



HARELINES



Volume 21 Number 3 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

Fall 2017

Obesity in House Rabbits

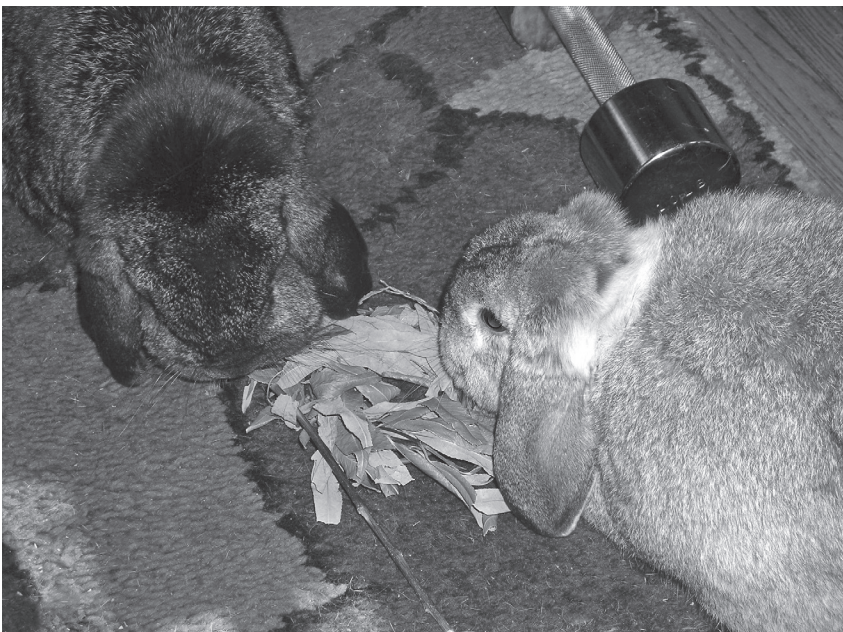
By Phyllis O'Beollain

Obesity among American pets – as with American pet owners – is on the rise. An annual survey of over 500 pets by the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention revealed that approximately 53 percent of cats and 55 percent of dogs are now overweight or obese. The fact that such an organization even exists speaks volumes. Pet obesity is a growing concern among veterinarians. Obesity in rabbits has been associated with such medical disorders as myiasis (fly strike), pododermatitis (sore hocks), and gastrointestinal stasis and ileus; it also exacerbates the pain and reduced mobility associated with arthritis.

A study* published in the British journal *Veterinary Record* has attempted to track the prevalence of obesity in rabbits and to identify risk factors associated with the condition. Information was

gathered from a national database of 41 primary companion animal practices in Great Britain. Data consisted of body condition score (BCS), pet gender, neutered status,

age, location, country of the veterinary practice (England, Scotland or Wales), and date of birth of rabbits presenting at eleven equally spaced times throughout 2008 and 2010. At each visit, the rabbits' BCS was rated by the attending veterinarian using a five point scale. Age categories were defined as: less than eight months – juveniles, eight months to 2.5 years – adults, 2.5 to five years – older adults, and five years and over – geriatric. The study found that about 10 percent of the rabbits were obese, and females were twice as likely as males to be overweight; informal surveys of American veterinarians suggest that the rate of rabbit obesity in the United States is significantly higher.



Healthy food helps keep your buns looking svelte!

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Health problems associated with obesity in dogs and cats are being increasingly publicized, but general awareness of this issue in house rabbits has not been widely recognized. Despite the progress made in educating owners that rabbits should eat a diet of hay, leafy greens, and limited amounts of high-fiber pellets, most of the rabbit treats sold in pet stores contain unhealthy amounts of sugars and starches; even food pellets often contain bits of junk food which many rabbits pick out and eat, leaving the healthier pellets behind. Many individuals equate food with love, constantly offering their rabbits high-fat, high-sugar snacks.

It can be more difficult for rabbit owners (as

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Buckeye House Rabbit Society at
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We know our members value their privacy
and that's why we never, ever, sell our
mailing list or distribute it to any other
party. All of our members' information is
held in the strictest confidence.

Special Thanks to:

Nancy J. Hill, for her touching donation in memory of her late son, Jason. His two beloved bunnies, Fifi and DC, are now in foster care with us and are patiently waiting for their new forever home.

Emily Troiano, for her thoughtful contribution in honor of her dear Snugglebunny, who passed away in June.

Deanna Brenner, for her kind gift in Pumperknickle's memory.

Lori Fair and Mark Kotzbauer, in memory of their sweet bunny, Pat, who enjoyed 12 wonderful years with them.

Andrea Davis, in tribute to Margarita Quintana Tuss, who passed away recently.

Ashley Hampson, for her grant-writing expertise in a recent fundraising effort.

Linda Gardner, whose support for our Cleveland-area volunteers is boundless.

Zoetis, Inc., for their generous donation of Revolution to help treat over 50 rabbits seized from a hoarder near Athens.

Small Pet Select, for donating a percentage of hay purchases to us. See our website for details (under Recommended Supplies) and remember to use the coupon code "Buckeye" to receive free shipping and to help us help more bunnies.

The following members, whose monetary and in-kind donations allow us to meet our ongoing fostering and educational goals:

Cynthia Slezak, Norma Jeanne Mudry, Bob and Holly Piekarczyk, Irma Laszlo, Shirley Wood, David and Jacqueline Csehi, Sue Milewski, Marjorie Aleva, David and Joyce Weaver, Deborah Raddish, Pam Loch, Richard and Junko Rogers, Jimmy and Debbie Dowell, Oraline Jorgenson, Judy O'Neil, Maggie Reading, Jim and Nancy Reed, Carol Harvey.

Our new and continuing Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors! These special rabbits, who will spend the rest of their lives in foster care due to serious medical conditions, have you kind and generous people to thank!

As always, the **Monks Copy Shop** of downtown Columbus, for their discount on printing our newsletter.

Find the BHRS on Social Media!



**Search for:
Buckeye House
Rabbit Society**



**Search for:
@BuckeyeHRS**

Introducing Our Newest Volunteer!

We're delighted to announce that the Buckeye HRS has a new fosterer-in-training – Maggie Reading of Cleveland. Maggie has been working with us for over a year, has helped with rabbit rescues in her area, and has contributed to Harelines. In her own words...

I am a Lakewood native and I currently reside in Cleveland's Ohio City neighborhood. I attended the Ohio State University and lived in Columbus for a few years where I did some work with the Ohio House Rabbit Rescue group. I pet-store purchased (shame!) my first rabbit when I was 10 years old. I was very lucky to have him for almost 15 years -- he even came to college with me. I began fostering rabbits with Stephanie Lodge; she was quick to convince me that I can take on more than one bunny and encouraged my involvement. She is the best! Right now I have one adopted rabbit -- Frances Ferdinandz but we call her Franzia for short. She is an absolute riot. I recently had my foster, Goldie Hops, adopted so now I am fostering a soon-to-be-named baby lop.

When I am not rescuing rabbits, petting rabbits, looking at rabbit-based Instagram accounts, or scheming how I can fit more X-pens in my



Maggie Reading

apartment, I work as a Data Scientist for IBM Watson Health. I love spending time out in Cleveland and pretty much any other city I can get myself to. I really enjoy the music scene in Cleveland and Columbus and I am always eager to take show suggestions! I am really looking forward to Midwest BunFest this year and I hope I get a chance to meet more of our volunteers and members.

BUNFEST 2017

Come join us for Midwest BunFest! Mark your calendar now for Saturday, Oct. 14, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Northland Performing Arts Center, 4411 Tamarack Blvd., Columbus, Ohio, 43229. For details visit www.midwestbunfest.org – Hope to see you all there!

Compassion Fatigue

By Dr. Diana Dornbusch Cron, DVM

We've all been there. Struggling to clean, feed, medicate, and enrich the lives of the many foster and shelter animals in our care. Feeling guilt that we aren't doing enough for the homeless animals, guilt that our own animals (as well as husbands, wives, kids, parents) don't get as much attention as they deserve. Arguments with spouses and families over priorities and finances and having the house smell like the many animals in residence. Using a bunch of money from our own pockets to take care of animals that other people have abandoned. And then, we get one more email or phone call with all too familiar excuses of why people can't honor what we feel is a long-term commitment they made when they took that animal or those animals home. We want to scream and yell and beat this person up for their stupidity. What were they thinking? Why were they so impulsive? Do they have no compassion for these animals at all? It is so very difficult to have compassion for those who have none for the animals that we all find worthy of rescue.

My disclaimer is that I am a veterinarian, not a mental health professional. The information contained here has come from a variety of sources, mostly proceedings from veterinary journals and conferences. Compassion fatigue, depression, substance abuse, and even suicide are all topics that have been discussed in the veterinary community for many years. Personal wellness is very important, but often overlooked by volunteers and those employed in caring professions. There always seems to be one more poor soul, well deserving of our time and attention, and then one more ... Like Dr. Seuss's Lorax (who speaks for the trees), we are self-appointed animal advocates. When we advocate for something, we hope and work for change. When the desired changes don't happen, apathy, hopelessness, and feelings of self-doubt creep in. "Why bother if it isn't going to make a difference anyway?" The endless march of discarded and neglected animals often makes the sacrifices

and contributions we make seem small and insignificant in comparison.

The simplest definition I could find for compassion fatigue (CF) is emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical exhaustion. Here's another from an article in *DVM 360 Magazine*: "an emotional and physical burden created by the trauma of helping others in distress." Wikipedia states that compassion fatigue is also known as secondary trauma stress. It is a syndrome first diagnosed in nurses in the 1950's, characterized by a gradual lessening of compassion over time. It is common among individuals who work directly with trauma victims such as therapists, nurses, teachers, psychologists, police officers, paramedics, animal welfare workers, and health unit coordinators, as well as family members, relatives, and other informal caregivers of patients suffering from a chronic illness.

Many terms are frequently used synonymously with CF, but there are some differences. Burnout can be distinguished from CF by the fact that CF is a result of the type of work you do, not where you volunteer or work. Burnout results from the stress of personalities, organizations, or policies. Energy expended waging political battles and philosophical differences contributes to burnout. So, if you are burned out in one rescue organization, you may be able to move to another rescue organization and get a fresh start. If you have true compassion fatigue, it doesn't matter which rescue you are working with; it's the fact that you are working in a rescue situation. Dani McVety, a veterinarian and frequent author in *DVM360*, a widely read vet journal, coined the term "Ethical Fatigue." She states that she feels she has an endless supply of compassion, but instead is fatigued by the immense responsibility to make the right ethical decision within the boundaries of someone else's often illogical values or unreasonable budget. Of course veterinarians are not the only people who suffer from ethical fatigue; people working in rescue situations are forced to make similar ethical decisions on a daily basis. Michael Dicks writes, "every decision in deciding the fate of animals causes a small incessant chipping away at the soul."

Signs of compassion fatigue can include decreased ability to think clearly, feelings of hopelessness, despair, anger, frustration and irritability, feelings of inadequacy and decreased self-worth, with

a short emotional fuse. Physical signs of stress can be exhibited by insomnia, headaches, gastrointestinal issues, chronic fatigue and pain. People suffering from CF may be depressed and more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs, develop eating disorders, have accidents and major bad medical events. Normal life stresses such as jobs and careers, raising children, and caring for aging parents compound compassion fatigue issues; stress from all angles leads to overload. Overloaded circuits blow fuses.

It is important to remember that we are not alone, even though each of us often feels very isolated in our struggles. People (even those working in rescue) don't always treat each other well. Tempers flare when people are frustrated and stressed. Find some method of calming yourself, whether it be humming a silly song (I like Jimmy Buffet's "Breathe In, Breathe Out, Move On"), visualizing offenders in the small, filthy cages they've forced their rabbits to live in, or hearing a mentor's voice in your head about not losing your cool. (Years ago Karalee Curry from Columbus HRS told me: "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar" and I repeat this mantra to myself often.) Discussing concerns and venting with other rescue workers, family members, and even more formal support groups and therapists can be beneficial. Understand that conflict is a reality in rescue situations -- and in life in general! Conflicts can be resolved constructively if everyone is willing to be open and honest.

Equally important is the sharing and celebration of success stories -- those we work so hard to make happen. Because of the efforts of individuals like us, working together in rescue networks, we can be proud of many successes. Maintaining a healthy life balance is also essential, including finding ample time for socializing with family and friends, spending time with our own pets, eating right, exercising, and recognizing when we need to take a step back and take care of ourselves rather than others. Putting oneself ahead of others isn't easy when there are so many who need help. But in order to do our best to help others, we must first keep ourselves fit and emotionally grounded so that we can make the most compassionate and ethical decisions for those who depend on us.

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Rabbitude

Tanja D. Stich

Book Review!

By Stephanie Lodge

Tanja D. Stich's *Rabbitude: A memoir by Romeo, Author and Diva* takes us on a lighthearted journey of rabbit ownership - from the rabbit's point of view. This book will resonate with rabbit people of all ages. And what's more - the author lives in my hometown of Cleveland. Romeo (the rabbit) will open your eyes to all of the hijinks buns are capable of. We're hoping for a sequel starring Que and Dante, Tanja's current house bunnies.

Tanja, thank you for sharing such a wonderful story full of love. Losing a furry companion is beyond difficult, but we are happy you were able to write this memoir as way to cope with Romeo's passing.



Petition Kroger to Stop Selling Rabbit Meat

By Shawna Lemerise

We celebrated a huge victory when Whole Foods ceased their sales of rabbit meat in 2015. This decision was surely the result of an overwhelming negative response from customers and pet-lovers everywhere. Unfortunately, our work in Ohio is not yet done. Kroger, a Cincinnati-based grocery store, currently sells rabbit meat. According to petition organizer, Anna MacLennan, Kroger sells rabbit meat at Cincinnati Kroger locations. What is especially horrific is that the company that Kroger purchases from, Pel-Freez, has a record of severe cruelty to the rabbits they slaughter (for graphic video evidence taken at their slaughterhouse, visit rabbitcruelty.com).

While the practice of raising any animal for meat often results in cruelty towards the animal, rabbits are the third most common pet in the United States, and the breeds used for meat are the same domestic breeds that are kept as pets. Rabbits raised for meat are commonly New Zealand or Californian breeds, which are also among the most common breeds of pet rabbit. One of my own bunnies, formerly known as "Princess Buttercup," is a Californian, who was rescued and brought to the Buckeye HRS as one of the Indiana babies!

An online petition is gathering signatures to plead with CEOs and managers to reconsider their choice to sell rabbit meat. Right now, there are over 5,000 signatures, and their goal is to reach 7,500 signatures to make the greatest impact. Please sign and share this online petition on social media. You can find it on our Facebook page, or by going to change.org and searching for "Kroger Stop Selling Rabbit Meat."

In addition to the petition, there many actions you can take to help end rabbit meat sales in Ohio:

1. Visit your local Kroger and see if they are selling rabbit meat. It may not be available at all locations. If it is being sold, complain to your store by calling, writing a letter, or speaking with



the general manager. Inform them that you will not return as a customer until the company ceases sales of rabbit meat.

2. Organize a protest outside a Kroger location that sells rabbit meat to inform customers of the issue. Distribute fliers and let customers know about the petition. You can even bring a laptop or tablet to offer people the opportunity to sign the petition on site.

3. Sign similar petitions listed online alongside the Kroger petition to help end other cruel practices on rabbits.

4. Contact other grocery stores in Ohio that sell rabbit meat. You may find rabbit meat being sold by local butchers. Contact the store owner and general manager to let them know that you find this practice inhumane and unethical.

Sadly, there are lots of farms that raise rabbits specifically for meat. There is not much we can do to stop it besides making a statement as consumers. If the demand in the market decreases, and companies receive complaints, then businesses will stop purchasing meat and save future generations of rabbits from being bred for cruelty.

Perhaps the decision by Whole Foods to choose ethics over profits will influence local companies to follow their lead. Together we can make a difference and be a voice for bunnies in Ohio!



**Helping
Rabbits
Since 1997!!**

Holiday Raffle to Benefit Buckeye HRS Foster Rabbits!



For our twelfth annual holiday raffle we proudly present a stunning, hand-crocheted afghan by our very own educator, Dr.

Diana Cron! This one-of-a-kind creation will, of course, have a bunny theme, including bunny ears, round bunny bodies, and even buckeyes! Colors include rabbit shades of grey, tan, cream, and rust with some contrasting highlights. Measuring



approximately 5 ft. by 5 ft., this adorable blanket will be large enough to wrap yourself in rabbits or use as a decorative accent on a bed. Diana is busy assembling the individual squares as we go to press and will have the afghan

completed and ready for viewing at BunFest in October. Look for it on our website – www.ohare.org – and on Facebook and Twitter as soon as it's ready! The photos here give a sneak peek of some of the special features.

All proceeds will go directly to our foster program



and will ensure that needy bunnies have a safe and happy holiday season while they await the ultimate gift, a permanent home. Tickets cost \$1 each and you may buy as many as you wish. **All entries must be postmarked no later than December 11, 2017.** Please include your phone number and email (if available) with your check or money order and indicate it's for the raffle. Mail your request to: Buckeye HRS, P.O. Box 61, Vickery, OH 43464. If you prefer, you may pay by credit card through our website – www.ohare.org/wordpress/support/our-raffle – for ticket purchases of \$5 or more. The lucky winner will be notified mid-December and will receive the prize in time for holiday gift-giving.



Somebunny Needs YOU!



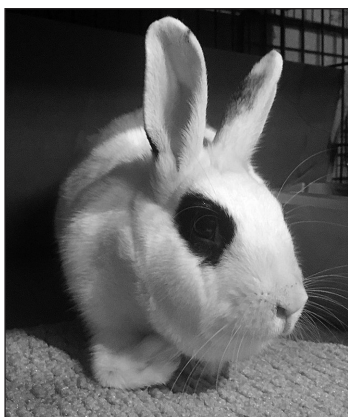
Gus and Daisy are a 4 year-old bonded pair and **MUST** be adopted together. **Gus** is the friendliest bunny in the world. He loves people and craves pets and snuggles. He likes to hang around wherever you go. Gus adores his mate Daisy and grooms her often. Shyer than Gus, **Daisy** loves exploring and hanging out by Gus's side. She's a Jersey Wooly and does require regular brushing

and grooming which she doesn't mind at all. She can be quite snuggly. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrsue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

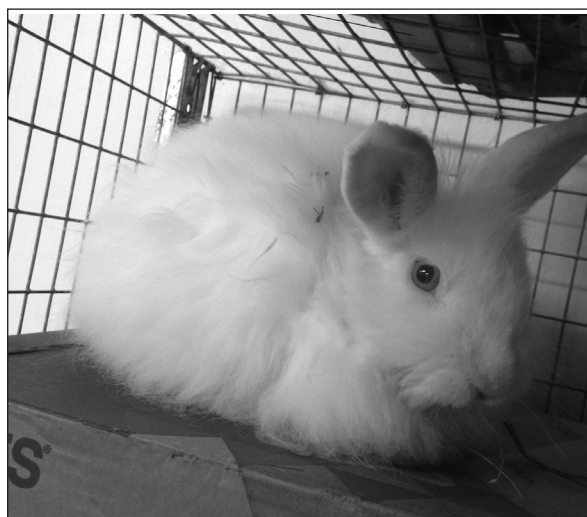


Meet beautiful, blue-eyed **Bella**. She is a sweet and gentle young Jersey Wooly. Bella has a stunning, long coat and will need regular brushing. Bella sits very patiently and enjoys her "spa treatments." **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrsue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

Adeline was left at a vet's office, but she is now ready for her forever home. She is a lovey bunny who enjoys giving kisses. She might be part T-Rex since her right front paw bends in. This does not stop her from loving life. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Looking for a beautiful mini-rabbit? Well look no further. **Cyndi** is a stunning young gal waiting for her forever home. She is very neat with excellent litter box habits. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrsue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Bootsy, a male Angora, is a fluffy ball of cotton. He is very sweet and patient for his grooming sessions. Angora rabbits require quite a bit of regular grooming to keep their coats smooth. He will make a great companion for the right person. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrsue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Samson is a young mini-rex male from the Sandusky County Dozen. He's active and friendly and likes to play with his cardboard box. Samson will make a perfect addition to your home. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhhs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Kelly girl is young and playful. She loves to run and explore everything around her. Kelly's favorite hobby is tearing up newspapers inside her cardboard box. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhhs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Fifi (black) and **DC** (white) are best friends. Both take their cardio workouts seriously and love to chase each other playing the Bunny 500. While both are affectionate, Fifi will let you pet her non-stop. Their appetite for food and life is

amazing. They have had only one owner until he fell sick recently. They must be adopted together. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhhs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**

Adopted!

Sierra and Willy, now best buddies, were adopted together by Katie Hayes and family. ♥ **Precious Truelsch** has found her fur-ever home with Madison Schultz. ♥ Clair Fenrich could not be happier to have adopted **Tyson**, now Steve. ♥ The Hinca family decided to add a second Buckeye HRS bunny to their home this year. **George** is now becoming "BFFs" with former foster Brutus. ♥ **Chuck** was adopted by Jennifer Streaker and family. ♥ **Mia** has found her forever home and has quite a few admirers, both bunny and human. Her new boyfriend Gibbs adores her, plus her neighbor Philly also has the hots for her. Congrats to her humans, Becky and Ariana, on their new addition! ♥ Jennifer and Isaac Douglass have adopted **Butterscotch** (now Rainbow) and bonded her with their bunny Thunderbolt. ♥ **Goober and Miso** have found their forever home in Bowling Green with Mariah and Salon. The boys have already made themselves at home. ♥ **Sherman**, now Dmitri (named after Dmitri Mendeleev, inventor of the periodic table), is slowly but surely wooing his new lady friend, Fibonacci. Chelsea, Tim, Fibbers, Bella and Breeze (cats) are very happy with their new addition. ♥ Little **Elsie** might be small, but she is mighty and she is definitely in charge at her new forever home. Her dad Scott is loving all her antics! ♥ **Astor** has found her forever home in Cleveland Heights with Hannah and Andrew. Her new digs include a custom-made house and pen. Astor is known for her binkies – something she had never done before! ♥ **Goldie Hops** had a rough start in life, but now she has her feet planted in her new home. She can finally be the Queen of the Castle that she always wanted to be! Congrats to Sam and Nathan.



compared to cat or dog owners) to recognize signs of overweight in their pet. It may be visually difficult to determine if your bunny is obese, as different breeds of rabbits have slight differences in body shape. Many owners perceive their rabbit's weight as being just fine, when in fact the rabbit is obese; early signs of exercise intolerance and difficulties with mobility associated with obesity are not so easily identified in rabbits. On the other hand, a rabbit may have a very good BCS and yet will naturally have a very large dewlap, making her appear overweight. The best way to determine if your bunny is at an appropriate weight is to take your pet for an annual checkup with a bunny-savvy veterinarian.



Playing with toys keeps bunnies active!

Follow your veterinarian's recommendations for an appropriate weight for your bunny and how best to achieve this. Avoid all the unhealthy junk treats sold by the pet stores, which not only make bunny fat but promote unhealthy bacteria in the gut, increasing the chances of potentially-fatal GI stasis. If you want to offer your rabbit treats now and then – not entirely a bad idea, as refusal or acceptance of treats is one way to gauge whether bunny has an upset stomach or not – offer them healthy treats. Half a grape or a thin (1/8 inch) slice of banana is a healthy option, as are natural dried fruits (no added sugar or preservatives). FYI – brand-name dried cranberries have added sugar. Offer dried fruit in miniscule amounts, as drying concentrates the natural fruit sugars. An even better idea is to grow or purchase herbs, dandelion, plantain, or thistle. Bunnies

regard these as fine treats; they can be grown in flower pots, and can be dried for winter use.

Encourage exercise: change bunny's toys around, switch out hiding boxes for cardboard tunnels – anything to add interest and get your bunny exploring his surroundings. Play games with your bunny, and try putting some of his food pellets in a Go! Cat! Go! Play-n-Treat ball or a Booda Ball, so that he gets exercise as he gets his pellets!

Never withhold food from your rabbits; they have to eat constantly to keep that gut moving and avoid GI stasis. Do feed your rabbits unlimited hay and water 24/7, limit the treats, and get them moving!

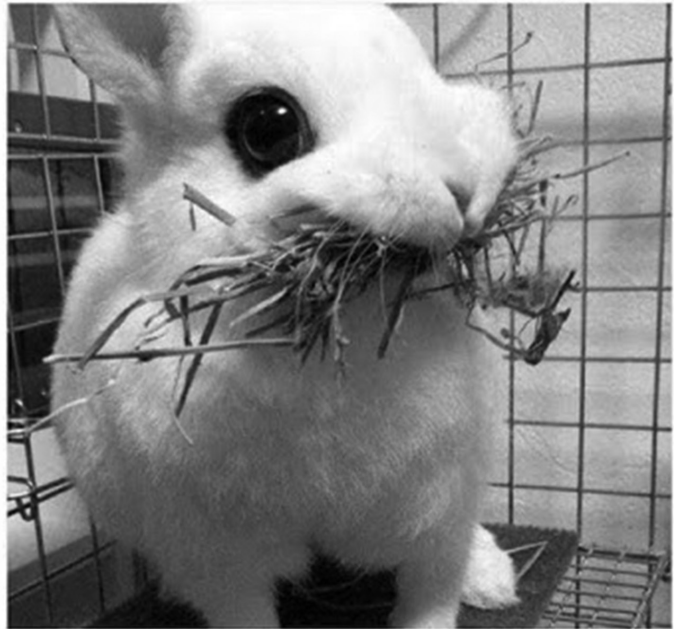
*<http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/early/2012/07/09/vr.100792>



Funny Bunny Memes!

*Thanks to
Shawwna
Lemerise for
searching the
internet for
some of the best
bunny memes!*

When the server comes to the table while
ur chomping on ur food n asks if
everything's ok and u just like "isssggoo"



@UNILAD

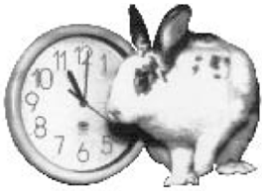




Buckeye House Rabbit Society

P.O. Box 61

Vickery, Ohio 43464



Buy a bunny a little time...

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your \$35.00 annual membership in the Buckeye HRS includes:

- National membership (\$20.00) and 3-4 issues of the House Rabbit Journal
- Local membership (\$15.00) and issues of Harelines

If you are already a national member, your local fee is \$15.00

☐ I would like to donate \$_____ to help a foster rabbit (vet care, supplies)

☐ I would like to donate \$_____ in memory of _____.

The grieving family receives an acknowledgment of your gracious gesture.

I would like to volunteer to:

☐ Distribute information to vets

☐ Assist with mailing

☐ Help at Buckeye HRS booth at Pet Expos and fairs

☐ Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Bunnies' names and special dates _____

Please make checks
payable to:

**Buckeye
House Rabbit Society**

**P.O. Box 61
Vickery, Ohio 43464**

**All donations are
tax-deductible.**