Guinea pigs are social animals, so choosing the right members for a group is essential if they are to live together happily. Admittedly, there are no hard and fast rules – a vital factor in keeping guinea pigs is not just the gender of the individual animals but also their respective characters. Most important of all, however, is having an appropriate habitat. If they are kept incorrectly, and their minds insufficiently challenged, even the most agreeable of guinea pigs will develop aggressive tendencies.

**Size of group**
The smallest possible group of guinea pigs is a group of two. However, there are good reasons for acquiring and keeping three or more:

- Three or more stimulate more active behaviour within the group.
- Should one of the guinea pigs die or have to be placed in quarantine for a time, this will not lead to another being left alone, even temporarily.
- Since guinea pigs are territorial animals, it is easier to assemble a group right at the start than to integrate new members later.

**Possible combinations**
- One neutered male and two to three females
- One to two neutered males and two to four females
- Neutered males in small groups

A female-only group is not a good idea. A male provides balance and neutralises the quarrels that sometimes occur among females. Furthermore, guinea pigs cannot behave in a wholly natural manner within a female-only group, since this configuration is unnatural to them.

**Other points to observe**
- **Neutering the males:** whichever grouping you opt for, the male guinea pigs should be neutered. This not only prevents uncontrolled breeding but also aggression arising from pent-up sexual urges.
- **Age:** it is important for the animals all to be approximately the same age, as this also determines how active they are.
- **New arrivals:** if you want to add guinea pigs to an existing pair, we recommend bringing in two or more at once, otherwise the newcomer may wind up as an outsider. Likewise, when trying to integrate new
guinea pigs into a larger group, experience has shown that it is useful to introduce two at once as this divides up the concentration of old-established group members between two new arrivals.

- **Keeping guinea pigs and rabbits:** guinea pigs and rabbits can be kept together in a generously proportioned enclosure, although there must be at least two of each species. However, the enclosure will then need to be suited to the needs of rabbits as well as guinea pigs.