Hay

► Providing unlimited hay for your Guinea Pig is crucial. As well as the health benefits, they enjoying playing and sleeping underneath it.

► Always have hay on the floor of their cage as well as in a hay rack. Guinea Pigs often soil hay and then refuse to eat it. Hay racks prevent this by keeping hay off the ground. It is an idea to use cheaper hay as a ground covering and good quality hay in various racks to save on wastage.

► Be careful with hay named ‘Alfalfa’. This type of hay has high calcium levels and is only suitable for young or pregnant/nursing pigs. Grass hays such as ‘Timothy’ are perfect for adult pigs.

Pellets

► With a good balance of vegetables and hay a handful of pellets a day is plenty. Take care when buying pellet food as pet shops often stock a ‘muesli mix’ type food which is unsuitable as it can lead to selective feeding and obesity (see pictures above).

► Buy Guinea Pig pellets with added Vitamin C. Never feed rabbit pellets as these can include ingredients toxic to pigs.

► Not all treats available for Guinea Pigs are suitable. Yogurt drops and treats covered in seeds and honey are the equivalent to junk food in humans. Feed a small piece of fruit as a treat instead.

A money saving idea...

Buy hay in bulk from a local farm rather than in small bags from a pet shop. Bales of hay can be as little as £3 and can last for several months. Farm hay is often of far better quality. Just make sure it has not been sprayed with pesticides and you have the space to store it in a cool, dry place.

Good websites to try:
http://www.guineapigcages.com
http://www.theguineapigforum.co.uk
http://www.guinealynx.info
http://www.guineapigrehome.org.uk
**Nutrition: The Basics**

► Guinea Pigs are strict **herbivores**. They should never be fed meat or dairy products.

► Like humans, they **cannot produce their own vitamin C** and therefore need to be fed suitable vegetables and a small amount of pellet food to counteract this.

► **Hay should be an important part of your Guinea Pig’s diet.** It not only keeps teeth in good shape but provides vital fibre for good digestive health.

► **Not all vegetables are suitable for daily feeding.** For example, carrots are very high in sugar and should only be fed a maximum of twice per week. Fruit should be seen as an occasional treat. See food chart for further details.

► **Dried pellet food should be fed as a supplement not as a substitute for fresh vegetables and hay.**

**Diet: The 3 Stages to a ‘Very Happy Pig’**

**Vegetables**

► **Vegetables are crucial to a Guinea Pig’s diet.** Green leafy varieties including spring greens and romaine lettuce should be fed daily to provide much needed vitamin C. **A bowl of vegetables should be provided per pig every day.**

► **Feed a variety every day rather than the same things, they love a good mixture to graze on. Certain herbs are also a favourite and small amount of fruit can be fed as a treat.**

► **Use the Food chart opposite to plan your Guinea Pig’s daily intake. Some of the selections are not suitable to be fed every day and all new foods should be introduced gradually. The colour key highlights our recommendations. The list is not exhaustive.**

**How often to feed:**

| How often to feed: |  
|--------------------|---|
| **Daily** |  
| **2-4 times weekly** |  
| **Occasionally** |  

**A money saving idea...**

Don’t waste money on mineral stones and vitamin drops, they are unnecessary if your Guinea Pig is fed using the ‘**Very Happy Pig’** diet.