

A light brown rabbit is sitting on a patterned rug. To its right is a blue and white pet scale. The background shows a large tree and a grassy area. A black rectangular bar is at the top of the page.

9 CONTROVERSIAL THINGS ABOUT RABBITS

YOU NEED TO KNOW

These are some of the main things that I do differently but the results are undeniable.



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Hey there,

Im leah. A show rabbit raiser with over 20 years of experience raising rabbits.

This guide is meant to bust the common myths of the rabbit world and give you solid answers on why I don't believe these things to be true and how I handle the situation.

Some of these you may not agree with and that's ok. It's my job to share what has worked for me and why.

It's your choice to leave it on the table.

Go through this guide with an open mind and I'm sure you will take home a few nuggets of rabbit-raising gold.

The first page is a quick overview of the 9 things I will cover in case you are short on time and just want to take my word for it.

Then I get into each one in detail in the following pages.

Got more questions? Email me
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QUICK READ

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DOES NOT NEED
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I don't feed hay.

More than a decade ago I overheard a lot of people at rabbit shows talking about how they almost lost their whole herd to bloat. The common denominator was hay.

I figured what do I have to lose? If it doesn't work I'm no worse off than these people who struggled with bloat.

Here is where people get mixed up. It's not the HAY that keeps the rabbit's digestion moving. **It's the fiber.**

Most commercial rabbit pellets should have over 20% fiber. So if you are feeding good feed to your rabbits bloat shouldn't be a problem. - If they are a wooled breed papaya tablets are great to have on hand for woolblock.

Hay or any type of dried plant draws damp very easily. You may not even notice it but there can be mold on the hay without realizing it. And if you don't catch it that can be deadly for your rabbit. There really is no fixing bloat. - Read more about it in my blog post here.

I don't fruits and veggies except as treats.

Rabbits need at least 16% protein in their diet. Vegetables are barely 3% protein. If rabbits are fed on vegetables like the "gurus" are pushing these days they essentially are going to starve and even lose muscle mass.

Think about it. When someone who has an eating disorder wants to lose weight what do they do? They go for foods with low protein and fat.

My rabbits only get things like this once every two weeks at the most.

Rabbits are never let loose on the ground EVER!!!

This is a BIG ONE. There are so many diseases that are carried by wild animals that rabbits can't handle. Even if you live in town you have no idea what wild animal went across your yard without you looking.

The rabbit hemorrhagic disease is still a big thing in the US, wild birds carry mites, and Raccoons and Skunks are the main carriers of rabies.

Aside from the high potential of getting sick.. letting your rabbit free roam is going to cause you to have a demanding rabbit that wants down when **they** want out. They don't care that you are running late for work and don't have time. Rabbits will nip and growl to get what they want.

Think twice before letting them loose.

If I can't treat it I don't take the rabbit to the vet.

I'm going to say something that you may disagree with and that's ok. - Animals are not equal to people.

You don't have to go into debt to save an animal. And in fact you should never put your family in a financial hardship situation over an animal.

This is something you have to decide where your line in the sand is. If it's a dollar amount. Decide what that is and set it aside for when you need it. But then stop at that amount.

As much as vets don't want to say how much something will cost you can push them for a ballpark. They have to tell you what they charge for certain treatments and that will tell you what kind of dollar amount you are looking at.



You have to sit
your emotions
aside for both of
these things and
ask yourself which
is for the greater
good.



Sometimes putting the animal down is the kindest thing to do.

It is UNFAIR OF YOU to keep the animal around and in pain because you don't have the guts to say enough is enough. That probably sounds mean but if you think about it most people keep an animal around out of self-interest.

Nature is a whole lot less kind when animals can not survive on their own anymore. They either starve to death or are eaten when they become too slow.

You have to decide where your line in the sand is again in this situation. But here are some guidelines I follow for our farm or even with our house pets and say enough is enough.

- If the quality of life is going to be severely diminished after treatment.
- If the animal is in pain.
- If they are not going to make it any way I don't let them get so far gone they are in severe discomfort.
- If the animal loses mobility and won't get up to go to the bathroom or eat.

I don't keep them on solid floors.

Keeping rabbits on solid floors is SO unhealthy. -- The reason this is big right now is because of rabbits possibly getting sour hocks. Which I get. BUT if the rabbit is bred well and the breeder does their job they shouldn't be using an animal that has issues with that.

- Waste builds up so quickly and it can get in the rabbit's fur and cover over their rear end. Causing them to get stopped up.
- Then in the summer the manure attracts flies and can cause maggots to be laid in the attached poo. YES ON YOUR RABBIT. It only takes 24 hours for maggots to hatch.
- On top of that being close to their waste with such high ammonia will cause respiratory issues and illness in your rabbit.

Rabbits don't live together

This one puts a bur under my saddle! Rabbits fight. They are not dogs, they don't live in packs. Even in this whole colony push each rabbit still has their own space to go back to.

Think about it. In the wild, you don't see big groups of rabbits. You see ONE doing their own thing.

I have had siblings as young as 9 weeks old fight each other and break the skin. When rabbits are injured it's not an easy fix.

And for those who have had the "bonded rabbit" experience in the past. I have a question for you.

Do you want your rabbit to get their attention from you or another rabbit? -- You are going to have a much friendlier rabbit and better pet if they want YOUR attention.

Rabbits don't need a litter box.

Rabbits naturally go in one place in their own cage. BUT rabbits will also drop turds as they go because this is one of their ways of telling other rabbits "hey, another rabbit roams this area". That is something you are going to have a hard time breaking especially if you want to let them live in your house. -- Which I will touch on next.

The second issue goes back to the solid floor thing. Number one, a litter box will cause the waste to build up on their rear end, and also as rabbits naturally clean themselves you run the risk of rabbits ingesting the bedding which can cause issues and even kill them depending on what bedding you are using.

Have a cage with a wire floor where the waste falls through into a tray or on the ground.

Your rabbit doesn't need to free roam your house.

Oh mercy... This one can step on a lot of toes. Rabbits do not need to run loose in your home.

There are so many things in your house that are deadly to a rabbit. Carpet, pillows, fabrics on furniture. Even stained wood can be an issue.

Rabbits naturally explore the world with their teeth. Even your baseboards are not safe. I can not tell you how many times I've had someone come to me after they have lost a rabbit and say "But I was so careful".

If them not having more space is causing you to feel guilty. Think of it this way.

Compare their size and their cage to the size of a human and the house size we live in.

A small family doesn't need more than 1400 square feet. That's only 500 or so square feet per person. Sometimes a family of 4-5 will live in a smaller house. You can cross that space in just a few paces.

So ask yourself. Does a small animal like a rabbit really need to have the same amount of space that you do? Not really. Not to mention letting a rabbit free roam will cause them to be demanding and want to get out when THEY want to get out. It doesn't matter if you are in a hurry they will fight you to get out their cage door.

Solution: If you want to have your rabbit out with you in the house have them sit on your lap or beside you. Then have them in ONE room or in a puppy play pen if you need to set them down.