

# Hilltop Pet & Aquariums

## Rats & Mice Information Sheet

43 Main South Road, O'Halloran Hill. SA. 5158 Ph: (08) 8322 1888

Open Monday - Friday 9:30am-6pm Weekends & Public Holidays 10am - 5pm

Rats and mice can be easy to look after. They are friendly without taking up too much room and can be taken out of the cage and trained, and with proper cleaning, can be kept virtually odour free.

### Housing

Housing should be easy to clean and large enough for the animals to live in alone or with others. Unless you wish to breed these animals, it is best to keep single sex colonies. If you are purchasing a baby mouse and want to keep the same cage for when it grows bigger, you may need to place fly wire over the cage as the young ones can squeeze through the bars of some cages.

The bedding should be dust free. Pet pine shavings, newspaper and straw are commonly used. Straw should not be used with rats and mice under two weeks of age. Cleaning should be done at least once a week depending on how many animals you have. Rats and mice should have access to a wheel to keep them exercised and a sheltered area for sleeping and hiding.

### Feeding

Food should be available at all times. They are nocturnal animals so they will generally eat more at night. A good rat and mouse mix designed especially for them is best as well as supplementing with fresh fruit and vegetables. A salt lick stone should be provided to give them essential minerals.

A water bottle is the best source for water (which should always be clean and fresh) as they will make a mess in bowls of water.

### Handling

Always pick the animal up from the base of the tail only and supported underneath. Picking up the animal from the tip or the middle of the tail can strip it and cause damage. Once they are familiar with you, you can pick them up by their body; supporting their front and back legs. They can make good pets and with frequent handling, become quite tame.

### General Health

General health checks should be made on a regular basis. Check the eyes and nose for discharge, check the coat is in good condition (e.g. no parasites), check the teeth are straight and not over grown, no strange breathing noises, swelling or diarrhoea. These animals don't suffer from many problems but they can get tumors. The life span of rats is three to four years, and mice is two to three years. If you have any doubts or questions regarding their health, please contact us or your local veterinarian.

### Breeding

Breeding should not be entered into unless you are prepared. Male and females should not be housed together otherwise they will breed as often as possible which will affect the mother and the offspring. Should you choose to breed mice, vitamin and mineral supplements are available and should be offered to the female mouse.

### Veterinary Care

You must be prepared to take any sick or injured animal to a vet without delay to minimize any pain or further complications to the health of your pet.

Something that may begin as a minor problem can easily end up developing into something major, and possibly life threatening, so it is advisable to contact your vet without delay.

This brochure was put together by the staff of Hilltop Pet & Aquariums as a general guide to assist you in raising your pet and advising requirements to keep your friend happy and healthy.

If you cannot provide the proper care and housing, we strongly suggest you not purchase the animal.

We have books available for sale should you require more information.