

*1 week R*

## ANIMAL CARE

### General Information

All of the animals used in the trained animal acts are common domestic breeds. They are hardy and only ordinary good care and sanitation are needed to keep them in good health. *1/2 R. acts W.*

Each animal can be identified by its number. Chickens and ducks have numbered leg bands. Rabbits have numbers or names tattooed in their ears. *T*

As a rule, animal performance can be depended upon. Experience has demonstrated that the animals are even more reliable than the apparatus with which they perform.

Because all of the animal acts depend on food rewards, it is necessary to control the feeding of the animals fairly closely. The animals will not perform when they are too full to have an appetite. On the other hand, it is neither necessary nor desirable that they be starved. *1/2 R. acts W.*

An animal that has worked for all the food it can eat, will usually not need additional food during the same day. Animals that work for only part of their food requirements in one day should usually have supplementary feeding. *50*

Animals should not be given maintenance or supplementary feeding until the end of the day. This practice will assure a supply of animals ready to work all during the day. *1/4*

If you are feeding ducks or chickens after dark, leave lights on until the birds have finished eating. Rabbits don't need light to find their food, but birds do. *1/2*

When an animal refuses to work the trouble can generally be traced to one of the following causes: *120*

1. The animal has had all the food it wants.
2. The animal is sick.
3. Something is wrong with the apparatus.
4. The animal is frightened.

Much of each animal's training time is spent in getting him (or her) accustomed to human movements and sounds. The animals are not easily frightened. When they are frightened, the source of disturbance will probably be very obvious and can be eliminated. *M-TW T*

It might be the sight of a stray dog or cat, or something that a very rambunctious visitor is doing; or perhaps something in the performing equipment, like a sharp end of broken cage wire is hurting the animal.

If the animal is slow, sluggish, and stops working after a short time, it is possible (unless he is sick) that he received too much to eat the day before. If he is not sick, try cutting back on the amount fed at the end of the day (probably give him nothing at all) and see how he does the next day. Check the feeder to make sure it is not too generous. Sometimes an animal's performance may indicate that he is too hungry. If he seems very excitable, jumps up and down, rushes back and forth wildly, makes mistakes in acts calling for response to a signal (such as the Fortune Teller, for example), the animal may be too hungry. Feeding a little extra at night may calm him down for the next day.

AMOUNT OF FEED EARNED. During off seasons, and sometimes even during the busy season, only one animal will perform on a given act during the day. At the end of the day, refill the feeder and measure with a standard measuring cup the amount necessary to refill. This is the amount the animal ate during the day.

If you need to change animals on a given act during the performing day, again fill the feeder level full when you change, if it is possible. Make note of how much it takes--this amount is the amount the first animal ate. If you are busy and do not have time to fill the feeder at the moment, but refill at the end of the day, or later in the day, then the amount it takes to fill it is the amount both animals ate. By taking into account how much time each animal worked, you can estimate how much of the total amount each ate. When you are very busy, this may sometimes involve a little guesswork, but it is better than not having any information about how much each animal earned. After you have determined how much each animal ate during the day, feed any extra feed needed ONLY AT THE END OF THE WORKING DAY. Remember to leave lights on for chickens or ducks if they are being fed after dark.

It is a very good idea to weigh each animal occasionally and keep a record of the weights to see if he is gaining or losing. Once a week is a very good frequency unless you are puzzled by an animal's performance or have reason to be concerned about his health, in which case you may find it useful to weigh him more often. Chickens can be simply perched on a scale. A rabbit or duck can be weighed in a cardboard box and the weight of the box subtracted.

#### CHICKENS

None of the chickens can be properly fed by rule alone. This way, they're like people. It is important with all of them, particularly with bantams, because of their higher metabolic rate, to check frequently for signs of under- or overweight.

A heavy bird who performs poorly needs smaller rations.

A light, overactive one needs more maintenance food.

A chicken who is too thin will have a sharp prominent breastbone, which can be felt when you pick up the bird. She may also look pale and perhaps sit around with her head tucked back and eyes shut a good bit of the time, or her feathers may look unusually ruffled.

The maintenance food for chickens (any food not earned in performing) should be a standard commercial pellet--Purina Layena or equivalent.

For chickens only, a special food is used in the electric feeder as a reward for performance. The food is a mixture of about 1/3 scratch grain and 2/3 crumbled egg mash. The mixture must be sifted to remove the fine particles. If fine particles are allowed to remain in the mixture, a chicken may spend a great deal of time pecking at them when she should be performing.

If the scratch grain contains large pieces of grain like whole kernels of corn, these must be strained out with a coarse screen. Large pieces tend to clog the electric feeder.

If you find it troublesome to prepare the mixture, you may order it from us at our cost plus shipping.

#### AVERAGE FULL DAY'S RATION

Large Chicken: 1/2 to 3/4 standard measuring cup

Bantam Chicken: 1/3 to 1/2 standard measuring cup

These are averages only. Individual birds vary. WATCH YOUR INDIVIDUAL BIRDS CLOSELY, and weigh them on a regular basis.



#### BEAK TRIMMING

A chicken may occasionally need to have its beak trimmed. Use a nail clipper and file. Let the chicken catch her breath every few seconds. A long, overgrown top beak will often break painfully and put a chicken out of operation for several weeks.

#### DUCKS

Other animals should have water available at all times in both living and performing cages, but it may be found best not to use a water cup in the Piano Duck, Drumming Duck or Guitar Duck performing cages. Ducks tend to splash their drinking water all over the insides of performing equipment. In addition, duck droppings are very messy, and we find that a duck will produce fewer droppings when water is not available. However, if the no-water practice is followed, ducks should be exchanged in the performing cage about once every two hours and should be offered water on the 1/2 hour if traffic is heavy. Plenty of water should be provided in the living cages.



Ducks feet should be examined often for possible sore spots or injuries. If any foot troubles seem to be developing, pad the floors of their living cages with straw or hay. The padding should be changed daily. It is also advisable to place a piece of astroturf in the performing cage.

Ducks should have occasional access to water to swim in, not only for cleanliness, but to keep them healthy. They should be given the opportunity to swim for at least an hour about twice a week, or more often if possible. An ordinary wash tub, a small plastic wading pool, or even a dish pan will serve as a duck swimming pool.

Ducks should be examined frequently for signs of over- or underweight. Overweight will produce poor or sluggish performance in an otherwise healthy bird. Underweight will be indicated by a sharp prominent breastbone which you can feel when you pick up the bird. Feeding, of course, should be adjusted to correct an over- or underweight condition.

Ordinary chicken pellet food is used in both the electric feeders and as supplementary food. This should be a non-medicated food as the antibiotics and other additives contained in "booster" chicken foods are harmful to ducks.

#### AVERAGE FULL DAY'S RATION

1 to 1-1/2 full cup (standard kitchen measuring cup)

This is an average. Individual ducks vary. WATCH YOUR INDIVIDUAL DUCKS CLOSELY, and weigh them regularly.

#### RABBITS

The diet of performing rabbits must be watched more closely than that of chickens.

A rabbit that is allowed to get fat and "roly-poly" will commonly not work at all. Such a condition may also harm his heart and liver. To reduce a fat rabbit, put him on half rations until he is willing to work again.

Thin rabbits will have hollows over their hipbones and behind their ribs. They may also show loss of weight over their shoulders and the backbone may become more prominent. Obviously, such a rabbit needs more food.

Commercial rabbit food - Purina Rabbit Chow or equivalent is used in the electric feeders and as maintenance food. Do not give chicken feed to rabbits as it may harm them.

AVERAGE FULL DAY'S RATION

1/3 to 1/2 standard kitchen measuring cup.

WATCH YOUR INDIVIDUAL RABBITS CLOSELY, and weigh them regularly.

To pick up a rabbit, lift him by the loose skin of his back. If a rabbit is to be carried very far, also support him under his rump. A rabbit, of course, should never be lifted by his ears.

A WORD OF CAUTION ABOUT RABBITS: Rabbits, generally harmless and lovable, are relatives of rats, mice, and squirrels. Like all such animals, they like to chew on many types of materials: wood, cardboard, cloth, rubber, etc.

Keep electrical wires, like extension cords, out of their reach. A bunny might chew through the insulation, shock himself, or cause a short circuit.

Be careful not to toss valuable articles of clothing near a rabbit's cage. He would enjoy nibbling a neat hole in your favorite top coat!

A small piece of unpainted or untreated scrap lumber placed in a rabbit's living cage will let him satisfy his urge to gnaw--harmlessly.

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If at any time, you have questions about or problems with the animals or their performing equipment, please give us a call! We are here to help you!

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