



## RSPCA Rat Care Advice

### RSPCA COMPANION ANIMALS PET CARE FACTSHEET



## FORAGING BEHAVIOUR

### **FORAGING IS A NATURAL BEHAVIOUR FOR RATS.**

### **ENCOURAGE YOUR RATS TO FORAGE FOR FOOD ITEMS INCLUDING HANDLING AND MANIPULATING THEIR FOOD:**

- Give your rats a variety of appropriate food options, so that they have control over their own food choice. This is very important as rats often develop individual preferences for particular foods;
- Mix food items among fresh bedding during cage cleaning and scatter food items around their cage;
- Hide food items in safe places. Rats will happily dig in sand/gravel trays, or chew through cardboard tubes to find hidden favourite food items;
- Occasionally provide seeds (e.g. sunflower), nuts (e.g. peanuts) to allow your rats to manipulate their food in their paws whilst they eat;
- Give your rats whole or intact food to help stimulate them (i.e. working out how to break into a cooled unpeeled boiled egg);
- Always provide food enrichment as part of their daily food allowance, and not in addition to it. Foods high in fat and/or sugar should only be used as occasional treats, or rewards for training, and should not make up their regular food;
- Always provide multiple food objects rather than just one for a group of rats, this will help to avoid competition.



*This pet care sheet has been produced by the RSPCA Companion Animals Department (V1 CAD/KW 11.08.11). This leaflet is provided for general information only and is not intended to be relied upon as specific advice. Whilst we try to ensure that the information is correct, we cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information, nor for any reliance on or use of the leaflet.*