

R.A.T.S. Standards for Selling Rats and Mice in Pet Shops

The Rat Assistance & Teaching Society has established these standards of excellence for providing customers with the best quality pet rats and mice possible. The practice of selling rats and mice from the same breeding stock for both pets and feeders either violates the human/animal bond, or means that they are not the highest quality pets. The highest quality pet rats and mice trust humans absolutely and are personable and loving like dogs. Most people have never met the ideal pet rat or mouse because most rats and mice are not produced according to these standards.

1. Live rats and mice sold for pets only. No live rodents sold for reptile food; only frozen rodents sold for reptile food. (*Selling live feeder rats and mice degrades the value of all rats and mice.*)
2. Rats and mice properly bred and raised for pets. (*This ensures that customers receive quality animals that will be well socialized and make excellent pets.*)
 - a. Breeding stock selected for health and temperament.
 - b. Pups handled daily from birth.
 - c. Pups raised in a roomy cage with toys (*Experiments have shown that rats raised with toys are more intelligent than those that aren't.*)
 - I. Minimum cage size for mother and litter: 14" X 24" X 12" tall
 - II. Required toys: chew toy(s), nesting materials, at least one climbing structure (such as a ladder, rope, tree, etc.), at least one tunnel or other hiding place. An exercise wheel can be added when the pups are 3 weeks old.
 - III. A litter box is also recommended. (*Rats raised in a roomy cage with a mother who uses the litter box will be litter-box trained.*)
3. Rats and mice housed and cared for properly.
 - a. Males and females housed separately. (*Rats can get pregnant from 5 weeks of age!*)
 - b. Displayed in roomy cages with toys.
 - I. Minimum cage size 14" X 24" X 12" tall for:
 - A. 10 pups up to 6 weeks of age (add 6 sq. in. per additional rat)
 - B. 6 pups up to 12 weeks of age (add 6 sq. in. per additional rat)
 - C. 4 pups up to 16 weeks of age (add 10 sq. in. per additional rat)
 - D. 2 rats of adult size (add 12 sq. in. per additional rat)
 - II. Required toys: exercise wheel, chew toy(s), nesting materials, at least one climbing structure (such as a ladder, rope, tree, etc.), at least one tunnel or other hiding place. (A litter box is also recommended.)
 - c. Housed on non-toxic bedding—no pine or cedar shavings. (Rabbit food makes excellent inexpensive, odor-controlling bedding.)
 - d. Fed a nutritionally complete diet.
 - e. Cage cleaned often enough to prevent detectible odor and keep the bedding dry.

For questions or more information, contact RATS, 857 Lindo Lane, Chico CA 95973, rats@petrats.org, 530-899-0605