

CARING FOR YOUR FERRET



We care about pet care

It is only recently that Ferrets have been considered as a pet animal although for generations they have been used by country people in controlling the rabbit population. Ferrets differ in many ways from other caged pets. They are much more intelligent than guinea pigs or hamsters and do not take kindly to long periods of confinement. As they are by nature predators they cannot be given complete freedom. Selective breeding has helped to reduce many of their less desirable behaviour habits. Improved veterinary expertise has made it easier to have them neutered and to reduce their strong body odour by surgical means. It must be emphasised that a ferret is not a suitable pet for a young family but a knowledgeable and caring owner can derive a great deal of interest and pleasure from owning a Ferret.

HOUSING

Ferrets can be housed either inside or outside provided they have a dry and draught free kennel. They react badly to extremes of temperature and are best kept in a range of from 15° to 21° C. A small dog kennel inside a wired (25mm x 25mm) run and with an enclosed top is suitable. A removable metal tray will simplify cleaning and the droppings which are similar to that of a dog are usually confined to one corner of the run.

BEDDING

Bedding can be of soft hay or straw or a lined washable pet bed. Wood shavings or cat litter are suitable floor covering. Earthenware or metal dishes are best for food and water; and a Ferret will also learn to use a water bottle.

HANDLING

Handle your Ferret in a calm quiet atmosphere speaking softly and making slow movements. Let the animal sniff the back of your hand (not your fingers) and when it will take a treat readily from your hand go on to the next stage. Place one hand across the animal's back then slide the hand up to circle his neck with your thumb under the mouth. The other hand will support the weight of the Ferret's body. Confidence will come to both you and the

Ferret by frequent and gentle handling. Protective gloves should only be used in an emergency.

FEEDING

Special all in one complete diets for Ferrets are now on the market. Fresh meat, fish, or canned dog or cat food are also suitable as some Ferrets prefer a varied diet. Milk should only be given in small quantities as too much can cause digestive problems. Feed your Ferret twice a day removing any moist food which is left after each meal. Vitamins suitable for dogs can be given in small amounts and treats are a useful training aid.

WATER

Fresh clean drinking water must always be available. It should be given in a gravity-fed bottle.

GENERAL CARE

Given a good routine your Ferret should keep healthy. Check regularly that the hay does not go mouldy, as this can cause respiratory problems. Ferrets will benefit from grooming with a gentle brush once a week.

FERRETS IN THE HOME

Ferrets are full of curiosity and they have very sharp teeth. They also have a genius for getting into unlikely places. Check the room for escape holes, any electric cables or precious chewable fabrics. If you are travelling with your Ferret for extra safety ask your pet shop for a special ferret collar or harness and attach to it an identity disc.

SHOPPING LIST

Hutch/cage, Food, Food Dish, Bedding, Water Bowl/Bottle, Bottle Brush, Treats, Run, Minerals, Salt Lick and Grooming Brush.

This leaflet gives basic guidelines only. It is not intended to be a substitute for a good book on Ferrets. Your pet shop will be pleased to show you their range.

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