

## Bad Weather Covers for Rabbits

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January 2011

For smaller enclosures, for enclosures with limited thick brush piles, or for those who can afford it, here is a suggestion to protect your rabbits from bad weather conditions. I used to have a problem with reductions in my rabbit population during periods of continuing rains or long periods of snow. I tried various approaches and finally came down with this simple solution. It's a spinoff from the way I build my larger brush piles. Basically, I cover strategically located thick brush areas during the winter months with tarps.



I have tarp covers, sizes from 4' by 6' to one about 10' by 10' spread about 1 to 2



per half acre around my pen. Each is stretched about 2 ½' to 3' above the ground over thick brush, held down by straps anchored to heavier branches or logs underneath. Rabbits get sick and can't run well when they are wet from rain or damp snow. The cover keeps the area under dry when we get serious rains like in this area, plus provide a safe haven for

hiding and feeding when snow covers everything. Many times I've walked my grounds in the morning after a snow fall and seen tracks where the rabbits took cover under these makeshift areas.

I also have a cover located next to a feeder year around. This one was put there due to an owl that won't go away and wants to target rabbits that approach the feeder. At first I built a brush pile right up to the feeder for protection. But after watching

him a couple of times, I put a cover right to the edge of the feeder. The rabbits now almost always approach the feeder through the brush from the back side.

During the summer you could take these covers down but a few of mine I leave up year around. As far as I'm concerned this is a great near term fix for the flying predator problem, plus they do provide shade in the hot sun as well.

### **Standing Water Drainage**

I mentioned above how rabbits have problems when they get wet, particularly in cold weather. One item related to wetness is making sure you don't have large areas of wet ground after a rain. My pen is in bottomland along a year around creek. When I get a lot of rain, there are a number of places where standing water starts to build up with no easy drainage to the creek. There have even been a few times when the creek overflowed. One thing you can do is place some pipes to drain low spots or at least focus them into a single place to reduce to surface area of the pools. I used regular 10 ft by 4 inch plastic sewer pipes buried just below the ground level.

I can drive my mower over the area easily and the drainage has really help eliminate much of my standing water, plus has also dropped the local mosquito population. This works so well I'm now considering running another pipe line from the main pond that holds standing water right into the stream bank.