

# Animal Welfare Code for Rabbits Consultation Responses

## We Asked

The purpose of the consultation by the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) was to seek views on the draft Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Rabbits.

The purpose of the Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Rabbits is to provide practical guidance to help the public comply with the provisions of Section 6 of the Animal Welfare Act 2023. It does not tell people precisely how to care for a rabbit, but summarises important things you should consider when making decisions about how best to care for a rabbit.

Breach of a provision of the code is not an offence in itself but if proceedings are brought against a person for an offence under the Animal Welfare Act, the Court will look at whether or not they have complied with the Code in deciding whether they have committed an offence.

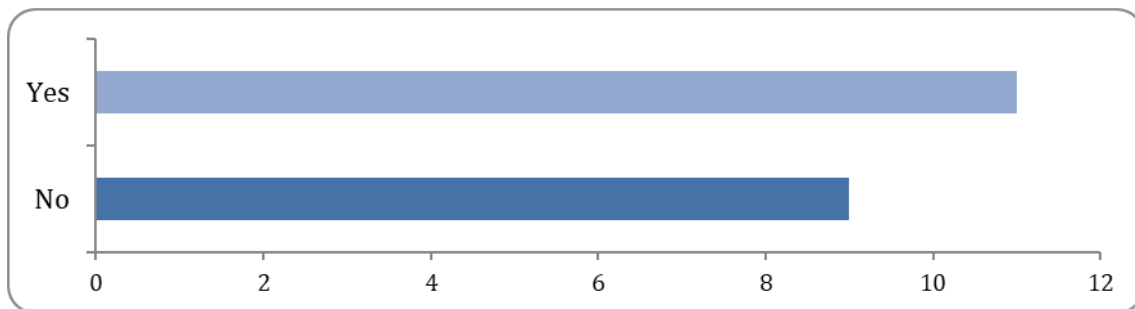
The code was heavily based on the Welsh version of the Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Rabbits. The Department asked a number of questions around the code of practice to gain views from the public and interested parties on the suitability of the code.

## You Said

The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture received **20** responses to the consultation. Of these, **18** responses were from individuals and **2** Responses were representatives of a society/ company/ charity.

**55%** said the code covered everything required. **30%** said there were things in the code that they disagreed with. **65%** said there was enough detail in the code. **100%** said the code was understandable.

### Does the content of the code cover everything required?

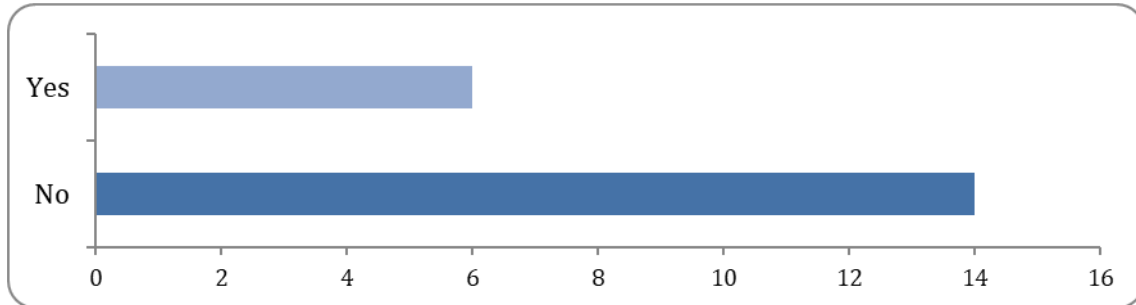


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	11	55.00%
No	9	45.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Five respondents were concerned about the enclosure requirements and the sizes recommended. The welfare code has now been altered to reflect the concerns.

Three respondents commented about neutering, especially relating to more strongly recommending that female rabbits require spaying. The wording in the codes has been altered to reflect these comments.

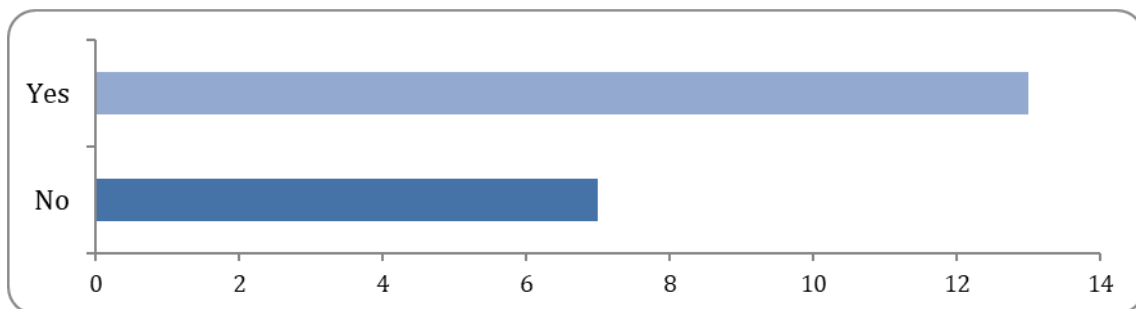
**Is there anything in the code that you don't agree with?**



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	6	30.00%
No	14	70.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Three responses were similar to those above concerning enclosures and these have been addressed. Neutering was also mentioned again and has already been addressed as above.

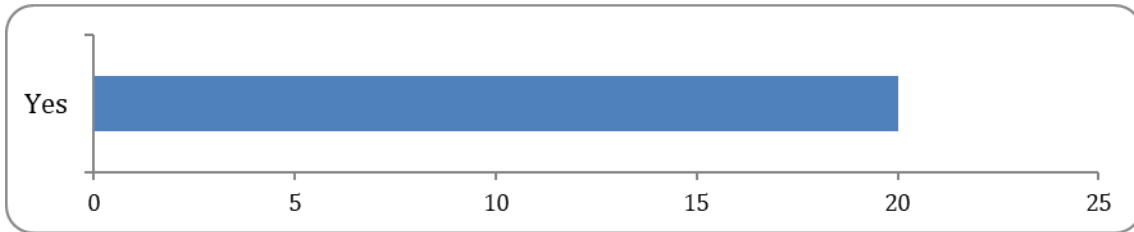
**Is there enough detail in the code?**



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	13	65.00%
No	7	35.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Two respondents requested more detail about diet. Because this can obviously be specific for each rabbit, depending on age, type of and also general condition, only general information is given in the code. More specific details should be advised by a veterinary surgeon if the owner is unclear. This will be added to the code. Again enclosures were mentioned which will be addressed in the code.

**Is the code understandable?**



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	20	100.00%
No	0	0.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Everyone said the code was understandable. However one respondent commented that the code was “*tokenistic and basic*”. Another said the “*fly strike section was repeated*” and this will be amended.

All responses received during the consultation period have been carefully considered, and were valuable in both ensuring general satisfaction with the proposed code and in identifying some modifications were needed or might improve the code in order that they can be finalised.

### **We did**

The Department is grateful to those individuals and organisations who took time to respond to the consultation and tell us their views on the proposed Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Rabbits. As stated above some minor changes have been made to the code.