



## How to encourage your rabbit or guinea pig to eat more hay

Rabbits and some guinea pigs are notoriously stubborn, especially when it comes to their food. Here are some tips and tricks to try and encourage them to eat more of what is good for them!

- ▣ Decrease pellets, grains and treats. Foods high in fats, proteins and carbohydrates are generally preferred over everything else.
- ▣ Offer hay in large amounts, at a minimum half a body size per day. A happy healthy hay eating average sized rabbit should eat about a cat litter tray of hay every day!
- ▣ Offer hay in all locations. As bedding, in the litter tray, all over the hutch!
- ▣ Restrict access to non-hay areas. This may mean restricting your rabbit or guinea pig to the hutch (with small amounts of exercise time) until they begin to eat hay.
- ▣ Do not remove hay unless it is soiled. Unlike salad greens do not remove the hay in 24 hours if not eaten.
- ▣ Offer hay in a hay rack, or a toilet roll tied to the side of the cage.
- ▣ Fill boxes or a big wading pool with hay, so your rabbit can play and burrow in it. Blue children's clam shells (available from most large hardware stores) are good for this.
- ▣ Hide a small number of pellets or treats in a box of hay, so you rabbit can burrow and forage in the hay.
- ▣ Offer all salad greens mixed up with hay in a box.
- ▣ Grate carrot or apple (treats!) and mix up with small amount of hay as a tossed salad!
- ▣ Lightly spray hay with fruit juice (as an introduction, not long term)
- ▣ As a last resort, offer Lucerne Hay. This and clover hays are higher in protein and are more palatable than grass hay, however they should not be given long term as they are high in calcium that can cause a range of problems including urinary stone formation in adult rabbits and guinea pigs.



Note: Oaten and Grass Hay are the primary source of fibre in a rabbit or guinea pigs diet, feed it free-choice, which means you always have plenty of fresh, good quality hay available for your pet.

Low quality straw hay has very little nutritional value at all, however can be used for bedding.

