

Rabbit Handbook

Internal and External Parasites

Examine your animals daily. Note how much food and water are consumed, and the nature and quantity of wastes. Color, fur condition, breathing, nasal discharges and ear carriage (the way the ears are held) are indications of health. Isolate sick animals until they recover. Do not handle sick animals until after you've cared for the healthy ones.

Like other animals, rabbits can become infested with both internal and external parasites. The main parasites found outside the body are ear and mange mites. Both are microscopic.

When hutches are kept clean, internal parasites generally pose no problem. If they do occur, seek advice from your veterinarian on what type worm is present and what treatment is proper.

Preventive measures consist of keeping hutches dry and clean, and controlling flies and mosquitoes in the area. Keep dogs and cats and other pets away from the rabbitry. Do not let them sleep on feed sacks or material to be used in hutches.

Ear Canker

Cause: Ear mites.

Symptoms: The animal shakes its head, holds it to one side and scratches at its ears. Later, the ear becomes infected. If not treated, this builds into a moist exudate with crusts or scabs inside the ear, sometimes extending to the outside.

Treatment: Swab and remove as much debris as possible. Remove the scabs from the sores and pus from the bottom of the ear. Apply a solution of mineral oil and camphor medicine with an eye dropper, or a commercially available product, saturating thoroughly the inside of the ear and all sores or scabs.

Mineral oil alone may be used if the other two products are not available. Ear mites may also be controlled by using tick and flea powders that are used for dogs and cats. Sprinkle powder into the ear after the ear has been thoroughly cleaned.

Ringworms

Cause: Ringworm, caused by a fungus, is seen as circles of hairless spots or grayish scaly areas.

Treatment: Treat the affected area with tincture of iodine. Clean the hutches thoroughly every day when external parasites are present.

Coccidiosis

Cause: A parasitic disease, coccidiosis damages the liver and intestinal tract. It is caused by protozoa, which can be seen only under a microscope.

Treatment: A veterinarian's advice is needed for treating this condition.