

HOT WEATHER CONCERNS







By Debra Olon-West

Summer has come and everyone wants to enjoy the outdoors. The heat is enjoyable after the cold of winter, but with the climbing temperatures may come some discomfort for yourself and your rabbit. Bunnies actually cope much better with cooler weather, than hot. I imagine yourself wearing a fur coat in 80-degree temperatures; you would understand better how your rabbit feels.




Keep in mind that rabbits can have heat stroke; it can kill them if not prevented or caught in time. Rapid breathing is not unusual but if your rabbit is panting heavily and his muzzle or nose is dripping wet, he may be over heated. Move him to a cooler place immediately and wipe his ears with a piece of ice wrapped in a washcloth. You also can wrap him in a cool, wet towel to bring his temperature down. Take his temperature. If it is 102 degrees or over, or if he appears passed out, call your vet immediately.







Here are some tips to help your bunny feel cooler in the uncomfortable heat of summer, especially over 75 degrees.

OUTDOORS

-  Make certain the rabbit's hutch or play area is in a well-shaded area.
-  Make certain that she has plenty of cool, fresh water available.
-  You may consider placing a frozen bottle of water in their hutch. The rabbit may cuddle with it to stay cool.
-  Keep a mist sprayer of cool water available to mist your rabbit's ears with periodically (can be used in the house as well).
-  Good ventilation in the hutch is very important.
-  If your bunny is in a barn or shed, a circulating fan works well. Make certain that the fan is not directly on your rabbit.

INDOORS

-  Keep your rabbit in an air-conditioned room. Don't be surprised if they want to lie right next to the vent.
-  If you do not have air conditioning, you may wish to keep him in the basement. Most basements are about ten degrees cooler than the rest of the house.
-  We have found that a circulating fan works well. Good circulation is important but remember rabbits are sensitive to very drafty conditions. Do not blow the fan right on your animal all day.

-  Keep their drinking water refrigerated and make certain that they have fresh, cool water daily.
-  Ice cubes in his water will also help to keep him cool. The miniature ice cubes seem to work the best in water bottles.
-  The water mister can be kept in the refrigerator as well to mist their ears to help bring his temperature down.
-  Your bunny may also find it cooler if they have a tile or marble slab to lie on.
-  Have an ice pack available for your bunny to lie next to.
-  A cool, wet towel laid out in a section of the hutch with good ventilation also is a help.

Using these simple precautions can be invaluable in making your bunny's summer more enjoyable.