



# ADOPTION PROCESS



Thank you for your interest in our rats!

We hope that this document will help answer all the questions you have regarding our adoption process from start to finish, as well as some basic care information.

### **Why one document for both ratteries?:**

While Calico rattery & Exotics and Mischief Managed Rattery remain as 2 independent ratteries, we do work closely together on similar lines. To make things easier, not only for potential adopters, but also for ourselves, we have decided to merge our adoption process.

This means that when submitting an application, you will have the opportunity to receive rittens from either/both ratteries.

We love and adore the rats we produce. We put a lot of our time, effort, and heart into our breeding program.

We care about what happens to each and every single one of our rats. We want to ensure that we find forever homes who will love and adore our rats as much as we would.

We have had bad experiences with adopters in the past, and in order to ensure that future rittens get the homes they deserve, we have overhauled our entire application process.

We have noticed that some people can be very impulsive when it comes to getting a new pet.

Yes, it's a very exciting process, but it's also a lot of hard work and commitment.

We want to ensure that potential adopters are aware of the correct way to keep and care for their rats. We want to make sure that having rats as pets is truly something you are prepared for so that, hopefully, in a few months you don't regret it.

This document will cover everything you need to know from the moment you express interest in our rats, all the way to when the new babies are in your care.

Please take the time to read through this document, and if you still have questions you are welcome to contact us at any time.

*Loves and Boggles  
Nova - Calico Rattery & Exotics  
Chelsea - Mischief Managed Rattery*

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## Deciding who/where to get your rats from

### SO YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD PET RAT(S) TO YOUR FAMILY?

The first step in the adoption process is finding an ethical breeder/rescue. If you are reading this document then we can happily assume that you are doing your research and considering us for your new rats.

Calico Rattery & Exotics and Mischief Managed Rattery are both URC REGISTERED and APPROVED breeders. (<http://unitedrodents.com/>)

### **UNITED RODENT COMMUNITY-**

If you are a breeder or rescue and would like to become a part of the United Rodent Community please see the following channels:

Website: <http://unitedrodents.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unitedrodentcommunitypage/>

Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/244365036778497/>

List of ratteries we trust in South Africa: *(Last updated: 25/10/2020)*

### **Gauteng:**

#### **All Rat Rattery (Kelly)**

**URC REGISTERED & APPROVED**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/allratrattery/>

Email: [allratrattery@gmail.com](mailto:allratrattery@gmail.com)

Whatsapp: 071 441 8544

Website: <https://allratrattery.wixsite.com/mysite>

#### **Imagine Rattery (Shaz)**

**URC REGISTERED & APPROVED**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/>

Email: [imagine.rattery@gmail.com](mailto:imagine.rattery@gmail.com)

Whatsapp: 072 133 3717

Website: <https://imaginerattery.wixsite.com/website>

#### **Full O'Beanz Rattery (Dayna)**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Fullobeanz/>

Email: [daynavds1502@gmail.com](mailto:daynavds1502@gmail.com)

Whatsapp: 083 266 6111

#### **Wild Whiskers Rattery (Emsie)**

**SAFRA**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wildwhiskers/>

Email: [wildwhiskersratteryrsa@gmail.com](mailto:wildwhiskersratteryrsa@gmail.com)

Whatsapp: 076 368 3762

**Western Cape:****Calico Rattery & Exotics (Nova)****URC REGISTERED & APPROVED**Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CalicoRattery/>Email: [info@calicoexotics.com](mailto:info@calicoexotics.com)

Whatsapp: 082 463 0551

Website: <http://calicoexotics.com/>**Mischief Managed Rattery (Chelsea)****URC REGISTERED & APPROVED**Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/MischiefManagedRatterySA/>Email: [mmanagedrattery@gmail.com](mailto:mmanagedrattery@gmail.com)

Whatsapp: 082 762 6799

Website: [www.mischiefmanagedrattery.weebly.com](http://www.mischiefmanagedrattery.weebly.com)List of rescues we trust in South Africa: (Last updated: 25/10/2020)**The Rat's Whiskers**Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/theratswhisker/>**KZN Critters Rescue and Rehoming**Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/kzncritters/>**PET STORES/FEEDER BINS**

We do not support the purchase of rats from pet shops or feeder bins.

You are not "rescuing" the rat when you purchase from these stores. You are not "rescuing" them from being snake food.

Another rat will take their place. All you are doing is giving the shop money.

Snakes and other reptiles also need to eat. Feeder rodents have their place. And if you choose to purchase one then that's totally your choice, but do not call it rescuing.

A feeder rodent has not been bred for temperament and health. They have been bred to be fed off young.

Because of this, it is impossible to predict what these rats will be like as they age. They may develop aggression or a multitude of illnesses that will cost you a fortune at a vet.

If you truly want to support rescues we have included a list of rescues we trust. Keep in mind that rescuing isn't always for everyone. Rescues don't often get to pick and choose the rats that are surrendered and some of the rats do not come with a genetic history. Which means that there will be no guarantee on temperament or health.

However, if you are a first time rat owner, and want to truly enjoy your experience, then we recommend an ethical breeder. Yes, we acknowledge that some rescue or feeder rodents can make good pets and can be relatively healthy.

But we will always support ethical breeding and breeders who strive to improve the fancy.

## "OOPS" LITTERS

Ask questions when you are choosing a pet rat. Sometimes individuals will advertise baby rats from their own accidental litters.

These rats have had zero thought put into their creation, and therefore, have no proven genetic or health history. And while these babies may seem very cute, you as the adopter have no guarantee that these babies will grow into healthy, friendly rats.

Breeders spend months meticulously planning their litters. We study genetics and are always striving to better our knowledge for the sake of improving our lines.

All ethical breeders will have a set of goals they are working towards with each line. As an adopter don't be afraid to ask about these.

Ethical breeders will always be willing to share their genetic history and pedigrees of the rats, all you have to do is ask. Ask about the rat's parents, and the grandparents. Ask about the health in the line, ask about the temperament.

Find out if the babies have been socialised. Especially if they have been over socialised.

A rat's temperament is typically 50% genetic and 50% learned.

This means that if a breeder over-handles or socialises the babies, they are then unable to prove if the babies have true genetic temperament. And a breeder should always strive to produce sound GENETIC temperament.

## IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Breeding goals and genetic temperament by Imagine Rattery:

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=420762115280726&id=182551212435152](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=420762115280726&id=182551212435152)

The importance of good breeders by White Wolf Rattery

<https://whitewolfattery.com/blog/f/the-importance-of-good-breeders?fbclid=IwAR16Tr7TvP0ot4OhRIUhHmSiSFOsf45ElxQQegGRcPtI8s-uOXU0AEfxAng>

Why we changed our adoption process by All Rat Rattery:

[https://www.facebook.com/allratattery/posts/559400744963593?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=H-R](https://www.facebook.com/allratattery/posts/559400744963593?__tn__=H-R)

How long does it take to get your rats? By Imagine Rattery

[https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/photos/a.182950725728534/556022491754687/?type=3&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/photos/a.182950725728534/556022491754687/?type=3&__tn__=-R)

The reasons why you don't breed without experience/guidance by Ritten in Stardust Rattery:

[https://www.facebook.com/RittenInStardust/posts/2350461845254436?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=H-R](https://www.facebook.com/RittenInStardust/posts/2350461845254436?__tn__=H-R)

Keeping single rats vs groups by Once Upon a Mischief Rattery:

[https://www.onceuponamischief.com/single-rats?fbclid=IwAR0wGQdxrlek\\_fCX8w0-KSlkKg6IMCTDjwzsT576mG8cN\\_HwjuSZEHFRmg](https://www.onceuponamischief.com/single-rats?fbclid=IwAR0wGQdxrlek_fCX8w0-KSlkKg6IMCTDjwzsT576mG8cN_HwjuSZEHFRmg)

When we discontinue lines by Imagine Rattery:

[https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/508429906513946?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=K-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/508429906513946?__tn__=K-R)

## WHEN YOU HAVE DECIDED ON A BREEDER

- ★ Have a look at their website/Facebook page etc. Do you research and decide that they are the breeder for you. **READ** their pinned post at the top of their page, this post often contains a lot of the information you will need.  
(example: <https://www.facebook.com/CalicoRattery/posts/411346515993258>)
- ★ Familiarise yourself with the varieties they breed and make sure that these are the varieties you are looking for. (Don't contact a breeder that only breeds siamese if you are looking for a russian blue roan. Rather do your research and ask questions to avoid disappointment.)
- ★ Reach out to the breeder and let them know that you are interested in adopting rats from them. If you reach out to more than one breeder then disclose this, especially if you are already on other breeders waiting lists.
- ★ If you manage to find the rat/s you want, then notify these breeders if you are still on their waiting lists. (There's nothing worse, as a breeder, than reaching out to a potential adopter and offering them rats only to find out that they went and bought from a pet shop or from another breeder. Just let us know that you found your rats.)
- ★ Familiarise yourself with the breeders adoption process. Most breeders all have their own policies and protocols. You will most likely be asked to fill in an adoption application as well as sign a contract. Please note that breeders will often also reach out to you and ask further questions, request photos, etc. as well.
- ★ Please always be honest. If you want to breed, tell us. If we ask you questions, tell us the truth, not what you think we want to hear. Breeders talk to each other, and if an adopter has shown to be problematic we will notify the other breeders.
- ★ Be prepared to stay in touch with the breeder for the rest of your rat's lifetime. As breeders, we care deeply for every single rat we produce. We want to be kept in the loop. Don't be afraid to spam us with pictures or ask us a million questions. We will always be there for support and guidance. All breeders have different procedures in place, some may add you to their private Whatsapp or Facebook groups, some may give you their phone number to contact them. If you are approved, definitely ask the breeder about this and find out how they operate.

*If you have any further questions you are always welcome to contact us.*

## **Adoption Application & Process**

We cannot speak for other breeders, but in this next section we will explain how our adoption application works. Please read through this section thoroughly as we go into detail about the entire process from start to finish.

Our adoption request form can be easily found on our websites/Facebook pages and on the link below

[Calico Rattery & Exotics and Mischief Managed Rattery Adoption Application](#)

### **ADOPTION APPLICATION**

Our adoption application form is an extensive questionnaire. Please ensure that you email yourself/save a copy of the form so that you can refer back to it if you need to. PLEASE read through the form carefully and make sure that you thoroughly understand each description. Please answer each question in as much detail as possible.

We take the time to read through each application and we will often have follow-up questions. If we believe that you have not read through the form properly we will **IMMEDIATELY DENY** your request and you will have to complete the form again.

If this process is too much for you, that is more than okay and understandable.

We are just not the right breeders for you and we wish you well on your journey to adopting pet rats.

The completion of this form does not guarantee that your application will be approved. Additional information may be required and home checks may apply.

## **DISCLAIMER:**

*Calico Rattery & Exotics and Mischief Managed Rattery are small hobby breeders. We breed exclusively for ourselves.*

*We occasionally have some rats we offer to the public as pets, however, we make it very clear that we also donate our rats to various Birds of Prey and Reptile Rehab/Rescues and educational organisations.*

### **ADOPTION POLICIES**

We don't always have rittens available for adoption, and when we do, we have strict terms for all adopters to adhere to. Please note that we do have an extensive waiting list and we operate on a first come first serve basis.

When rittens become available we will make an announcement on our pages and websites. Please make sure that you stay in contact with us and keep an eye on these pages if you would like rittens from us.

IF your application is approved you will be contacted directly when we have babies that fit your criteria.

Our goal is to find the perfect, forever home for our rittens.

We work very hard to produce the rats we have. We plan pairings months in advance and we are constantly communicating with other breeders and expanding our knowledge on genetics so that we can properly develop our lines.

Each life we bring into the world has been meticulously planned and is precious.

We don't want you to feel like you are under interrogation. We just want to get a feel for what you are looking for in a pet rat and what kind of life you would offer to our rittens.

The purpose of our adoption process is to ensure that you have the rats best interests at heart and will provide a forever home.

Please also familiarize yourself with the varieties we breed in order to avoid disappointment.

We will occasionally announce what is to be expected in a line, however, we cannot guarantee that what we predict is what will be available to pet homes.

Adopters must be 18 YEARS OR OLDER. We do not adopt rats out as pets for children unless an adult will be the primary caregiver and responsible for the rats. This is to avoid the common "my child is no longer interested in the rats" reason for rehoming, as well as the fact that contracts can only legally be signed by an adult.

### APPLICATION FEEDBACK

*Please note that it may take several days to read through and reply to each application.*

If your application is **DENIED**:

- ★ You will be notified and reasons for this status will be provided at our discretion.
- ★ You will have the opportunity to re-apply if applicable.

If your application is **PENDING**:

- ★ You have not yet completed the application and submitted all the necessary information.
- ★ You do not have an appropriate cage.
- ★ We would like to contact you and open up a dialogue to get more information from you about your application.

If your application is **APPROVED**:

- ★ You will be contacted and given a notice of approval
- ★ All the information you need will be shared with you privately

\*If you have been approved and no longer want rats, please notify us. If you do not, this may influence your approval for rats in the future.

\*You are welcome to contact us and ask questions regarding the status of your application at any time.

*Please see our Facebook pages/Websites for more information on this process.*

<http://calicoexotics.com/our-policies/>

## **PLEASE NOTE:** **WE ONLY ADOPT OUT IN SAME SEX PAIRS.**

If you have questions about this, please have a look at the FAQ section of this document



## PRICING

Our rats can start at R700 for a same-sex pair. If you are looking for cheaper rats, we are not the breeders for you.

Our pricing is dependent on the amount of work we have put into the line, the number of generations the line has, as well as the complexity of the line's variety. We do not price due to "market demand" and we do not work on standardised pricing.

Each rattery will have their own pricing for their rats and the exact price will be confirmed with you when you reserve your rittens.

Why do breeders charge so much? By Calico Rattery:

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=551762005285041&id=349058035555440](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=551762005285041&id=349058035555440)

## NON-NEGOTIABLES

All our recommendations can be found here- [Basic Guide To Rat Ownership](#)

In depth information on each subject can be found here- [Adoption Information](#)

### Cage

- ★ You must have an APPROPRIATE cage BEFORE you will be approved. You must have the cage in your possession (we WILL check).
- ★ If you are unsure as to what kind of cage you want to buy then let us know. We will be more than happy to guide you on an appropriate cage for your rats.
- ★ If you are unable to provide a suitable cage for the rats your application will be DENIED.
  - Cage Recommendations: <http://calicoexotics.com/wp-content/uploads/Recommended-Cages.pdf>
  - What cages should you buy for your rats? By Imagine Rattery: [https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/229797424377197?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/229797424377197?__tn__=-R)
  - To bin or not to bin? By Imagine rattery: [https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/230065617683711?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/230065617683711?__tn__=-R)

### Bedding

- ★ Not all bedding options are suitable for rats. Please make sure you do the proper research before choosing a bedding. We will DENY your application if we feel that your husbandry is not suitable.
- ★ Please be specific when listing the bedding you will use for your rats as well as your cleaning schedule. This is EVERYTHING from spot cleaning, to deep cleaning, changing out bedding etc.
- ★ Please take a look at the resources linked below. If thereafter, you still have any questions or are unsure of what to use for your rats, please message us.
  - Bedding Recommendations: <http://calicoexotics.com/wp-content/uploads/Recommended-Bedding-Options.pdf>
  - Bedding types by Calico Rattery: <https://www.facebook.com/CalicoRattery/posts/1044221769372393>

### Enrichment

- ★ It is important that you provide your rats with the enrichment they need to thrive. This can be anything from toys, a dig box, scatter feeding, etc.
- ★ Please see the following links for ideas on enrichment:
  - Toys: <https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/videos/341885679710820/?v=341885679710820>
  - Climbing: [https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/251863128837293?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/251863128837293?__tn__=-R)
  - Bird puzzles: [https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/251864972170442?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/251864972170442?__tn__=-R)

- ★ Rat nutrition is complex. Calico Rattery & Exotics and Imagine Rattery have done extensive research into a rat's dietary needs and are still actively working to improve on this knowledge.
- ★ Most pet shop commercial mixes are not appropriate for rats. Especially if they are targeted to be used for so many different species such as mice and hamsters as well. Rats have very specific dietary needs that these commercial mixes often can't provide. I will provide you with some links below and if you have any questions you are welcome to ask.
- ★ Please be SPECIFIC when listing what your rats will be fed. This includes their dry mix ingredients, fresh food, and any other treats you intend to give them.
- ★ You will be required to purchase a bag of our food for your new babies. This is so that your babies can be transitioned onto the food you intend to give them. If you choose to continue to feed them the same food we feed, or the URC Dry mix, please let us know.
- ★ Please take a look at the resources linked below. If thereafter, you still have any questions or are unsure of what to feed your rats, please message us.
  - Food Recommendations: <http://calicoexotics.com/wp-content/uploads/Recommended-Food.pdf>
  - STOP! WHAT ARE YOU FEEDING YOUR RATS!? By Imagine Rattery: <https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/448014962555441>
  - URC Dry Mix: [https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/473787536644850?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=K-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/posts/473787536644850?__tn__=K-R)
  - Rats also need access to fresh, clean water all the time. Please see the following link on advice regarding water and water bottles for your rats: [https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/photos/a.183342019022738/251848652172074/?type=3&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/photos/a.183342019022738/251848652172074/?type=3&__tn__=-R)

**Your adoption approval can be REVOKED at any stage without prior notice/explanation from the rattery. Our rats are important to us, and if at any stage, we no longer feel like you are a good fit, your application status can be set to DENIED.**

***Once your request has been APPROVED. You will be contacted and informed.***

### *WAITING TIME*

If you are impatient and want rats IMMEDIATELY, then we might not be the right breeders for you.

We **ARE NOT** a pet shop.

We don't have available rats at the drop of a hat.

We are ETHICAL and RESPONSIBLE breeders and we breed with a purpose.

Selling is not our main priority, as we breed first and foremost for ourselves and with specific goals in mind.

We are picky about the temperaments of our babies, to ensure you get the best rat possible. We do the hard work so you don't have to

We understand that we may share pictures of rittens to our pages/websites, but please note that we are often working on several lines, and some of these lines are not yet available to the public.

Our waiting periods can be anything from 1 month, if you get lucky on timing, and up to a year. This entirely depends on how set you are on what variety you want (specific combinations may take longer to pop up) and on how our litters come out. Unfortunately nature is it's own beast and we cannot predict sex ratios and litter sizes ahead of time.

We hope that if you have chosen us to get your rats from, you aren't simply looking for another animal, you are looking for an exceptional pet that has had love, care and thought put into it's every aspect. This takes time to get right.

How long does it take to get your rats? By Imagine Rattery

[https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/photos/a.182950725728534/556022491754687/?type=3&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/imagineratteryusa/photos/a.182950725728534/556022491754687/?type=3&__tn__=-R)

## BOOKING YOUR RATS

- ★ If you are an approved adopter you will get the list of available rats a few days before they are uploaded to our Websites.
- ★ Available rittens will be shared directly to you when they are approximately 6/8 weeks of age. Their names, variety, sexes, ages as well as their potential take-home dates will all be included.
- ★ We operate on a first come first serve basis, HOWEVER, return adopters will always get FIRST OPTION on a rat.
- ★ If you see a ritten you are interested in please let us know which one(s) using their ID #
- ★ Please make sure that you send through a few different rittens you are interested in, in case you are not able to book the rittens you had as a first choice.
- ★ While we try our best to ensure that you get the rats you really want, there is the possibility that more than one person might want the same rat. If you have any specific varieties that you are interested in please let us know in your application so that we can take this into consideration when you're booking rittens.
- ★ DEPOSITS will be due within 24 HOURS of booking your ritten. If you fail to pay your deposit you will lose the booking on the ritten and they will be offered to the next person in line. You will then be given the option to choose another rat.
- ★ An announcement will be made on Facebook prior to uploading rittens publicly, where the general public can enquire and go through the application process to be approved.

*\*NB: Deposits are non-refundable. If for whatever reason the rat you reserve is no longer available, your deposit can be used towards another rat.*

## RECEIVING YOUR RATS

- ❖ Rittens are ONLY sold in SAME SEX PAIRS or larger groups. WE DO NOT SELL SINGLE RATS.
- ❖ Rittens will be ADOPTED OUT at/after 8 weeks of age where your FINAL PAYMENT will be made. (Some lines might be kept back longer, individual adopters will be notified.)
- ❖ If at any point a baby you reserved at 6 weeks is no longer available, we will notify you and you will have the option to select another rat or wait to receive a pair of rats from another litter. We will NOT allow you to only take ONE rat.
- ❖ When your rittens are ready to be collected, we will contact you with available dates and times. Please note that these times are considered to be "appointments" and are to be treated as such. If you are unable to make an appointment please be respectful and notify us as soon as possible. Any rats that are not collected within a suitable time frame and without alternative collection plans in place, will be re-advertised and your payment for the rats will be forfeited.

- ❖ Please note that you may be subject to a holding fee if you are unable to collect your rats and require us to hold your rats for an extended period of time.
- ❖ Contracts will be emailed to you before the time for you to peruse and contact us if you have any questions.

### ON THE DAY

- ❖ On the day of collection please ensure that you confirm your appointment time with us and please bring an appropriate carrier. (Do not bring a dog or cat carrier as those are for dogs and cats. Rats are too small and may escape through the holes in those carriers. We won't send our rats home in them! You will be sent away and asked to return with an appropriate carrier.) Here is an example of an appropriate carrier: <https://www.facebook.com/182551212435152/posts/272658056757800/>
- ❖ All our rittens need to go home on the food they are on now. Rittens can't just be taken home and switched to a new diet immediately. So even if you choose to change diets you will need to wean them off the old one slowly. You will be sent home with some of the current food.
- ❖ You will need to sign the contract either digitally or physically. If you prefer a physical copy, please print one and bring it yourself.
- ❖ After your rittens arrive in their new home, allow them 2 to 3 days to adjust. Everything will be new to them and they need time to adapt to their new environment, find food & water, get used to the new smells, etc.

### WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR RITTENS ARE HOME

- ★ New rats may sneeze during the first 10 to 14 days in a new environment, this is perfectly normal as they adjust to their new home. Please notify us immediately if you notice anything out of the ordinary. Don't be afraid to reach out just to check.
- ★ Please let us know how the babies are doing by the end of the first week. We will also add you to our Rattery Facebook/Whatsapp groups where you will be able to share updates and ask questions. Please make sure that you are added to this group by the time your rats have been taken home.
- ★ We may request any health or mortality updates, should the need arise. We like to keep track of these details in our lines so that we can continue to breed healthy, well-tempered rats in the future.
- ★ We expect health updates about our rats. Should any health issues arise, we must be notified ASAP. Failure to do so may affect your ability to adopt from us in the future.
- ★ We have an "open door" policy for all our clients who have purchased rats directly from us. Should you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us. All our clients will also have access to the exclusive Facebook/Whatsapp Groups for any questions, comments, or concerns. Clients will also be given our personal phone numbers, should they need to contact us urgently.

### RETURNS

If you no longer want or are no longer able to care for your rat(s), we ask that you return them to us. We will always take back any rat(s) not matter the reason. Refunds for the rat(s) will not be given and the rat(s) must be returned at the buyer's expense.

**Rats need to be returned in an appropriate cage.**

Please note that once you return your rat(s) you relinquish all rights to the rat(s). We will then decide if the rats are to be rehomed/retired/etc. We want our rat(s) to go to the best quality of life possible, and we will do anything in our power to facilitate this.

### REFUNDS AND REPLACEMENTS

We strive to only ever sell rats that are temperamentally sound. However, if for any reasons you experience issues with your rats we will do everything in our power to assist you or we will take the rat(s) back.

- ❖ We will not offer refunds past 1 month post adoption date. Beyond that we will only offer replacement rats from future litters.
- ❖ We will not offer refunds on issues that are not our fault, ie the rat injured itself and you want a refund to pay for the vet bills.
- ❖ Please note that we also have a refund and return policy. This means that if you require a refund due to issues with the rat(s), we require the rat(s) be returned to our care.

## Where to from here?

### WHAT TO EXPECT FROM US

- ❖ We will ALWAYS take any rat back, no matter what, no questions asked.
- ❖ Whilst we do our best to breed only the best, things do happen. We will replace any rat who has temperament faults free of charge, assuming the issues have not been caused by environmental faults.
- ❖ We will always be available for any questions and advice.
- ❖ We will inform all adopters of anything we believe may affect them in a line from which they have rats.

### WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM YOU?

- ❖ Should you wish to breed, inform us so that we can provide you with better breeding stock and the relevant pedigrees.
- ❖ The rats must be housed indoors in an appropriate cage
- ❖ The rats must receive care or euthanasia when ill. They will not be allowed to suffer
- ❖ The rats must live in accordance with the 5 freedoms
- ❖ The rats MUST be returned to the breeder should the owner no longer be able to care for them/no longer want them. They MAY NOT be given to another individual or organisation without the express, written permission of myself.

### Our Stance on Humane Euthanasia

- ❖ We value each and every rat that we breed and own. Regardless of where they come from and what they are used for, we love all our rats equally and our rats are all upheld to a certain standard.
- ❖ A healthy and happy rat should be comfortable, happy with handling and at ease amongst other rats.
- ❖ We keep the majority of our adult rats after breeding if they are well tempered. Those that we do not keep are either humanely euthanized for a valid reason (see below) or are pet homed to trusted friends.

What do we consider a “valid reason” to euthanize a rat?

- ❖ The rat is ill and not easily treated. We do not believe in major surgery for our rats. This is because surgery is extremely risky for such small animals, and the potential for something to go wrong is far higher than with cats and dogs. Rats also live a very short amount of time, and expecting them to spend even a few months recovering from something that may not be permanently solved (such as recurring tumours) is in our opinion, unfair on the rat. Quality of life is always our primary justification for euthanasia.
- ❖ The rat is unable to be happily integrated with a colony. This means the rat is either scared or aggressive with other rats. This is non negotiable as this affects the health, safety and happiness of other rats living in the colony.
- ❖ The rat is aggressive or skittish with humans. We breed rats as pets. This means they should see us as family and not a threat. Rats who are not friendly and loving towards humans are not appropriate for any home.
- ❖ If the rat is from a line not ready to be released to the public yet, and it is unable to be utilised in our breeding program.

At this point you should have already read through the documents on our website as well as the links included in the previous sections. These will all provide the information you will need when caring for your pet rats.

All adopters will be given an adoption pack with all the information they may need. However, if our adopters feel that they still need more guidance they are always welcome to contact us.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **WHERE ARE YOU LOCATED?**

Calico Rattery & Exotics is based on the Stellenbosch Farms and Mischief Managed Rattery is based in Goodwood.

### **CAN WE COLLECT FROM YOUR HOME?**

No. These are our private residences. We do on occasion allow individuals to come to our homes, but by invitation only. We have collection points for a reason.

### **DO YOU DELIVER/FLY RATS?**

We are willing to meet you at an agreed upon area at the adopters cost. (R5 per km as per AA rates)

We are able to fly rats, however there are a lot of costs and effort involved. We would rather refer you to one of our sister ratteries if you are looking for rats in their area.

On occasion we may fly rats to and from our sister ratteries, in the event of this we will put up a notification for adopters if they are interested. However, please note that the specific breeders adoption applications will still apply.

#### **Information on flights and estimated costs:**

- ❖ Shipping is often done through an airline. The rats are flown in cargo of a plane just like other animals.
- ❖ One of our sister ratteries will be responsible for collecting the rats from the airport. The adopter will then have to schedule a time to collect the rats from the breeder.
- ❖ Flights can be upwards of R500 per flight.
- ❖ The adopter would have to rent a crate for the flight which can be an additional R500 - R1000.
- ❖ The breeders will also charge you for their travel to and from the airport (R5 per km as per AA rates) as well as their time. These fees can start at R300.
- ❖ To fly a pair of rats you will be looking at a cost of R2 500 or more.
- ❖ Flying rats is a lot of effort and only really worth it if more than one adopter wants rats. We would rather refer you to a breeder closer to you.

### **WHAT VARIETIES DO YOU BREED?**

Please see the following pages for information on varieties we breed:

#### **Calico Rattery & Exotics (Nova)**

<http://calicoexotics.com/prices-and-varieties/>

#### **Mischief Managed Rattery (Chelsea)**

[www.mischiefmanagedrattery.weebly.com](http://www.mischiefmanagedrattery.weebly.com)



### CAN I GET A DISCOUNT ON THE RAT(S)?

Short answer, no.

Long answer, there are multiple reasons why we don't give out discounts when asked. One of the most common reasons for asking for a discount is the inability to afford the adoption fee. If you cannot afford the adoption fee, how do you expect to afford ongoing care (food, bedding) or vet visits.

The other reason people ask for discounts is if they do not believe the rats are worth the price. Which means that our work is not worth the price. Which is quite rude.

For repeat adopters, we may OFFER a discount at our discretion, but please do not ask.

### DO I HAVE TO FILL OUT THE WHOLE APPLICATION? CAN'T I JUST EMAIL/WHATSAPP/CALL YOU?

Yes, our application is in place for a reason. Failure to complete the application properly will result in an immediate **DENIAL**. No one gets to skip the process.

We only sell our rats to APPROVED adopters.

Return adopters, if purchasing another pair of rats within 6 months of their first pair, do not need to complete the whole application. They will, however, be subject to a screening questionnaire.

### CAN I GET FIRST PICK WHEN THE BABIES ARE BORN?

No. Available babies will be sent directly to approved adopters to choose from.

Yes, we will share lots of pictures of the babies on our websites and pages. But these may not be the babies that will be available to pet homes.

Our timeline works as follows:

- ❖ Each breeder will make their selections at 6 weeks old.
- ❖ Sister ratteries and other breeders will then have the option to choose rittens from the litters.
- ❖ RETURN ADOPTERS will be able to choose from the rittens offered to pet homes.
- ❖ Rittens will then be offered to APPROVED adopters to choose from.
- ❖ Rittens will be shared/advertised to our website/pages, approx 3 days after they are offered to approved adopters, for the general public to choose from. NB: individuals will still need to be approved before they can purchase rittens.

### CAN I TAKE MY RAT(S) HOME EARLIER?

No. Rittens will only be allowed to go home after 8 weeks of age. The exact age may vary according to the line, and this will be communicated on a case by case basis.

We are aware that some breeders do allow their rittens to go home earlier than 8 weeks. Babies can be a lot of work! They eat a lot of food, take up space, make a lot of mess, and some breeders just want to get rid of them ASAP to make room for other rittens.

Baby rats need to be given the time to grow, not only physically but emotionally and mentally as well! From weaning to 8 weeks of age, rittens are learning about how to be "good" rats and how the dynamics work in a colony which will help set them up for life. We prefer to set up our rats for success from the beginning, instead of taking short cuts.

### CAN YOU SEND ME PHOTOS OF THE AVAILABLE BABIES?

We will share pictures of the available babies to approved adopters first, once we have made our own selections.

Yes, we will continue to share pictures to our pages and websites, BUT, the first time we confirm the **AVAILABLE** rittens will be to approved adopters.

We cannot share these pictures with you beforehand because we are often still in the process of making our selections.

### CAN I BREED THE RATS FROM YOU?

Please don't. Obviously we understand that we cannot stop you if you choose to breed the rats. But you WILL be BLACKLISTED with ALL the URC Breeders in South Africa and Internationally.

We are always willing to work with new breeders. Please just disclose this to us and let us know that you are interested in breeding. That way we can ensure that we give you better breeding stock and help mentor you on the line.

We always want what's best for the rats, so let us give you the tools you need to thrive and produce well-bred animals.

### WHY DO YOU HAVE A CONTRACT?

Our contract is in place to ensure that everyone is protected. Regardless of how we may feel personally about our pets, in the eyes of the government, animals are seen as property, and the process of adoption is a sale of an item. A contract proves the agreed upon terms of the sale.

It ALSO makes sure that everyone on both sides of the transaction know what is expected of them from the moment the rats are handed over until the day they pass away.

### I ONLY WANT TO KEEP ONE RAT AS A PET?

Rat's are incredibly social animals. They need friends. This is why we DO NOT support keeping lone rats. This is why rats make such amazing pets. They have the ability to form strong connections and bonds in these groups. They are naturally social creatures and crave companionship.

There is evidence that shows that rats who are kept alone can become depressed and this has major negative effects on both their mental and physical health.

Rats have very specific needs and if you cannot meet these needs then they are not the pet for you. Mental/emotional health is just as important as physical health when it comes to caring for your rats. Sure, rats may be able to live or survive on their own in your home. But they will not THRIVE.

So no, you cannot keep a long rat even if you claim that you can give them all the attention YOU THINK they need. You are not an exception to the rule.

You are not a rat. You do not speak rat. You are not able to fulfil the social needs a rat has. Only their own species can do this.

For more information on social needs please see our website:

<https://imagerattery.wixsite.com/website/everything-you-need-to-know>

Rats are social and they need friends by Calico Rattery:

[https://www.facebook.com/CalicoRattery/photos/a.367639907030586/548189758975599/?type=3&eid=ARD6AnD2AoMFIEDPI.2niju.DJ0TRxcN1.JkQ3PIf1oUAdCwqYmGaeA9oQUL7b98MO-9AUkfNBZ716h2tvj-&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=FFHH-R](https://www.facebook.com/CalicoRattery/photos/a.367639907030586/548189758975599/?type=3&eid=ARD6AnD2AoMFIEDPI.2niju.DJ0TRxcN1.JkQ3PIf1oUAdCwqYmGaeA9oQUL7b98MO-9AUkfNBZ716h2tvj-&__tn__=FFHH-R)

*BUT I WANT MY RAT TO BOND WITH ME? WON'T HAVING MORE THAN ONE AFFECT THIS?*

No. As discussed above, rats are social animals and thus, they are able to develop bonds with more than one individual. Rats need their friends in order to be happy and healthy.

When your rat is happy and healthy they will then develop even deeper bonds with you.

Every rat will have their own personality. And if they are given the chance to thrive, these personalities will shine through. You may feel that you develop stronger connections with one rat than another, and this is perfectly normal. The important thing is that you always give your pets the opportunity to thrive so that they can be the best “them” they can be.

*I HAVE KEPT/KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO HAS KEPT A LONE RAT, AND THE RAT WAS PERFECTLY HAPPY.*

Doubtful.

Nevermind the fact that you don't speak rat nor are able to provide all of your rat's social needs. But it is **IMPOSSIBLE** for you to provide your rat with round the clock attention.

What happens when you sleep? Or got to work? Or get sick? Or have other plans?

I am going to quote an analogy from Once Upon a Mischief Rattery which really resonated with me:

*“Imagine you are starving. Not just missed a meal but literally close to death starving.*

*Someone comes and offers you a meal of the most disgusting slop that you would never in a million years normally eat. But you are starving! So you eat it up and even lick the plate clean as if it is the best meal you have ever eaten!*

*If I just saw that, I would think you loved it! Look how happy you are eating that! It must be your favorite!*

*This is the same as it is for the rats. They are starving for attention, for companionship, for attention. And the little sprinkling of time you give them they will eat it up and seem so happy for it. But the rest of the time? They are suffering.”*

Read the full post here:

[https://www.onceuponamischief.com/single-rats?fbclid=IwAR0wGQdxrlek\\_fCX8w0-KSItKq6IMCTDjwzsT576mG8cN\\_HwjuSZHEHfrmg](https://www.onceuponamischief.com/single-rats?fbclid=IwAR0wGQdxrlek_fCX8w0-KSItKq6IMCTDjwzsT576mG8cN_HwjuSZHEHfrmg)

*MY LONE RAT HASN'T EVER BEEN SOCIAL. THEY PREFER TO BE ALONE. JUST LIKE SOME HUMANS PREFER TO BE ON THEIR OWN.*

This comparison is illogical.

The people who preach this are often the ones with an extremely aggressive and skittish rat that doesn't even like humans either.

Sure, some people are introverted. But they still have family and friends they socialise with. They aren't confined to their room 24/7 with ZERO human contact.

To force your pet rat to go through this isn't only unfair, it is completely unethical.

The need for companionship is written into the rat. Yes, some rats may be more social than others. But none of them truly want to be all alone.

If the rat is so aggressive and fearful that it is unable to coexist in a group, you have to think twice about what's causing this behavior.

Sometimes these causes can be hormonal. Typically rats will experience these hormonal surges between 6/9 months of age.

The rats may also have not had the opportunity to learn about social dynamics when they were younger.

There are a few key phases in a baby rat's development where their mother and the colony will teach them about these social dynamics and behaviour. When purchasing from a pet shop, feeder bin, oops litter, or an irresponsible breeder, the babies may not have learnt these behaviours and thus they may experience issues when they are older.

It is YOUR responsibility as the adopter to NEVER purchase a rat that is younger than 6 weeks of age. Most ethical breeders will only rehome their rittens at 8 weeks MINIMUM. This is done so that they can properly assess genetic temperament. Many breeders will even hold their rats back until 12 or 16 weeks.

It is important that your experience with owning pet rats is a positive one. You don't want to have to trust-train a brand new pet. The rittens you get should be of sound temperament and good health. You can achieve this by purchasing from a good ETHICAL breeder.

### *I CAN ONLY AFFORD TO KEEP ONE RAT.*

Then perhaps a pet rat isn't for you. Explore other alternative options for solitary pets. There is very little difference in the cost of keeping 1 vs. 2, or even 3, rats.

The cost of vet bills might be higher. But if you purchase from a reputable breeder, feed your rats the proper diet, maintain good husbandry, then you shouldn't have a multitude of vet bills.

This doesn't always apply to buying rats from feeder bins, pet shops, oops litters, or unethical breeders as these rats have zero genetic history and may indeed cost you a fortune in vet bills.

While ethical rescues do their best to only adopt out healthy animals, it is also possible that these rats may experience issues too. It's the risk you take when rescuing an animal.

Make sure that you put aside some money each month for a vet fund, in case your rats ever need medical attention.

Talk to your breeder about any issues or concerns you have when you have the rats in your care. We are always there to help you.

### *WHAT NUMBER IS THE PERFECT NUMBER?*

When getting your first pet rats you MUST get a MINIMUM of 2, however, 3 is normally best.

That way, if one of your rats passes away, the other 2 still have a friend while you look for another addition to the family.

Don't purchase too many at once. Rats don't live for very long, and while some can live up to 4 years, on average they only live until 2 or 3.

When acquiring your first 2 rats, consider adding another 2 babies 6 months to a year later. That way you won't feel disheartened if your rats all pass away at the same time, as this can be incredibly heart breaking. These little animals have an amazing way of burrowing their way into your heart, and it can be devastating when they pass away.

### WHY SHOULD I ADD 2 BABIES INSTEAD OF 1?

We only sell rats in same sex groups of 2 or more. Often people are confused by this rule, especially if they already have rats at home. But we have some very important reasons for this:

- ❖ It is always advised to quarantine new rats before introducing them to your mischief. Quarantining needs to be done in a separate air space for at least a month. This will be discussed later. But during this time your new baby will NEED a friend. They cannot live alone for this time. It isn't fair on them.
- ❖ While your rats are colony animals, age groups can influence the overall social dynamics of a cage. Rittens are often hyperactive and full of games, whereas older rats can be a lot more laid back and lazy. On occasion, the babies may annoy the adults with all their excitement and this can lead to fights in your mischief. Babies need other babies to play with so that they are able to achieve their own social needs and establish their place in the colony.
- ❖ Sometimes introductions might not go as planned and your older rats may attack/reject the new babies. If this happens you will need to set up a separate cage for the babies while you work on introductions. This may take quite some time, and while you are working on this it would be unfair for a new baby to live alone. Taking home more than one baby ensures that the baby always has a friend to play and cuddle with while you are busy with introductions.
- ❖ The same thing applies to if the older rats allow the baby to live in the cage, sometimes the older rats may bully or not allow the new baby to cuddle with them. If your new baby has a friend, not only do they have back-up, but they also have a friend to cuddle with and receive that all-important social and emotional support.
- ❖ Moving to a new home/environment can be scary. It is normal for some rittens to be a bit nervous for the first few days, although this is definitely influenced by their breeding too. If you have 2 babies they will feel more secure and will adapt more easily to their new home than if you only had 1. Rittens can also imprint on the behaviours of the other rats in the cage. This means that if you add a single baby to a cage with skittish adults, the chances of the baby becoming skittish is high. However, if you add 2 confident babies to a cage, they will likely take cues from each other and they might even encourage your older rats to be more confident.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE 2 OLDER RATS AND ONE PASSES AWAY? DO I NEED TO GET MORE INDEFINITELY? CAN'T I JUST REHOME THE LAST RAT?

This is something that we often see and it breaks out hearts. Why wouldn't you want to keep your rats forever?

Their lives are so short and they develop such strong connections with you during this time.

When an older rat loses their friend it takes a massive toll on them, they often become very sad and you become the only familiar face they remember.

If you then choose to re-home them they then lose ANOTHER individual who meant the world to them and they often become very confused and even more depressed.

So please, don't just give your rats up because they are old. The good news is that no, you don't need to go out and get 2 more babies and start the cycle all over again. Offer to foster or adopt a rat of the same age. Rather keep your rat to live out their days with you, especially if they are older.

If you truly do not want to keep your rat anymore then return them to the original breeder or contact an ethical rescue to take them. If the remaining rat is very old or sickly, then rather humanely euthanize them. You don't know what kind of life they will receive if you give them away.