



Behind the coops...

By: Joy Ekstrom - Hillsboro, Oregon - OL Director

Rabbits like consistency. Routine times to feed and water. Consistent types of food. Anything new to their system is a challenge to their system. When you vary from your rabbits routine, its like playing Russian Roulette, you are taking a chance on getting a sick bunny. Let's talk about what is in my rabbit medicine chest.

Good Quality Timothy Hay: This is for soft stool. Pull the feed and just give hay until it clears up. Alfalfa hay is too rich to feed your rabbits exclusively. (Although, alfalfa is the primary ingredient in most rabbit feeds, remember in that case it is watered down by all the other ingredients). Grass hay varies greatly in quality, and runs the whole gamite of quality depending on where it was grown, and variety of grass used to make the hay.

Neomycin 325 (also seen it under the name NeoMed 325) has come in handy for anything that looks like an enteritis, stomach upset, full blown diarrhea or bloating. (once they bloat, it is very rare to save them). Follow directions on package.

Critical Care: This is a fine powder made from hay. Mix a small amount with with equal parts water and syringe feed the rabbit. The best success comes when you can catch the rabbit early. A rabbit that is not eating is a sick rabbit. To entice them also I give parsley, dandelion greens, dill weed, strawberry leaves, or willow tree leaves. I will say that a rabbit that is not eating is less inclined to eat something from this list if the rabbit isn't used to it. About every other week or so I give something from this list to my herd.

Sweet Potato baby food: Can be mixed with the critical care. Make sure it isn't chocked full of sugars! Sugars can throw off the gut also. Look for the lowest amount of sugars.

Pedialyte: Is also good to entice them to drink and keep their hydration. It's has electrolytes.

Vanodine: They don't make Vanodine anymore, but there is a product Barbi Brown (<http://www.barbibrownsbunnies.com/>) sells that is similar to it. This is a great disinfectant, you can put in the water or use for cleaning cages. (Check the label for what the different strengths of vanodine are used for).

Goat Milk Yogurt: This one can be tricky to find. This helps me with the litters that lose their mom early, or when a rabbit goes off feed. It can also be mixed with the critical care and fed to sick rabbits.

A dewormer: There are tons of products to deworm. Ivermect, Safeguard or Strongid, just to name a few. Deworming should be done when ever you get home from a show. All must be dosed dependent on size of animal. Your vet can help you figure the proper dosage or make recommendations.

Coccideostat: Kills Coccidiosis. Products like Sulfamet or Corid are good medicines for this.

In my barn I won't mess with respiratory issues or vent disease issues. The biggest key with rabbits is to keep them eating. Don't throw a new type of food or water at them when they are not feeling well, they won't likely eat or drink it.

As always consult your vet first before treatment and develop a patient/client relationship with your vet.

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