

CAVY COMFORT IN SUMMER

During hot days in excess of 30 degrees losses can occur from heat exhaustion, so keep your cavies constantly cool and keep them in the shade if they are outside. Remember the sun moves so keep a careful watch that they are still in the shade.

Do not leave them unattended for long periods and avoid travel with them in the car. It takes very little time for stress and exhaustion to occur. Make sure their drinking water is cool. To keep the cavies cool you can place a large plastic container of frozen water in their cage. Lay this on a tray in case of leakage, or you can thoroughly soak paving bricks and put these in the cage.



Very pregnant sows should be placed in a box and brought inside into a cool room. Placing the box in the empty bath in the bathroom is ideal. The first sign of heat stress is wetness under the chin. If noticed, this is the time to act or the Cavy will become limp and exhausted. Place the Cavy in tepid water up to its neck, gently take it out, wrap it in a dry towel and place it in a cool shaded area; under a tree in long grass is ideal. A few drops of water given by dropper, sparingly at first, will help rehydrate your cavy.

INFORMATION & MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to join our friendly club to learn more about Cavies and/or exhibit them, you will find it a most rewarding, absorbing and interesting hobby - adults as much as children.

To obtain Membership Forms or if you have any queries please feel free to call -

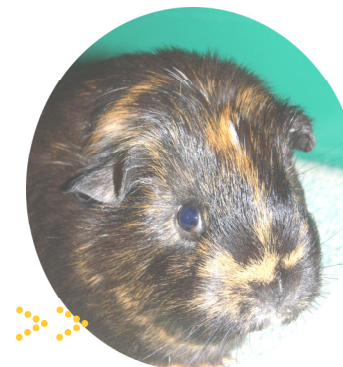
Sue Scott	Peter	Ken
9455 3789	9410 1652	9881 2163
0429 068 042		

For Show Dates and Venues see the Pet Section of the Quokka or check out our new Website :

<http://www.cavywest.com>

brief information for interest

Life Expectancy - up to 8 years, usually 4-5yrs
First Eat Solids - 2-4 days, some seen eating and washing as soon as born.
Sexual Maturity - Boars & Sows 4-6 weeks,
Very possibly earlier for sows.
Oestres Cycle - every 15-17 days & 2 hours after giving birth.
Gestation - 63-72 Days
Litter Size - 1-6, average 3
Birthweight - 75-100g
Toes - 4 on front feet, 3 on back feet



What Makes a Cavy

Hi! I'm a Cavy. My Biological name is '*Cavia porcellus*' but most of you know me as a 'Guinea Pig' though I am not even related to a pig, I am a rodent. I make a charming pet for both adults and children.

To give you an idea of what makes me happy, here are a few basic details



Cavy West is an amateur body that strives to popularise the fascinating hobby of Cavy (Guinea Pig) Breeding and Exhibiting.

CAVY WEST (Inc)

<http://www.cavywest.com>

CHOOSING YOUR PET HOUSING

Boars (male) and Sows (female) make equally ideal pets. Two Boars can be kept together if introduced at an early age, or a baby boar will get along harmoniously with an adult boar. Boars that have grown to even half size might fight if placed together and Boars which have been used for breeding are an even greater risk. When selecting a baby Cavy, choose one about 4 weeks old. As a guide the baby should be able to eat and drink independently and weigh 180-200gms at least. It should be lively and alert, eyes bright, eyes, nose, ears and vent clean and free from any discharge. The coat should be clean and healthy with no bald spots except behind the ears and inside the wrists. Beware of buying a young sow which has been housed with Boars as she can get pregnant even at a very tender age.

HOUSING

Elaborate or expensive housing is not necessary but it should suffice to be warm and dry in the Winter and cool and shaded in the Summer. Allow at least 1800 cm² (2sq ft) for one Cavy and 900 cm² (1sq ft) for each additional Cavy kept together. Cavies seem much happier in wooden cages but metal can be used. (Bear in mind that metal heats up in the Summer.) Do not allow your Cavies to walk directly on wire floors as they walk on their toes and can get their nails caught. The bedding can be news paper, then pine sawdust or shavings. Be sure to use untreated pine sawdust as jarrah emits toxic fumes when urinated on. Cavies do not need a sleeping compartment. If you wish to provide a little house for them to hide in then a small wooden or cardboard box will suffice. If your cage is outside it is better to raise it off the ground.

FEEDING

Your Cavy needs 'a little green', 'a little grain', plenty of hay and fresh water each day. Vegetables provide Vitamin C which Cavies (like humans) cannot store in their bodies. Fruit also has Vitamin C. Fruit & Vegies should be fed daily. Grass is a Cavy's birthright and can be fed in abundance once they are used to it. Try for variety in their diet, a "little of a lot" rather than a "lot of a little". Grain is supplied by a good Guinea Pig Mix (muesli) and/or good Guinea Pig Pellets. The hay fed must be of good quality and NOT hay 'sweepings', meadow, oaten or lucerne are preferable. If you feed a good muesli you will probably find lucerne hay already contained so you only need one of the other two in addition. Hay provides important fibre in a Cavy's diet and Cavies without it do not thrive well.

A Cavy's water requirement is minimal but do not be tempted into thinking they get enough from their greens. Even though they do not appear to drink it—it must always be available. Water is best given in a drink bottle with a metal sipper tube and babies should already be using this when they leave their mother.

Keep bottles and tubes clean to prevent algae forming. Complete change of water daily is preferable.



BREEDING

A sow should be mated for the first time at about 3-5 months of age, her weight ideally over 500gms (1lb). It is better for her to have her first litter while she is young so that her pelvic bones will readily separate for the birth. A sow attempting to deliver her first litter at 1 year old or over could have trouble because of rigidity of the bones. Boars are ready for breeding at the same age as sows. Pregnancy is a surprising 63 to 72 days. The sow is most fertile about 2 hours after giving birth and should a boar be present, she will likely fall pregnant. The average litter is 3 babies (known as pups) and three litters a year is plenty. Avoid sows being heavily pregnant during hot months as they are prone to stress and could die. Pups are usually weaned at about 4 weeks. Do not keep baby sows with males, especially adult males as it is possible for them to become pregnant at a distressingly early age.

HEALTH

If your Cavy develops diarrhoea, feed only dry food and give Vitamin C. If it continues give Kaomagna or similar and no food, give water with Vitamin C added for 24 hours, then gradually add greens. If your Cavy develops bald patches it possibly has mite. Contact Cavy West for advice on obtaining liquid Ivomec and its dosage. Toenails can be trimmed with foldback clippers or similar, be careful not to cut too short or bleeding will occur. Should this happen, run the cut nail across a bar of soap to stop the bleeding.

Hayseeds in the eye can be carefully removed. Bathe the eye gently and it will return to normal after a few days. Seeds in the ear can be removed gently if they can be seen, otherwise consult a vet.