



Feeding Guide for Bunnies

Info collected from Bunny Huggers SA, Southern Cape Bunny Haven and The Strawberry Foundation

✓ ROUTINE:

Why is routine important? So the bunny's gut will stay healthy and he does not go into stasis. Stasis is when a bunny stops eating. It can be deadly. Keep your bunny in a routine to check his/her health.

✓ HAY:

Bunnies' staple food is hay! Bunnies should not go without fresh hay for even one day. All bunnies should have access to unlimited fresh hay: Oat hay, teff hay, eragrostis, mountain hay, meadow hay, orchard grass & timothy hay (hard to find in SA). Lucerne, also known as alfalfa, is usually given to babies (up to 6 months old) and lactating mothers. It should only be fed as a treat to adult bunnies due to high calcium content.

Eating enough hay will ensure a healthy digestive system as it prevents intestinal issues and blockage. It is essential that your bunnies eat hay in order to keep their teeth short and healthy. An easy guideline to feeding hay is to give as much hay as the size of the bunny's body. Bunnies that fill up on pellets do not eat enough hay. Sometimes it is necessary to take pellets away completely to encourage hay eating – your bunnies will beg for it pellets, but don't give in! They will learn to love their hay and will be happier & healthier for it. If they come from a home where they were deprived of hay, they might take a long time to learn to eat hay. Sprinkling drops of pineapple juice on the hay could encourage them to eat it, but this should not be given permanently as it contains sugar.

Do not mistake straw for hay. Hay is not just golden in colour but also has green and brown bits, and could also contain seeds. Although

bunnies may eat straw, it has no nutritional value – this is the same for yellow, old hay.

✓ PELLETS:

Pellets can be given as a supplement to a bunny's diet, but should never be used as a main source of nutrition. We suggest a maximum of 1/3 of a teacup pellets per bunny per day.

✓ GREENS:

- All herbs such as coriander, parsley, basil, coriander, rocket, mint, watercress, fennel, dill, oregano, rosemary, thyme, sorrel
- Kale
- Cabbage leaves 5x5cm piece per day (only outside leaves, not white leaves)
- All lettuce except iceberg/crispy lettuce (too watery and can cause diarrhoea)
- Celery leaves and tender stems (the thick stems contain too much water and the fibres can get stuck in their teeth)
- Wheatgrass (can easily grow at home, it's a nice project for kids)
- Spinach
- Swiss chard
- Weeping willow branches and clover from parks/ green belts
- Bamboo, lavender, rosemary, bay leaf, rose bush branches harvested from garden *** make sure no pesticides were sprayed on
- If your bunny eats Lucerne, then give spinach, parsley or kale sparingly.
- Never give spinach, parsley or kale on the same day.

✓ VEGGIES:

- Carrots
- Beetroot
- Broccoli
- Asparagus

✓ FRUIT:

- Banana
- Apple
- Pear
- Blueberries
- Pineapple (especially good for long haired or shedding buns to help keep the gut going)
- Grapes
- Strawberries

✓ PREGNANT & LACTATING MOTHERS:

- Kale, parsley and Lucerne boosts milk production
- Mint inhibits milk production

- Give much larger quantities of food and water during her pregnancy and lactation period

X DO NOT FEED:

- Iceberg/crispy lettuce
- Avocado
- Mushrooms
- Watery fruit & veg e.g. cucumber, watermelon
- Onion family e.g. leeks, onions, spring onions, garlic
- 'Hard' veggies that require cooking e.g. potatoes, butternut, sweet potatoes
- Cooked rice/pasta, cooked veg
- Bread or bread products
- Tomato
- More than 5x5cm piece of cabbage per day
- Cauliflower
- Maize or corn on the cob
- Any pet shop foods with maize and colourful sugar pellets

✓ AN EXAMPLE OF AN IDEAL BUNNY FEEDING ROUTINE:

Morning wake up:

A hand full of Lucerne

A bunch of hay

Clean water

Greens

Remove any wet newspaper or blankets and let it dry

Clean the litter box

Mid-day:

Check water

Treats (not compulsory) (excluding carrot and apple) e.g. banana or strawberry

Sundown:

Carrot: about 2-3 cm thick piece of medium sized carrot

Check water

Just before bed:

Wedge of apple, not larger than an eighth of an apple

A scoop of pellets

Check the amount of clean hay

Check water