

IS AN ANGORA RABBIT RIGHT FOR YOU?

The Basic Commitment:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Lifespan: | 7-9 years with proper care. |
| Startup Equipment: | hutch, hay feeder, water bottle, hang up feeder or bowl, grooming tools |
| Maintenance Costs: | good quality hay, pelleted rabbit feed, medicines/veterinary care |
| Time: | Pet rabbits need to be handled and played with often. Rabbits require daily feeding and watering. Hutch cleaning should be done weekly at a minimum in a cold weather and more often in summer or during periods of warmer weather. Angora rabbits must have their coat removed every 10 to 14 weeks by either clipping or combing; some interim grooming may be required depending upon the rabbit. |

Angoras as Pets

Angora rabbits can make excellent pets. They can be kept either indoors or outside, however if outside the rabbit needs to be protected from drafts, extremes of temperature and predators. The optimum hutch size for a French, English or Satin Angora is 30"x30"; Giant angoras or German angoras do best if kept in a 30"x36" hutch. A screened porch or well-lighted garage can be an excellent place to keep a rabbit. If a rabbit is to be kept inside and allowed loose in the house special precautions are required due to normal rabbit behaviors such as chewing (e.g., electrical cords, wood) and digging (e.g., carpet). Rabbits can also be trained to use a litter box.

If a rabbit is to become a good pet, s/he must be handled gently and often. When the bunny is picked up the rear end needs to be supported or the bunny may become frightened and kick with his powerful hind legs. This can result in injury to either the handler (scratches) or the bunny. I don't recommend rabbits for unsupervised children under the age of approximately 8 years because a child's energetic behavior and potentially rough handling can severely frighten or injure a rabbit.

Rabbits can get along with other family pets quite well. Cats in particular will often bond and play with house rabbits. Be sure your other pets are calm and well behaved. Do not leave the bunny unsupervised with other pets until you are absolutely certain that they get along together under a variety of circumstances.

If you have more than one indoor pet rabbit, altering (spaying or neutering) the rabbit is almost essential to eliminate behaviors such as aggressiveness (toward other rabbits) and spraying urine. Altering is always a good idea as it prevents undesirable behaviors and eliminates the risk of unplanned pregnancies and uterine cancer in female rabbits. Neutered male angoras are also reported to grow more wool. Be sure to find a veterinarian who is knowledgeable about rabbits!

Breeding/Showing Angoras

Breeding and showing angoras can be tremendously rewarding, but it is a BIG commitment. Several issues to consider:

- Are you willing to take the time to clip, clean, feed and manage the care of a large number of rabbits?
- Do you live in an area where the zoning will allow you to breed and raise rabbits?
- Are you able and willing to take the time to develop markets for your fiber and sale of breeding/pet/wooler rabbits?
- There will inevitably be rabbits that you don't sell or that get sick and need to be humanely killed - are you willing to deal with hard choices like euthanasia or use of the rabbits for food purposes?

If you are sincerely interested in breeding angora rabbits, it is best to first arm yourself with as much information as possible by visiting rabbitries, attending rabbit shows and/or fiber festivals and reading as much as possible before you make a commitment. Joining the American Rabbit Breeder's Association (ARBA, <http://www.arba.net/>) or the International Association of German Angora Rabbit Breeders (IAGARB, <http://www.iagarb.org/>) is highly recommended for the serious rabbit breeder!