

Mazuri Small Pet Diet Helps your Ferret Flourish

People have been keeping ferrets as pets for at least 2,000 years—most often for rodent control. Ferrets belong to a group of animals, which includes otters, weasels, polecats, and mink. Their scientific name, *Mustela putorius furo*, means little fur thief.

Despite their size and speed, ferrets are NOT rodents. In fact, a mouse would probably be terrified if it met a ferret since rodents fall one step below ferrets on the food chain. Ferreting became the rage in Caesar's time when the Roman army muzzled their companions and sent them into rabbit burrows to chase their prey into secured nests... a hunting method frequently used by poor families during the Renaissance.

By the early 1900's ferrets had migrated to the United States where they were used for rodent control. Later in the century ferrets often assisted industrialists pull telephone wiring underground and through pipes where human hands could not reach.

These days ferrets have become increasingly valued as house pets, ranking third behind dogs and cats in popularity. Carnivores by nature, ferrets share the meat eating preference of both dogs and cats... which is likely where the idea of feeding cat food to ferrets got its start. However their nutritional needs are very different. Here are some of the differences between cat feed a Mazuri Ferret Diet:

- **Protein:** Protein requirement of cats are not as high as that of a true carnivore such as a ferret. In fact, most cat foods only contain 30-33% protein. Mazuri Ferret diets contain 39.9% protein. Also digestibility of protein is important. Mazuri uses a variety of high quality protein sources to the protein requirements of ferrets are met and adequately balance with amino acids for proper growth, maintenance and reproduction.
- **Vitamin E** is particularly important to good ferret health and prevents yellow fat disease (Nutritional Steatitis.) A mere 10 mg. Of vitamin E each day prevents this problem. However your ferret would have to eat two kilos (4.4#) of cat food each day to meet this requirement.
- **Niacin** is also important to maintain the tryptophan levels of your pet. Zinc and magnesium levels must also be carefully balanced in your ferrets diet. Too much zinc can cause toxicity. Too little zinc causes skin and hair problems. Too much magnesium can lead to the formation of painful urinary calculi.

- Finally, dog and cat foods don't contain the proper fiber levels for ferrets. Feeding too much fiber will cause it to produce larger more smelly stools... and a more smelly litter box.

Another important nutrient is water. Ferrets must have access to clean, fresh water at all times—even when playing outside of their cages. If your ferret doesn't drink enough water, its urine may become concentrated, which in turn leads to urinary problems.

So what's the best way to keep your ferret healthy?? Pick up kitty litter for good hygiene, but put the cat food back on the shelf and visit your MAZURI dealer for all the nutrients it needs, in the precise proportions.

Mazuri Ferret diets are available in 25# bags or 6# pails.

For further information on this and any other MAZURI diets go to www.Mazuri.com.

Danny Smith