
Types of Rabbit Hay & Grass



Not All Rabbit Hay Is the Same

Hay & Grass for Optimum Rabbit Health

The main diet ingredient for every single rabbit ever born is fresh grass and hay, (dried grass).

The high fibre content in grass is essential and the single most important thing in maintaining optimum intestinal and dental health in all rabbits.

Without this crucial fibre, a rabbit's digestive system will not function properly. The movement of food through the gut will slow down, causing all manor of illnesses and, more often than not, can lead to an early death.

The crucial fibre in hay/grass is also essential for the dental health of rabbits. Rabbit's teeth grow all the time, and need the chewing action of course substances to wear down teeth to stop them becoming painfully long.

If teeth do get too long it can inhibit a rabbit's ability to eat, swallow and groom themselves, all of which are essential functions for any rabbit.

A Closer Look at Grass

Hay is just dry grass, so why not just feed rabbits grass?

The large quantity of grass a rabbit needs to eat every day, to meet all of their needs, is not usually practical in a domestic environment.

There could be a few reasons for this.

Some rabbit owners...

- don't let their rabbit's outside for safety reasons, (high predator risk, dangerous terrain etc).
- don't have a garden or yard, (live in a high rise or flat etc).
- have other pets that prevent a rabbit going outside without getting stressed.
- supervised outside grazing for long lengths of time is not always possible.
- their garden or yard is not secure.
- plants within the garden are not rabbit safe.

The solution to these issues (and others), is to supplement or entirely substitute, fresh grass with hay.

The benefits of hay are tenfold including the fact that hay is always available from good stores and is very easily stored.

Rabbits Eat A Lot of Grass!

Grass is more nutritious than hay as hay is dried, causing some of the beneficial vitamins & minerals to fade over time.

Just as their wild counterpart, a domestic rabbit will always opt to eat fresh grass over hay, and eat it with fervour too!

Please Note:

If a rabbit is not used to eating grass, you should introduce it into their diet slowly.

Rabbit Hay & Grass

There are many different varieties of hay suitable for rabbits, and as described on the rabbit diet page, hay is a vital ingredient for keeping healthy, happy rabbits.

Types of Hay

- **Timothy Hay**
- **Meadow Hay**
- **Orchard Hay/Grass**
- **Oat Hay**
- **Herbal Hay (Herbage)**

There are many different hays available and popular varieties include meadow, Timothy, and orchard hay/grass.

Any of these types of hay will provide an excellent base or foundation for your rabbit's diet.

Types of Grass

- **Oat Grass**
- **Wheat Grass**
- **Barley Hay**
- **Bromegrass**
- **Bemudagrass**
- **Barn Dried Hay / Dried Grass**

Oat, wheat and barley are all types of grass which are usually grown for their cereal grain.

Grasses are harvested before the seed heads have ripened they can also be fed as any other grass hay.

However, once the grain has ripened and the plant has turned from green to a gold-brown colour, the stems lose their nutritional value and it becomes straw, which is used for bedding rather than food.



Rabbits Love Fresh Grass!



Take a look at these top 10 Best Rabbit Hay products. We analysed all the nutritional data on the popular hay supplies and narrowed down the list to these top ten...

Specialised Hay & Grass

Alfalfa Hay

Alfalfa (Lucerne), is actually neither hay nor grass! It is in fact a legume and is also grown as a richer type of animal feed.

Alfalfa hay has a much higher protein level than grass / hay, which makes it very fattening to feed as a main ingredient for an average adult rabbit.

However, it is very good for growing youngsters (kits) for helping them put on weight. It is also good for helping a post-op, sick or poorly or underweight rabbit as it is a very good source of rich

proteins needed to boost a rabbit's immune system.

Please Note:

Alfalfa hay is also much higher in calcium (1.5% compared to 0.5% in grass hay), so it is best avoided for any rabbit with a history of problems related to excess calcium, for example bladder sludge.

When Alfalfa is Perfect!

Alfalfa on its own can be too rich but mixed with meadow hay, it makes a lovely tasty treat.

Here is a fun and challenging, swinging hay ring made from the finest meadow hay and alfalfa.

Great for Growing Baby Rabbits...

The Naturals Alfalfa ring is also great for growing rabbit kits or for poorly bunnies needing a protein boost.

Provides hours of good fun for rabbits and is packed full of nutritious vitamins and minerals too.

Dried Grasses

When fresh grass is cut and dried very quickly, the nutrients that would otherwise be lost if it is left to dry naturally, are preserved, giving dried grasses more nutritional value than hay.

This type of grass is sometimes called;

- **barn dried hay**
- **dried grass**
- **Readigrass**

The quick drying process tends to leave it greener looking and also has a slightly higher protein content (12-14%) than hay, making it much more equal to grass in nutrient value.

Please Note:

If your rabbit is very sensitive to diet changes (and most are), then please introduce any changes or additions of this kind, very gradually.

Most rabbits find dried grasses very tasty, so it's a good choice if your rabbit's a reluctant hay eater.

However, it is best to monitor intake if a rabbit is particularly overweight. Rabbit's that are heavier should have a higher mix of Timothy Hay to balance calorie intake, especially if their exercise regime is restricted for any reason.

Different Types of Rabbit Hay

Popular Hay & Grass for Rabbits

Popular types of rabbit hay include meadow, Timothy, and orchard grass and any of these hays will provide a suitable foundation for your rabbit's diet, but don't feel like you have to limited to one type.

Mix it Up!

Mixing several different kinds of hay will give your rabbits a wider variety of flavours making them more appealing. You will also create a more even mix of nutritional content too, as some hay has more vitamins and minerals than another.

The Best Choice of Rabbit

Hay: *Timothy Hay*

Timothy Hay is by far the most popular and probably the best kind you can give your rabbit as their basic hay source.

Timothy hay is a good all-around choice for unlimited offering to your rabbit.

Timothy hay is a mix of leaves and stems from Timothy grass, which is a perennial bunch grass.

Timothy grass is a cool-season grass and it works well for bunnies with delicate digestive systems. It provides very good fibre content and is a thick, coarse hay.

Timothy Hay is high in fibre and low in protein which is a combination critical to the health of rabbits and other small animals.

The protein and fibre levels help to keep the gastrointestinal tract functioning properly.



Oxbow Western Timothy Hay is high in fibre, low in protein and calcium and is a good, basic grass hay with high quality nutrition.

Nutritional Breakdown of Hay & Grass

Hay Type	Crude Fibre	Crude Protein	Calcium
Orchard Grass	34%	10%	0.33%
Timothy	32-34%	8-11%	0.4-0.6%
Oat	31%	10%	0.4%
Dried Grass	25-28%	12-14%	0.55%
Meadow	33%	7%	0.6%
Alfalfa	28-34%	13-19%	1.2-1.4%
Bermudagrass	29%	10%	0.46%

Timothy Hay should be fed as 'free-choice' food daily, meaning it should be available at ALL TIMES.

Timothy hay is the better choice of hay as it comes straight from the farm, sun-dried naturally and in most cases free from pesticides.

This makes it more fragrant, greener and more palatable.

Note: Timothy Hay is more suitable for adult rabbits due to the low calcium content.

Orchard Hay/Grass

Orchard grass is another cool-season grass; it grows in tufts and is more drought tolerant than Timothy hay.

Orchard grass has a soft texture and is high in fibre and low in protein.

Mixing this in with Timothy hay is another way to tempt the fussy eater and keep non-fussy eaters from becoming 'set in their ways'.

Orchard Grass Hay is packed full of long strand fibre and is relatively low in protein. This combination keeps the digestive system working properly.



Orchard Grass has a sweet smell and taste to stimulate the senses of any herbivore!

- High in fibre
- Low in protein and calcium
- Sweet smell and taste

Meadow Grass Hay

Meadow grass (also known as 'meadow grass hay' is a mixture naturally occurring grass hays which create a nice combination of textures and flavours for your rabbits.

It is not actually true hay, as such, but rather several different types of grasses which are mixed and specially kiln dried.

The protein and calcium content in meadow grass can vary quite a lot, depending upon the type of grasses are contained within it, and it is rare that farmers analyse each crop.

So unless you know the farmer, the land and area the crop is usually made up of (and thereby know what the bale mix is) you might not want to feed this in 'unlimited' quantities, as recommended for Timothy Hay.

This is not because it is unsafe but rather because it may be richer in protein than normal Timothy hay and therefore more 'fattening'.

Oat hay is rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre, and is generally harvested just before the oat head develops into a seed, leaving lots of crunchy husks for your bunny to enjoy.

It is high in fibre and low in protein, and can also be blended with other grass hays.



Bromegrass is a perennial bunch-grass which is high in fibre and great for the dental and intestinal health of an adult rabbit.

It is a tender, sweet hay and an excellent choice for your rabbit.

Another good grass source is **Readigrass** which is also high in fibre and is tender and sweet.

Readigrass



Herbal Hay

is any kind of hay (usually Timothy) to which some type of herbs such as chamomile, marigold or dandelion have been added.

This type of hay mix is very popular with rabbit owners that cannot give their rabbits lots of foraging time outside.

If you do have access to a garden or place to grow plants, it would be less expensive to grow your own herbs for your rabbit and either feed them the fresh herbs in season, or dry them for the winter.

Recommended Herbage



Popular Rabbit Hay Questions & Answers

Should I Only Give One Type of Hay to My Bunnies?

While Timothy Hay is a good 'all-rounder', it's best to vary the different types of rabbit hay for three main reasons:

1. Variation encourages fussy rabbits to eat more.
2. Variation discourages non-fussy rabbits from becoming 'set in their ways' and only accepting of one type of hay.
3. Variation allows for nutritional values to be more balanced.

Variety is the spice of life after all!

What's the Key to Good Rabbit Hay?

There are three main factors when it comes to choosing a good rabbit hay, no matter what variation it may be:

1. It must be fresh and sweet-smelling with no musty odour.
2. It must be free from excessive dust.
3. It must have been stored out of direct sunlight, in a dry location, in a container that is NOT airtight. (Sealing hay in an airtight container encourages the growth of potentially deadly mould toxins).

Did You Know About Hay Cutting Times?...

The *time* of cutting also plays a part in how much fibre & protein content there is too!

How Much Hay Do I Give My Rabbit?



You can give rabbits an unlimited supply of hay.

Timothy Hay or Oat Hay are good sources of fibre.

The only hay that should be limited or even completely eliminated from the diet of an adult rabbit is **alfalfa hay**.

Alfalfa is a perennial legume which is high in vitamins and minerals but is also high in calcium and can run as high as 20% protein, which is far too much for a rabbit over a year old. However, a small amount of alfalfa mixed in with other hay can encourage a fussy eater to eat more

Quality & Quantity

Rabbit Hay for Healthy Digestion

The following article is taken from The House Rabbit Journal and I have included it in completeness as it has some valuable insights in to rabbit hay, it's components and why it is a vital part of a rabbit's diet.

Quality and Quantities for Healthy Digestion

Linda Sterett-Fogarty

From House Rabbit Journal

CONTRARY TO BELIEF, hay is not grown year-round.

Forage cannot be grown during a major portion of the year due to cold temperatures. Since animals need a continuous supply of food, the storing of hay is critical. The haying process allows us to harvest and store hay grown during favourable weather conditions for use during less favourable conditions. The process starts in the spring when the days become sufficiently warm and the length of daylight hours increases. This stimulates the plants that have been lying dormant over the winter to begin their growing process. Where our ranch is in Lincoln County, WA, this growing process usually begins in April. There are many variables that can affect this process, not the least of which is the temperature of the nights. April nights in this area can be in the 30s which causes a longer growing period. In order for good growth to begin, not only do the days need to have warm temperatures, but the nights need to have temperatures ranging above 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Grass will grow slightly faster in cooler weather than the legumes, such as alfalfa. Alfalfa grows best when the temperatures are hot. It typically takes approximately 60 days for new growth of alfalfa, 60 for mix hay, 60 for orchard grass, and 75-80 for Timothy in Lincoln County.

- **Alfalfa**, which is a herbaceous perennial legume, originated near Iran . It has a high mineral content and contains at least 10 different vitamins. Alfalfa, if cut when all things are ideal, can run as high as 20% protein in the pre-bloom state to as low as 11% at the end of bloom.
- **Timothy grass**, a perennial bunchgrass, is a cool-season forage grass. It is slow growing and has a low yield in the field. It has been our experience that 1st and 2nd cutting Timothy grass hay works well for animals with a delicate digestive system, skin problems, issues with diarrhoea and weight problems. Timothy can, however, go as high as 18% protein just before bloom (we've never had one test this high) and can fall as low as 4-6% protein in the late bloom state.
- **Orchardgrass** (also known as "cocksfoot" in Europe, New Zealand , and Australia) is native to Europe, North Africa , and parts of Asia but has been grown in North America for more than 200 years. It is a cool season grass that grows in clumps or tufts and has a fibrous

root system. It starts growth early in spring, develops rapidly, and flowers during late May or early June, depending upon length of days and the temperature. Orchardgrass is more heat and drought tolerant than Timothy grass. Orchardgrass grows rapidly at cool temperatures, is very productive in early spring and recovers quickly after cutting. Orchardgrass, in our experience, usually runs a bit higher on the protein scale than Timothy. Researchers say it can run as high as 18.4% in early vegetative state, down to 8.4% in late bloom, but typically we find it runs approximately 12-14%.

- **Mix hay** is a mixture of alfalfa and some type of grass, typically orchardgrass. The percentages can vary from as little as 5% alfalfa vs. 95% grass to the complete opposite of 95% alfalfa vs. 5% grass, all dependent upon the percentages of the seed mixture that is ordered from the seed company and planted by the farmer. In some cases, a farmer will go into a field and over plant in an existing stand of either a legume or grass with the opposing seed and achieve somewhat of a mix. The downside of this method is that there is less consistency in percentage of legume vs. grass when comparing the bales, as wide fluctuations can occur over the course of the field. Our two most popular mixes are: 1) A l f a l f a , 30% Orchardgrass-brome grass mix, 70% 2) A l f a l f a , 40% Orchardgrass-brome grass mix, 60%

RABBIT HAY CUTTING TIMES & WHAT THEY MEAN

Cuttings of Hay

Where our ranch is located in Eastern Washington, we get a 1st cutting (the first crop taken off a field in any given year), a second cutting (the second crop taken off that same field in that given year), and possibly a third cutting (the third crop taken off that same field in that given year), provided Mother Nature complies and gives us enough sunshine, dry days, and warm nights. Mother Nature is, however, very unpredictable! You learn to make hay while the sun shines, as the old saying goes.

- **First Cutting:** The first growth off of a field for the year is the "first cutting." Many people erroneously feel that first cutting hay is not to be considered as good feed. We tend to disagree, provided it is of good quality and was cut when relatively immature (pre-bloom stage), before the plant is allowed to mature to the point where the stem becomes larger and coarser. This is when the lignin (an indigestible part of the fibre component associated with cellulose and hemicellulose in the cell wall) content has become sufficiently high so as to make the hay more unpalatable and indigestible and the nutritive value has declined greatly. This can happen with 1st, 2nd, or any cutting of hay if left growing too long.
- **Second Cutting:** Depending upon the temperatures of the days and nights, it typically takes 40-45 days for regrowth of alfalfa, mix hay, and orchard grass, and 55- 60 days for regrowth of Timothy. This is termed the "second cutting," which usually has a larger percentage of leaves to stems, has a finer and softer stem, has increased percentages of crude protein and crude fat, and has a lower crude fibre percentage (depending upon the stage of maturity at which it was cut). More non-structural carbohydrates (starches and

sugars) and protein are in the leaves than in the stems. These starches and sugars are very digestible and make the hay higher quality.

- **Third Cutting:** If the growing season is long enough on any given year, it may be possible to secure a third cutting. In regions that lie south of our location, the growing season is longer and hotter, making alfalfa the prime hay crop, and often as many as four or five cuttings may be taken from a single field.

The third cutting is typically very soft hay that is primarily leaves with very few small stems. While beautiful to look at, it can be "rich" (high in nutrients, having a high *Relative Feed Value* or RFV, and low in fibre). It is our opinion that third cutting hay does not contain sufficient fibre content to be the only hay in the diet of most rabbits. It can, however, be used in conjunction with a higher fibre, good quality, relatively immature 1st or 2nd cutting hay, and creates greater variety and interest in the chewing experience. We suggest that you feed the different hays at different meals so as to eliminate waste.

Forage Quality

The stage of maturity at which forages are cut (whether it be 1st, 2nd, or 3rd) has a major influence on the quality of that forage. Forage crops generally decline in nutritive value as they mature. As forage plants mature, it is typical for an increase in *Acid Detergent Fibre* or ADF to occur.

ADF is the percentage of highly indigestible plant material in a forage comprised of cellulose and lignin. A low ADF value indicates greater digestibility and therefore "better quality" hay. ADF values are important because they reflect the ability of an animal to digest the forage. As ADF increases, digestibility usually decreases. *Neutral Detergent Fibre* or NDF is the percentage of cell wall material in the hay that is partially available to the animal and is made up of cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin. As the NDF percentages increase, the dry matter intake will generally decline (meaning the animal will consume less). NDF is very important because it estimates that fraction of forage that, if it is to be used by the animal, must first be broken down by gastrointestinal microorganisms. Lignin is a non-carbohydrate substance that is the main factor influencing the digestibility of plant cell wall material. As lignin increases, digestibility, intake and animal performance usually decrease, and the percentage of ADF and NDF increases. Simultaneously there is a decline in the Crude Protein (the total amount of nitrogen in a forage indicative of its ability to meet an animal's protein needs). Thus, *Relative Feed Value* (an index that ranks forages relative to the digestible dry-matter intake) declines with maturity.

The complex carbohydrates that are in hay include hemicellulose, cellulose, and lignin, forming the cell wall of the plant.

Note added by Just Rabbits:

Lignin is a class of complex organic polymers. Lignins are one of the main classes of structural materials in the support tissues of vascular plants and some algae. Lignins are particularly

important in the formation of cell walls, especially in wood and bark, because they lend rigidity and do not rot easily.

These complex carbohydrates provide fibre in the animal's diet and is important to a healthy gastrointestinal system. The soluble or digestible part of the hay is primarily the cell contents. As the plant matures, the hemicellulose changes to cellulose and is not as digestible, which leads back to the timing of the cutting being a critical factor in the quality of the hay. It is not so much the cutting but the maturity of the plant at the time it is harvested. If the hay is cut when relatively immature it is higher in nutrients and darker green in colour, but given more growing time, that same hay will be more mature, larger and coarser, have a higher cellulose content and will not be as digestible nor as nutritious; it's all a matter of timing and what Mother Nature allows you to do. Leaves of both grasses and legumes contain a much greater concentration of digestible nutrients than do stems. Therefore, as the proportion of leaves to stems becomes higher with each successive cutting, it is easy to understand how the nutritive quality of the successive cuttings (1st vs. 2nd vs. 3rd) becomes higher. The only way in which a 1st cutting could be higher in nutrition would be if the 2nd and 3rd cutting forage being compared were both allowed to become far too mature so as to decrease digestibility, nutrition, and intake, compared to a pre continued on next page bloom 1st-cutting forage of the same type (alfalfa, Timothy, orchard-grass, etc.).

THE DIGESTIBILITY FACTOR

Let's say for the sake of comparison, that you are feeding your rabbit a portion of a 2nd cutting hay that was cut when the plant was relatively immature, the nutrition and digestibility are high, and the cellulose content is low. Your rabbit would be able to digest more of the nutrients out of this hay and would achieve maintenance or weight gain depending upon the size of the servings and the dynamics of this particular animal and his environment/ work load. If this same field of hay had been allowed to grow for another week, for example, the indigestible portion of the plant would have increased, making the hay less nutritious and less palatable, and the amount of digestible energy that the animal is able to extract from that hay is decreased. It would now become necessary to feed a larger size portion of this more mature hay to achieve the same maintenance.

This digestibility factor is the determining factor as to how much "good" your rabbit will get out of a particular type of hay. You can feed a large volume of hay that is low on the digestibility scale and keep the rabbit at his ideal body weight, but if feeding a highly digestible hay (hay that has a high RFD and is high in nutrients) one would obviously need to feed a smaller amount to maintain the rabbit at his ideal body weight. Within the confines of each cutting (1st, 2nd, 3rd) it is possible to have varying percentages of "digestibility" depending upon the stage of maturity of the plant at the time of harvesting. Therefore, we take issue with those that out-of-hand discount a 1st cutting of hay, stating it will always be too "stemmy or coarse." Nothing could be further from the truth, in fact, it is our belief that many animal owners could benefit from feeding a good quality, relatively immature 1st cutting hay. The nutritional level is usually more consistent with the needs of the typical pet animal, and the added benefit to the rabbit's gastrointestinal and digestive tract of this higher fibre percentage can be invaluable. If you have fed a beautiful, dark green, leafy 2nd or 3rd cutting hay and your rabbit has experienced diarrhoea, there is a good

chance that your rabbit could benefit from the binding qualities of the higher fibre content of the 1st cutting hay, as long as it was cut before it became too mature.

SELECTING HAY

Many pet owners with whom we deal buy hay based on its visual appeal-dark green, leafy, soft. This equates to hay that is very high in nutrients, high in protein, possibly high in fat, high in calories, and definitely low in fibre. The consumer driven hay market has continued to demand ever more "beautiful" premium hay, and it is our belief that we now have on a consistent basis, hay that is almost "too rich" for the normal house pet. In addition to this "premium" hay, many owners feel that more is better and are feeding ever increasing amounts of treats, vitamins, minerals, and supplements, whether the rabbit really needs them or not! In fact, one might say, we are killing them with kindness. If you choose to feed premium hay, then cut down on the treats and supplements.

We recommend that you look at the hay choices available in any given year, buy samples of the types you think are most likely to work, and go feed them out. This ensures a successful outcome in providing a menu that your rabbit will eat and one that will be good for him. Most importantly, observe your rabbit's appearance frequently. You can develop an "eye" for the current body condition of your rabbit and adjust the size of portions up or down as needed.

THE HAYING PROCESS

Swathing: The hay is harvested with a piece of equipment called a "Swather." This is a self-propelled mowing machine with a set of rubber rolls that the hay passes through. This roller crimps the stems at intervals of 2 1/2 - 3 inches which allows quick evaporation of stem moisture and decreases drying (curing) time. The shorter the drying time, the higher the nutritive value of the hay. The swather then shoots the hay out the back end of the machine in a continuous row called a "windrow."

Curing: The curing process is a drying out of the moisture in the hay to 14%. This occurs by a combination of air (wind) and sun. The shorter the cure-time, the less top-bleaching can occur from the sun. This process, if everything is ideal, typically takes 4 days in our fields. Usually the conditions are less than ideal and the process can take 7 days.

Hay Turning: As hay dries in the field, the top of the swath dries more rapidly than the bottom. Hay-turning is a process of flipping the windrow upside down (moving the wetter material to the upper surface) to increase the speed of the drying process and to make the hay uniform in dryness to ensure no slugs (small, wet clumps of twisted hay). This turning process is only done when nature has provided a less than ideal curing period.

Hay Baling: The hay baler is a piece of equipment that picks up the hay and lifts the windrow from the field surface, going next into a compression chamber where the hay is packed and formed into a bale, and a tying mechanism that completes the bale. Typical DM (*Dry Matter*) losses during hay baling vary between 2% and 5% of the yield, with the loss equally divided between pick-up and baler chamber losses. Pick-up loss is highest when the baler is being pulled

too fast. Chamber loss is greatly affected by crop moisture content, with drier material having greater loss. When hay is baled at night, leaf moisture is higher, similar to stem moisture, and chamber loss can be cut by 50%. We typically bale hay during the middle of the night when the days become too hot to bale during the daylight hours and achieve the proper moisture percentage. This moisture content, if it can be achieved, allows for a more beautiful and more nicely packed bale that allows for "peeling off" of a flake. If it is not possible to achieve this moisture content during the baling process, the bale, while having the same nutritive value, will fall apart more easily when the strings are cut and will be messier to feed. There is also a greater chance for this dry-matter loss (shatter quality) to exist in this drier hay. We always strive for this proper moisture content, but Mother Nature does not consistently provide the right circumstances, so we do the best we can. Our 2-string bales typically weigh 90-110 lbs. We use no drying agents or preservatives on any of our hay.

Bale Wagon: The bales are removed from the field by means of a bale wagon. This machine is self-propelled and picks up the bales on a platform and then through a series of hydraulic manoeuvrers stacks them on the bed of the wagon. Once the correct number of bales is "on-board", the wagon can be driven to the stacking area at the edge of the field. The wagon can automatically stack the hay by raising the bed of the wagon into an upright position, and driving out from underneath the "s tack" while hydraulic "feet" push against the stack, holding it in place.

PURCHASE AND STORAGE

Purchasing Your Hay: At our barn, August through November are the best months for hay purchases. The supply is normally ample at that time of the year as the crops are being harvested for the current year, the price is the best of the season, and the choice range is widest. Once a particular type of hay has been sold out, that type of hay will not be available again until the next year's crops are grown. Hay is only grown during a portion of the year so if you are purchasing hay during a time other than the growing season, the hay you are purchasing is being stored at a storage location. Large amounts of hay (hundreds of thousands of tons) are stored either in covered barns or in professionally covered stacks in Eastern Washington, where humidity is low.

Storage at Your Location: Hay that has been properly harvested and baled, and has been stored properly will last for several years in the bale. Bales that have been opened are best stored at room temperature or cooler in a dry location out of sunlight (which can leach nutrients). A garbage can or similar container that is not air tight works well. Your hay needs to breathe, as it naturally has a moisture content that, when enclosed in a sealed bag or container, can cause the growth of mould. Do not store your hay in sealed plastic bags. Properly stored, carefully selected high fibre hay can provide your rabbit with a healthy diet year-round. Knowledge of hay will help you to feed your rabbit the right kinds and right amounts.