

NUTRITION

Zoo Issues Best Diets For Captive Wild Animals

➤ THE BEST MENU for anteaters and armadillos consists of high quality canned dog food or corned beef hash, milk, finely ground lean raw meat, peanut oil, a multi-vitamin preparation and a mixture of 12 other ingredients including oyster-shell flour.

Flamingos, on the other hand, can get along well on the same mixture of ingredients with only ground boiled meat added to it.

This information comes from the Penrose Research Laboratory of the Zoological Society of Philadelphia which has issued information on adequate diets for captive wild animals.

The dietary needs of both mankind and domesticated animals are now so fully understood, Dr. Herbert L. Ratcliffe, director of the Society, explains, that malnutrition can be prevented. But, he points out, few zoos have used the nutrition knowledge at hand for feeding captive wild animals.

The diets suggested in the Philadelphia bulletin of menus are based on the experience at the zoo, worked out over a 22-year period.

"The introduction of a system such as this into a zoo," Dr. Ratcliffe says about the diets and feeding methods, "demands a willingness to break completely with the past."

Use of the diets, he reports, has cut the cost of replacing animals that have died at the Philadelphia zoo by one-third.

The diets include a general diet featuring the 12 ingredients for omnivorous mammals and birds such as apes, gorillas, monkeys and ostriches; a variation for "debilitated monkeys"; a second variation for "cage birds"; a third variation for flamingos; a diet for herbivorous mammals; a diet for carnivorous mammals, birds, and reptiles; a diet for anteaters and armadillos; and a diet for members of the cat family such as cheetahs, leopards and jaguars.

Science News Letter, April 6, 1957

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