
OBSERVATIONS ON THE GROWING CONDITIONS OF THE SIBERIAN DWARF HAMSTER (*PHODOPUS SUNGORUS*)

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Abstract

The Siberian dwarf hamster is a rodent that is part of the Cricetinae family, having its spreading area in the steppes in northeastern Kazakhstan and northeastern Siberia. The Siberian dwarf hamster is small in size, having a maximum length of 9 cm and a weight of 19-45 g. It has a fine, striped fur, which from winter to summer has different shades. Its diet is omnivorous, being mainly composed of dried seeds and fruits. The Siberian dwarf hamster prefers dark places where they can hide and also love to dig the galleries into the ground. This paper presents the influence of environmental factors on the growth conditions of the Siberian dwarf hamster. Ambient factors are the temperature and humidity of the air, the level of light, but also the cage dimensions in which the bedding inside it also has a very important role.

Introduction

The cage is one of the most important things to consider when holding dwarf hamsters. There is the possibility of using plastic boxes for growing hamsters, which is used by people who grow and breed hamsters for the purpose of selling them. Their use brings the risk of low air circulation, which leads to the accumulation of odors, increased humidity and stress of the animals. Also, keeping more animals in a limited space leads them to stress and territorial conflicts between them.

Table 1

Minimal dimensions

The minimal dimensions of the cage		
Length	Width	Height
35 cm	25 cm	35 cm

The most used bedding is sawdust because it is easy to buy and cheap. The disadvantage of this is that it moistens very easily due to water leakage from the water bottle or excessive urination and does not show an effective masking of the odor.

It is advisable to avoid the use of resinous wood because it can, by its composition, irritate the animal's airways.

The use of wood pellets is the best option because they absorb much better the liquids and have a higher efficiency in masking the odors, also offers the animal the possibility of cutting the incisors by storing them. Instead, this type of litter is very solid and therefore it is not recommended to be used for newborn babies.

Feed the hamsters is done directly on the bedding, in small plastic bowls or in glass bowls. Automatic feeders can be used to release a fixed amount of food over a certain amount of time. The most common types of food for hamsters are grains, seeds, dried fruit pieces.

In the case of water, it is recommended to use classical water bottles with a ball or 2 (those with 2 balls are more efficient because the amount of leakage water is much lower). In the case of large cages or terrariums, small "lakes" can be created by using small plastic or glass bowls or putting water in different containers dispersed through the cage.

The ambient temperature should be between 20-26°C. A higher temperature leads to increased water consumption and stress on the animal.

Siberian dwarf hamsters, in the natural environment, can withstand temperatures below 0 °C, which has not been seen in the relieved individuals on the market.

One thing that is more rarely seen in Siberian dwarf hamsters raised in captivity is the process of changing the fur color, the coat gaining a lighter color when the hamster is in low temperature conditions.

Humidity should be between 50-70%

The light must be of medium intensity. It is not recommended to use lamps in or above the cages, as strong light can cause stress on the animals. The level of light exposure is similar to that of other nocturnal rodents. In the cage where they are deprived of light during the day, they begin to manifest night-time behavior.

Table 2

Environmental factors

Environmental factors values		
Temperature	Humidity	Light
20-26°C	50-70%	Medium

Conclusions

- The Siberian dwarf hamster is easy to grow and maintain, being a good choice for a pet.
- The size of the cage is a very important factor in their growth, the minimum space being 35 cm in length, 25 cm in width and 35 cm in height.
- Ambient climatic factors, especially temperature, do not have a significant effect on their activity; temperature changes are easy to support.
- The litter used can only be sawdust, easy to buy and cheap, requiring frequent change.
- Drinking water is recommended to be administered at discretion from water bottles.
- Food is represented by seeds, grains or pieces of dried fruit that are easy to obtain.

References

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