

Creature Feature

The Dutch Rabbit

About the Dutch Rabbit: The Dutch Rabbit originated in Holland and is one of the oldest breeds. The first spotted rabbits were recorded in the fifteenth century. In the 1894 the English began breeding the Dutch into the rabbit we have today. Dutch are now one of the most popular fancy rabbits in America.

Lifespan: On average the Dutch rabbit can live to 5 years or more.

Breeding: The ideal age for the female Dutch rabbit to start breeding is between 5 and 6 months of age. The first litter must be born before the female is one year old. The reason for this is that after this age the pelvic bones fuse and she would not be able to give birth naturally. They should have no more litters after the age of three years.

Average Litter Size: The Dutch rabbit can produce, on average, 3-5 young. Litters of up to 6 or more have been recorded.

Gestation Period: The gestation period is between 28-34 days. On average they give birth at 30-32 days.

General Physical Description: The Dutch rabbit is a fairly small rabbit. They are compact animals with ears that stand erect. The powerful back legs are longer than the front legs. The Dutch rabbit is white with another color. They are one of the most popular rabbits kept as pets today.

Size: On average the Dutch rabbit is 2.3 kgs.

Feeding: A well balanced dry rabbit mix will contain all the necessary nutritional requirements that a rabbit needs. They can live healthy lives on a diet of the dry mix and hay. They do not need to be fed fresh fruit and vegetables. Rabbits have quite delicate stomachs so if you do feed these make sure they are limited as too much can cause diarrhea. An earthenware bowl is the best type of feeding dish to use, as they are harder to knock over than the plastic ones, also they are not chewable. A water bottle fixed to the outside of the cage, with the water tube going into the cage, ensures a fresh water supply is available.

Cage & Bedding: For an outdoor rabbit the ideal home is a wooden hutch made of a heavy wood with a waterproof roof, and to live indoors then a wooden hutch can also be used or a cage. The cage would have a plastic or wire base with a wire lid fixed to the base. All rabbits must have an adequate exercise area, whether it is an outside run or an enclosed area in the house. Wood shavings should be used for the floor of the hutch or cage. Fine sawdust can cause eye irritations so this should be provided especially in cold and wet weather for the outdoor rabbit. The best thing to use is straw on top of a layer of the wood

shavings in the sleeping compartment. The rabbit home should be cleaned out weekly and any old food removed. If it is necessary to wash the home then only use a cleaner specifically designed for cleaning rabbit hutches. An earthenware food bowl and a drinking bottle will also be required to feed and water the rabbit.

Suitability For Children: The Dutch rabbit is suitable for both children and adults. They are best suited for children over 10 years of age, for younger children an adult should supervise the care and handling of the rabbit. The Dutch is generally good natured and quiet to handle.

Character & Temperament: The Dutch rabbit is quite a sociable individual by nature. They have a great personality and can be very energetic. Some can be a bit jumpy and wary.

Sleeping Habits: Rabbits are most active in the morning and at night; they generally sleep during the day.

Toys & Exercise: Rabbits need things to climb on, crawl through, dig and chew. It is possible to provide plenty of entertainment for this rabbit with using household items, such as toilet roll tubes and boxes. Several boxes can be put together with holes in them so the rabbit can go from box to box, just like being in a warren. Ramps can also be put against the boxes so the rabbit can climb up; they like to have a lookout post.

Type of Coat: Short haired

Color: The Dutch rabbit is white with another color. The other colors being black, blue, chocolate, yellow and tortoiseshell.

Intelligence: Rabbits can become trained to learn their name. They are more intelligent than guinea pigs and hamsters. They can even be litter trained.

Show Characteristics: This rabbit should be compact with ears that are long and erect. The markings have to be pretty precise for a Dutch to be a successful show rabbit. Color wise they are always white with another color. They should have a white blaze on their face between the ears. The front half of the body should be white while the back section is colored. The front feet are white and the back feet are white from the toes to the middle of the foot. The colors preferred for showing are white with black, blue, chocolate, tortoiseshell, steel gray and brown gray.

Country of Origin: Holland