



**Edition 13 – June 2015**

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***Around the Refuge***

Recently, there has been more than the usual amount of guinea pigs needing extensive medical care being surrendered or rescued. Some free-ranging guinea pigs were rescued by volunteers, with one needing a caesarean. A number of guinea pigs were also surrendered with severe cases of bacterial mange. Unfortunately, not all have survived. To learn more about bacterial mange, refer to our Health Facts article and please consider sponsoring or donating towards their vet costs.

We have lots of warm winter beds, cuddle sacks and other winter goodies on sale at our open days, so please come along and continue to support us and the guinea pigs in our care.

*Rachel – Refuge Coordinator*

***Welcome!***

Welcome to the June edition of the *QGPR Weekly*. Another busy month ahead with more changes happening.

I hope you enjoy reading our news and find this edition interesting and informative.

The Qld Guinea Pig Refuge was founded in 2013 by a group of volunteers dedicated to supporting, rescuing, and finding homes for lost, abandoned, unwanted and mistreated guinea pigs. We would not be able to do this without your support!

*Beth – Editor*

***What’s On***

**Open Days are moving!**  
 From Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June we will be at  
**Bald Hills Scout Den-508 Bracken Ridge Road**

Map details: TURN RIGHT AT LIGHTS TO STAY ON BRACKEN RIDGE ROAD

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## Guinea Pigs for Adoption



### Cody (desexed male) and Petunia

It was love at first sight when Cody (13 months) met Petunia (4 months). They both enjoy a cuddle, however Petunia, being young, is still full of baby energy and loves to popcorn around her cage.



### Sam and Alistair (14 months)

Sam and Alistair are best friends. Alistair is blind in one eye but requires no further treatment. Sam is the shy one of the two but is always happy for a snuggle with his human.

These guinea pigs, and many more, are looking for their forever homes and are \$15 each. Desexed males are \$30 each. They come fully health checked, worm and mite treated, and are living at their foster carer's home where they receive lots of handling time. If you are interested in adopting, please fill out our [Adoption Enquiry Form](#).

### Sponsorship

Sponsoring allows you to help us help guinea pigs in need.



Honey Dew was surrendered to a vet who contacted QGPR to take her in and care for her. Her leg is severely broken in multiple places and will need amputation. Unfortunately, Honey Dew is also pregnant, so in consultation with our vet, she is receiving pain medication until she delivers her babies. Her leg will then be amputated and she will be rehabilitated and found a special home. She will be in our care for a number of months yet to deliver her bubs and recover from her surgery.

As amputation is expensive, we are hoping some special people will find it in their hearts to sponsor Honey Dew to help meet the costs of her treatment.

All sponsorship and one-off donations over \$2 are completely tax deductible. For further information, please visit the [Sponsor](#) section on our website.

## Weekly Tip



**Guinea pig tip of the week**  
from The Guinea Pig Community

**Weigh your piggies weekly...**  
so that you can pick up on any health problems early

Guinea pigs are a prey animal and therefore naturally try to hide any sign of illness. By regularly weighing and recording your guinea pigs' weight you'll be able to pick up on whether there is a hidden illness.

Photo source: The Excellent Adventure Sanctuary

## Meet the Team

**Liz**

### *A little about you:*

I moved to Australia from the UK four years ago with my husband and two young children. I am a SAHM to my two children, two dogs, a cat and six guinea pigs.

### *How did you become a piggy volunteer and foster parent?*

I have always loved animals and growing up used to have guinea pigs, rabbits, dogs and horses. My husband and I wanted to pass on our passion and love of animals to our children, so made the decision to adopt some guinea pigs.

From adopting and buying food at the shelter, I learnt about the amazing rescue work they do which made me want to be a part of the team. So I decided to volunteer and foster. We now have six guinea pigs due to foster fails as once you fall in love with their individual personalities it's so difficult to give them up!!

We have now moved to Sydney so my role is to write the food article for the monthly newsletter.

### *Most memorable piggy moment?*

My most memorable moment happened with a feral guinea pig we rescued. She was extremely scared when we first got her as she had been free-ranging with a large group of other guinea pigs. She slowly became more confident and started coming out for food and cuddles. One morning, we came downstairs to find she had given birth to a gorgeous baby boy. She had shown no signs of pregnancy (although we always keep females on foster for a certain amount of time just in case). It was a lovely surprise and I was very happy that both mother and son were healthy, even with all the risks of guinea pigs giving birth.



### *What is something people may not know about guinea pigs?*

Guinea pigs have 20 teeth; most are far back in the mouth so are difficult to see. Guinea pigs teeth continuously grow which is why it is very important that they always have fresh hay available as they need to continuously eat to keep their teeth ground down. If a guinea pig stops eating or eats in a different way to normal then they should be taken to a vet to have their teeth checked to ensure they are not overgrown or broken.

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## Health Facts

### Bacterial Mange

Mange is caused by microscopic mites that burrow under the skin and cause severe pain. A guinea pig that has a severe infestation of mange mites can develop bacterial mange, where they get a secondary bacterial skin infection. This is usually a result of intense scratching causing open wounds on the guinea pigs which gets infected, but may also be due to the inflammation of the skin. Guinea pigs with bacterial mange can't stop scratching or biting their skin. They have hair loss, thick dandruff, and in serious cases, seizures which can result in death. Death can also occur due to severe dehydration and failure to eat because of their extreme pain.



Bacterial mange needs urgent vet treatment, with weekly injections of either Demadox or Ivomec to kill the mites. Daily antibiotics and pain medication is also required. Guinea pigs suffering bacterial mange need to be bandaged to stop themselves from scratching and opening wounds on their skin. Treatment is usually ongoing for a number of months.

QGPR currently has three bacterial mange cases, Bella, Snowy and Des. Please consider sponsoring one of these guinea pigs as they all require long term vet care.

Please note that information provided is general only. If you have any concerns about

your guinea pig's health, please ensure you seek appropriate veterinary care.

## Guinea Pig Food Facts

### Citrus Fruits

Guinea pigs love many fruits. It is to them like chocolate is to us! As with chocolate, it should only be fed in small amounts. Fruits are packed with many essential vitamins and minerals but are also high in sugar. Guinea pigs convert fructose (the sugars in fruits) into glucose in the body, which if fed too much can cause weight issues or even diabetes.

Citrus fruits such as oranges and grapefruits are lower in sugar and high in Vitamin C and fibre. Guinea pigs are unable to store Vitamin C in their bodies, so providing a range of foods high in Vitamin C is essential for their good health. Fibre is important as it extends the digestive time of food, thus allowing more nutrition to be absorbed. It also plays a role in forming caecotrophs which are special partly digested faecal pellets that guinea pigs produce and then consume to extract the remaining nutrients. This is an important, nutritionally beneficial function for guinea pigs.

Due to their high acidity, citrus fruits can cause sensitivity to the mucous membranes in the mouth and to the stomach, so for this reason should be fed in small amounts. Always remove any seeds prior to feeding. All new foods should be introduced slowly and your guinea pigs should be monitored to ensure there are no adverse effects.



To access the QGPR food list on our Facebook page, click [here](#).

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