

Double 'D' Ranch

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DI SEASES WE HAVE DEALT WITH

By Debra Olon-West

Note: Information was found from a combination of sources, such as experienced breeders, our vet, and 'Official Guide Book: Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies' by the ARBA. We have been fortunate enough to work with a veterinarian who specializes in small animals.

CAUTION: this information is meant to supplement current knowledge and is no substitute for the care of a qualified veterinarian. If you are unsure what is wrong with your rabbit, please contact your rabbit savvy vet for help.

BACTERIAL PROBLEMS

Weepy Eye (Conjunctivitis):

🐰 Symptoms: matted fur in the corners of the eye; discharge on the eye surface; tissue around the eye may be red or look irritated.

🐰 Treatment: Use local ophthalmic or penicillin G ointment 2-4 times per day for 3-4 days; may want to check with your vet for blocked tear duct or respiratory infection.

🐰 Prevention: keep cage clean; watch for respiratory infections in general.

Roxy had this problem; we had to retreat her periodically for it.

Vent Disease ('vent'; Rabbit Syphilis)

🐰 Symptoms: Scabby lesions on the genital area; additional scabs in the nose to mouth area; scabs may have a white/yellow discharge; abortions may occur.

🐰 Treatment: All affected animals need to be treated; daily application of penicillin ointment or daily intramuscular shots of penicillin for three days. (20,000-40,000 I U per lb./body weight).

🐰 Prevention: Check animals before breeding them; do not breed infected animals; quarantine new animals; use caution when lending stud bucks.

Benten was born with this problem, though it was not detectable in either the sire or dam, which we lost after Benten was 2 weeks old. We had to hand feed Benten for an additional 6 weeks, give her the penicillin shots and bathe her bottom daily as well as applying the ointment. She survived and is doing well.

Pasteurellosis (Snuffles; upper respiratory infection)

🐰 Symptoms: Intermittent or constant sneezing; thick, white discharge from nasal area; is a precursor for other conditions.

🐰 Treatment: Antibiotic, but testing for the most effective one is recommended. With an antibiotic, need to administer daily yogurt with acidophilus.

🐰 Prevention: Strict culling; improve ventilation; minimize stress factors; isolate sick animals; regular cleaning of feed and water dishes.

Stanzi was successfully treated for this problem with Baytril antibiotic; it is best to treat as soon as you notice the symptoms.


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Abscesses ('weepy eye'; 'wry neck'; inflammation of other organs)

 Symptoms: Lump in any part of the body, but often found in the neck/shoulder area.

 Treatment: Take care of as soon as the lump is detected; cull animal from the herd; abscess needs to be lanced with a scalpel, making a large incision to drain the pus. Flush the wound with hydrogen peroxide or iodine solution daily, and use a broad-spectrum injectable antibiotic for 3-5 days, as directed by your vet.


 Prevention: Keep area and hutches clean and sanitary; upgrade nestbox sanitation; remove nest boxes early; separate the young at an early age to prevent fighting.

Natalya developed several abscesses at one time. We vet checked and treated her, but were only able to prolong her life by three weeks before the disease spread to an uncontrollable rate.

PARASITIC CONDITIONS

Fur Mites:

 Symptoms: Loss of fur around face, neck, and back; appearance of 'dandruff' in fur.


 Treatment: Use cat flea powder or shampoo; can use ivermectin orally or topically products (check with your vet first). Repeat as necessary.


 Isolation during treatment period; cleanliness in the rabbitry; quarantine new rabbits.


We have successfully treated several rabbits, including Apollo who have come to us with this condition and found them good homes.

INTERNAL PARASITES

Coccidiosis (Internal):

 Symptoms: Diarrhea; poor rate of weight gain; poor fur/flesh condition; pot bellied; poor resistance to other diseases; other secondary infections.

 Treatment: Use a coccidiostat on a regular basis as medicated water or feed additive; recommend rotating medications such as sulphaquinoxaline with other coccidiostats (using a vet's advice).

 Prevention: Cleanliness; self cleaning hutches; use of automatic waterers and feeders; wire brushing of cage floors on a routine basis; prevention of food, water, and environmental contamination.

We have found problems with store bought animals that were sharing food and water dishes, as some of them came to us. We have also treated rabbits that have come to us from less than sanitary places.