

Angora Rabbit Care Basics

Feeding

- The main part of your rabbit's diet should be a high quality pellet. Pellets vary in what they contain, but look for an 18% protein for an Angora rabbit. Higher protein helps the wool to grow faster, while a higher fiber helps to prevent wool block.
 - Growing new coat – higher protein, less fiber
 - Long coat, not yet harvested (3-6 inches) – higher fiber, less protein
 - Kits – high protein (18%)
- Free feed your Angoras until they are 1 year old. This means filling up the feeder so they always have feed available.
- Feed your adult Angora once a day (usually at night) or twice a day (morning and night). The general rule is 1 oz of feed for each pound of rabbit. For an 8 pound Angora, you would give 1 cup of feed per day either at night or split up between two feedings.
- Hay – Always provide a good quality hay for your rabbit. This can be a timothy, alfalfa, or clover hay. You can use a hay feeder to have hay available always, or put some in a toy or on top of the cage.
- Treats – avoid giving your rabbit any “greens” or treats before they are 6 months old, this can cause diarrhea. When rabbits are older, they appreciate the occasional apple slice, dandelion, crown vetch, romaine lettuce, pineapple, or papaya. Always make sure that what you feed your rabbit is safe and remember, treats are treats, and shouldn't interrupt your rabbit's normal diet.

Housing

- Rabbits should be housed in wire cages. This provides maximum ventilation and is best for the rabbit's feet. Wood or solid bottom cages (not dirt), will not allow the rabbit's toenails to sink down and remain in the proper alignment, causing pain (pressure), and sores on their feet. Don't forget a roof for your rabbit to protect him from the elements. In the winter, you can put up sides to block the wind and snow, but make sure they are at least 6” from the wire for ventilation and to prevent spraying. Wire cages also help to keep the rabbit's wool clean.
- Cages with wood (instead of wire), sides will trap bacteria and will remain damp, which can cause breathing and other health problems for your rabbit.
- What about bedding? You can provide your rabbit a resting mat or shelf to get off the wire, but putting in bedding such as pine shavings is a bad idea. The bedding will get soiled and give off fumes that can harm your rabbit. The damp bedding also harbors bacteria and can make the rabbit sick. Rabbits have a lot of fur and don't need bedding to stay warm unless very young. Bedding will also prevent the droppings from falling through the wire and will soil the wool.
- Wire cages should be cleaned weekly of stuck on droppings, and periodically with disinfectant such as vinegar or Lysol (rinse really, really well).
- With angoras you have the option of litter training them to help reduce soiled wool.

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Wool

- To keep the wool in best condition, make sure you are grooming the rabbit weekly. You will also want to do health checks at this time. Check your rabbits ears, eyes, and underside.
- If your rabbit is not eating, or his poop has gotten smaller, you need to be watchful of wool block. Provide fresh water in a bowl (encourages more drinking), and give unlimited hay. You can also give pineapple or papaya tablets to help (and on a preventative basis).
- Watch the weather. If it is over 80°F, (even if it is just from the heat index, and especially if humid), provide a frozen tile for your rabbit to lay on or a frozen water bottle to lay against. Too much heat can easily kill a rabbit, especially an Angora.
- It is also a good idea to harvest your wool before the hottest part of the summer, and leave enough wool for them to stay warm through the winter. In Michigan, we harvest in November, March, June, and August.
- Most of your wool, the prime, will come from the back and upper sides of the rabbit.
- Make sure you save the wool in a box or plastic clamshell (think strawberry container). If you store in a bag, the wool felts a little bit every time the bag moves.

Grooming

- Always give your rabbit a stable, non-slip surface to stand on during grooming. You can use a towel or carpet square on a table or turntable.
- We work from the bottom up. Start by lifting the wool on the side up, and brushing the exposed hair. When it is smooth, let down some more wool and keep working your way up the rabbit.
- The hind end can matt a lot and does not often provide much quality wool. We keep the hinds trimmed.
- Sometimes it is necessary to trim your rabbit's toenails. Use dog or cat clippers and be careful not to cut the quick.
- Hold your rabbit securely on its back to groom the belly. Start with the rabbit chest to chest with you. Holding firmly lower the rabbit back down to lay on your lap. You can find images or videos of this if you google, "Trancing Your Rabbit".