Behavioural assessment (Bays, Lightfoot & Mayer, 2006)
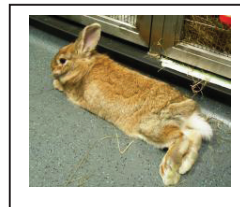
*** Vocalisations**
- High-pitched repetitive scream = terror or pain
- Grunts, growls. Snorts = anger and annoyance, kennel guarding
- Teeth grinding (bruxism) = discomfort, pain, illness
- Whimpering = anxiety

*** Body language**

- **Scent marking** of other animals and inanimate objects; chin/submandibular (chinning), anal (passed on pellets), inguinal (pockets deliver pheromones), Hardarian glands (pockets around eyes). Males and dominant animals mark more frequently than females and subordinates.
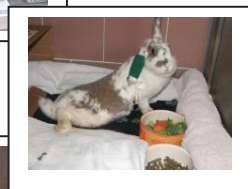

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- **Mounting**; dominance
- **Relaxed** state; lying out stretched, on its side, seeking social interaction (assume a subordinate position with chin on floor and limbs tucked under the body) such as nose scratches – can lead to allogrooming.
- Sleeping – rabbits have nocturnal tendencies but adapt to diurnal routine of owners.

- **Abnormal posture;**
- Hunched = abdominal pains
- Untidy or distended limbs; neurological or joint displacement, fractures
- Arched back; spinal or pelvic issues (dislocations and fractures)
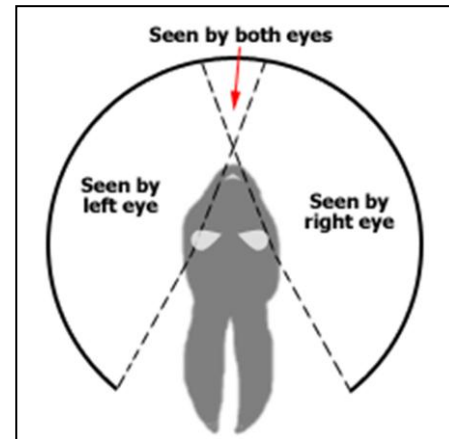- Ears extended and leaning forward; vision and hearing problems

- Thump feet/stomp = angry & alarmed followed by hiding
- Kennel guarding; females defend nest, males are territorial
- Excited/playful; rapid running in circles sometimes with a jump and twist
- Urination & defaecation; normal, location choice, training
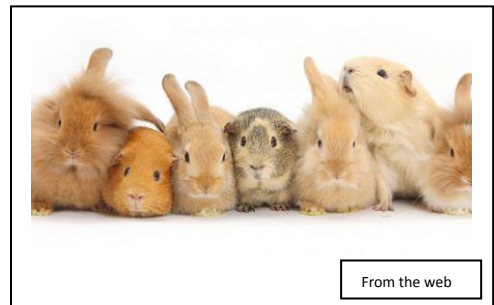

Considerations

- Circular vision and blind spots
- Prey species
- Mixed species husbandry e.g with guinea pigs; not advised due to anatomical (G.pig's fragile back and smaller size), dietary and behavioural differences

- Sociable; and will have an instinct to seek companionship. Companion rabbits may aide recovery in sick rabbits and make them feel safer

- Obligate nasal breathers; if nares are blocked the rabbit will have head raised and be open mouth breathing (highly stressful)

ill_rabbit_fieldofvision
httpwww.peteducation.comarticle.cfmc=2+2083&aid=159

From the web

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