best Bites gourmet hay blend and Bunny's Best Bites premium timothy hay sales go to the medical fund.

Help create Bunny's Best Bites—Volunteers mix and bag hay sold as Bunny's Best Bites gourmet hay blend and Bunny's Best Bites premium timothy hay. The hay is bagged each month and volunteers who do not suffer from hay allergies are encouraged to participate. More information can be found on the Rabbit Advocate website.

Adopt a special needs rabbit—Medical care is expensive and some rabbit's health needs will require ongoing medical attention. If you are able, please consider adopting a special needs bunny. Adoptable special needs bunnies are indicated on the Rabbit Advocate web site.

For more information on the medical fund, including an application form, please go to the Rabbit Advocate web site.

Some special needs rabbits on the RA website

Felix and Corn-pop: Felix (special need - 2.5 year-old male mini fuzzy lop) and Corn-pop (1.5 year old amber female) need a special forever

To Your Rabbit's Health

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towel to enhance the rabbit's security and to reduce the chance of injuring your rabbit should he or she become wiggly and flip out of your control.

Wear long sleeves and long pants, and be prepared for a nip or two. Nips go with the territory until the rabbit learns that he or she can just relax in your confident hands. Try not to let the rabbit go when nipped, because doing so reinforces the nipping behavior. Sneak in touches on new places while you pet your rabbit. For example, if you are petting your rabbit's back, nonchalantly touch a leg or a paw and slide your hand underneath the rabbit until the touches are non-events for you and the rabbit. It is helpful to learn some basic Tellington Touch (T-Touch) and massage techniques, which are enjoyable for both you and your rabbit.

Be patient, relax, take deep breaths and keep your training sessions short. End on a high note.

As soon as the rabbit has relaxed to your touch, end the training session and let go. Don't worry if he or she stomps away indignantly, that's normal. Be sure to give your rabbit praise and a healthy treat such as a nice piece of cilantro or basil. Don't give up. If you need more help or a demonstration of rabbit handling techniques, come to a Western Pet Outreach or Rabbit Advocates meeting; we'll be happy to share what we know.

What to look for

Knowing what is normal for your rabbit is the key to knowing what is abnormal. Of course, most of us will never comprehend rabbit anatomy as well as our vets do, but with careful observation, we can note any unusual changes and report them to the experts.

During your grooming sessions, check your rabbit's ears, eyes, teeth, cheeks, jaws, paws, nails, back, head, neck, tail, and the all-important (and usually neglected) underside. Gently brush and massage all body parts, including the tummy, which in most healthy rabbits is pliable and not

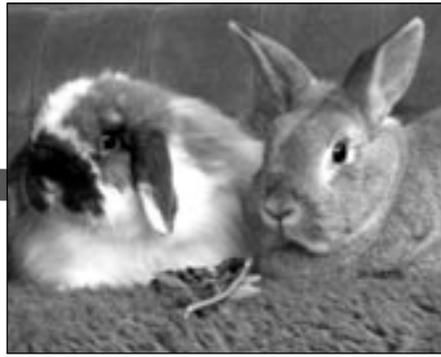
home where their frequent grooming, pen cleaning, and care will be lovingly provided. They both battle poopy-butt. I will train on long-haired clipping, butt baths, and grooming for them. Felix was a Waldport rescue, and Corn-pop was left in a box at a Vancouver major pet chain store. Both love each other dearly, and are happiest with lots of space. Indoor home, Portland area only.

Contact: jhhutto2@msn.com

Chance and Happy are two uniquely beautiful grey Dutch rabbits, approximately 3 years old. Both have white blazes on their foreheads and cute white noses. They were rescued together after living on the street and have stayed together. They are a very special pair, quiet and shy. They would do well in a mellow home with someone who is very gentle, patient and understanding. Sometimes the most rewarding of relationships are those that grow over time. Whoever earns the love of these two cuties, will not regret it. Chance weighs 3 1/2 pounds and Happy weighs 3 pounds. They are disciplined about using

distended. Feel for lumps and bumps and any places that seem to cause the rabbit pain, not fear of being touched, but actual pain. Look for non-symmetrical areas such as a swelling on one side of the face or body that doesn't appear on the other. Observe any crustiness around the eyes, nose, and between the paws. Be sure the nose isn't runny. Check the ears for tiny insects, debris, and dirt. Give your rabbit the sniff test: foul odors can indicate an infection or an excessive build-up of material in the scent glands near your rabbit's tail. (Observing your rabbit's enthusiasm for eating and the output in the litter box are two more very important ways to assess whether he or she is feeling unwell.)

If anything seems unusual, call your vet immediately, describe the problem in detail, and bring the rabbit in for a professional evaluation if necessary.



Photos: Jan Hutto

Felix and Corn-pop (top) and Nougat and Chloe are special needs rabbits available for adoption.

their litter boxes. They are currently in foster care in SE Portland, OR.

Contact: nellie409@yahoo.com

Nougat and Chloe (above) are a sweet couple that need more space and a mature home. Nougat is an exquisite ruby-eyed Californian mix, and almost 2 years old. He was rescued from the Glendoveer Golf Course area as a baby. Chloe is a West Linn 'valley' girl. She fell in love with Nougat at first sight. She is almost 4 now. They are truly devoted to each other, but do steal each other's treats, and take turns deciding who's the boss! Indoor home, Portland area only.

Contact: jhhutto2@msn.com

Warehouse, storage space needed

Rabbit Advocates needs warehouse space to store bales of hay that are used to create Bunny's Best Bites hay blends. Approximately 1,000-2,000 square feet of year-round dry space is required. The best situation is donated space, but a small monthly rental fee is negotiable. If you have storage or warehouse space, please call Janeen at (360) 574-4162 or e mail her at jahamnet@hotmail.com.

Thank You to Our Vets!

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the following veterinarians and staffs for their services to our rescued rabbits:

Dr. Chris Wilson, Dr. Katrina Ramsell, Beaverton Pet Clinic

Dr. Mark Burgess, Dr. Melinda Surrency Southwest Animal Hospital, Beaverton

Dr. Ken DeReamer Paws and Claws Pet Medical Center Troutdale

Dr. Ross Weinstein North Portland Veterinary Hospital Portland

Dr. Mary Blankenvoort, Dr. Peter Davis St. Johns Veterinary Clinic, Portland

Dr. Rebecca Prull Dogwood Pet Hospital, Gresham

Dr. Sheri Schlorman Creswell Veterinary Hospital, Creswell

Dr. Matt Fricke McKenzie Animal Hospital, Springfield

Dr. Doug Ferro Barclay Hills Animal Clinic, Oregon City

We'd love to add more names to this list! Please call us at 503- 617-1625 if you are a rabbit-savvy vet who is able to donate services to help rescued rabbits.

The Rabbit Advocate

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Editor Leann Bleakney

Graphic Designer Sandy Alto

Photographer Kem Sypher

Writers: Sarah Yasutake,

Amy Leith-Young,

Amy Roddey, Sara DeLuca,

Jan Hutto,

Elizabeth Olson

Proofreader Joan Gilbert

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Upcoming Meetings & Events

Rabbit Advocates general meetings are held at the Oregon Humane Society, 1067 NE Columbia Blvd., the third Sunday of each month from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in the Education Hall. Meetings include a "bunny basics" question and answer session on bunny behavior and care. The public is welcome. Please park in the gravel parking lot just west of the shelter building.

General Meetings

**September 20,
October 11, and
November 22.**

Bunny's Best Bites

Volunteers blend and bag different types of hay to create Bunny's Best Bites, our own custom blend of hay. For more information about the hay parties, go to the RA website or contact volunteer Jan at jhhutto2@msn.com

2009 Hay Packing

(10am & noon unless otherwise specified)

August 22 (9am & 11am)

September 26 (9am & 11am)

October 24 (10am & noon)

November 28 (10am & noon)

Adoption Outreaches

Each month, Rabbit Advocates showcase foster rabbits available for adoption. Adoption outreaches are held at Western Pet Supply, 6908 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway. Volunteers are also on hand to provide grooming and nail trimming services. A donation is appreciated for this service. Adoption outreaches are held the second Saturday of each month from noon-3 p.m.

2009

**September 12, October 10,
November 14, December 12.**



www.rabbitadvocates.org