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Cool Tips for Rabbits this Summer

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Oh, how we yearn for those warm sunny days of summer. We certainly don't miss frozen crocks and icy fingers.

Even though the summer months are more comfortable for you and me, the days of summer can be pretty hard on rabbits. So here are a few cool tips to get you and the rabbits through the hottest months.

Good Health

Ventilation is critical to a healthy environment for rabbits. Constantly replacing stale and/or warm air in the building with fresh air promotes clean and comfy air for the rabbits. If natural ventilation isn't adequate, consider using fans to circulate the air.

Litters born during the summer are vulnerable to heat exhaustion. So is the doe. Always remove excess hair from the nest after the birth of the kits. The use of oversized nest boxes with wire floors will help keep the kits cool. You may also want to consider removing the nest box when the kits are 14 days old and placing them in nursery boxes to provide a cooler, more open environment. Weaning bunnies at four to five weeks of age, versus six to eight weeks of age, will reduce the number of rabbits in one cage, making it more comfortable for the doe and litter.

Good Nutrition

Consider feeding twice a day to reduce the amount of energy entering the rabbit's digestive system at one time. Feeding smaller amounts of feed multiple times during the day will reduce the amount of heat generated during the digestive process. This process will also help to condition your show rabbits coming out of the summer in preparation for the fall show season.

Sound Management

Last but not least, provide cool, clean, fresh water at least twice a day during the summer. The use of electrolytes in the water will guard against dehydration and heat stress. Forget about frozen water bottles, they just cause more stress from the extreme fluctuation in temperature.

Stay cool, and good luck with your summer litters.