

COMMERCIAL LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION GUIDE SERIES

Rabbitry in Nigeria



Choice of land

Well-drained piece of land. Select a site with special attention to drainage and waste disposal.

Breeds

- New Zealand
- Californian
- Chinchilla.

DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS

Good vigour

- Healthy disposition
- Brightness of eyes
- Alertness
- Smooth and glossy fur
- Good front and hind legs
- Good tail carriage

Housing

- Building: Make sure the housing is designed to provide enough fresh air and shade.
- Hutches - Two types are recommended.
- Wood: Bamboo hutch. Treat bamboo with solignum or old crank case oil for preservation.
- Wood: Wire hutch – use ½" mesh chicken wire or ½" square stainless wire for the floor and ½" mesh chicken wire for the sides.
- Hutch dimensions: 78 x 68 x 48 cm raised 90 cm above the ground.
- Nest or kindling box Dimensions: 45 cm long, 30 cm wide and 30 cm high. One end should have an opening at least 25 cm wide and 15–20 cm from the floor.

Management procedure

- Females should be mated 2–4 weeks after they have kindled, so as to have 6–7 litters per year.
- Choose young females with good production potential to replace old or culled does (females)
- Replacement of the males should be done systematically once a year.
- Record keeping is essential for the doe, buck and litter production. Records should include Doe number, Buck number, Date purchased, Date bred, Number kindled, Number dead, Number alive, Date weaned, Number weaned, Sex, and Date sold.

Feeding

This could be mash or pellet.

Poultry growers or layers mash is recommended to replace pellet if need be. Feed rabbits twice a day with grain feed in the morning and green feeds in the evening.

HOUSE MIXING – GRAIN FEED

A farmer can mix his/her own feeds from the following ingredients: guinea-corn, brewers spent grains, maize, groundnut cake, soyabean meal, palm kernel meal, cassava peel, rice offal, kolanut pod meal, millet, sorghum, bone meal and salt. It is best to grind the ingredients before mixing.

GREEN FEEDS

Asphilia africana (Yoruba – yunyun)

Talinum triangulare (Yoruba – Gbure)

Amaranthus spp. (Yoruba – Efo tete)

Sweet potato leaves (Yoruba – Ewe Anamo).

Elephant grass

Guinea grass

Pangola grass

Gamba grass

Centrosema

Wash these green feeds in salt water before feeding.

WATER

Keep ample supply of fresh water in the hutches at all times.

Salt: Make sure rabbits are supplied with salt, either mixed in the feed or dissolved in the drinking water.

Diseases

Common rabbit diseases are: diarrhoea, coccidiosis, conjunctivitis, ear canker, and pneumonia. Consult your veterinarian for medical advice.

FIRST AID TREATMENTS

Diarrhoea: Withdraw concentrate feed for 12 hours and introduce green feed thereafter.

Ear canker: Remove the crusts, dress the ear with liquid paraffin oil and iodine.

Dysentery: Treat with guanimycin syrup or tablet and thalazole tablets.

“Efinrin” leaf juice in drinking water has been found to be effective.

The information for this Production Guide was obtained from Extension Research Liaison and Training Unit National Horticultural Research Institute (NIHORT) P M B 5432, Idi - Ishin, Ibadan.

About ICS-Nigeria

Information and Communication Support for Agricultural Growth in Nigeria (ICS-Nigeria) is a project which aims to increase the quantity and quality of information available for increased agricultural production, processing, and marketing and also strengthen the capacity of farmer assistance organizations to package and disseminate information and agricultural technologies to farmers for the alleviation of rural poverty.

In the recent past, investment in the support services to Nigerian agriculture has been neglected with the result that this sector has not realized its full potential to contribute to the prosperity and economic development of the country. Meanwhile, increasing population pressure and the accompanying need to intensify agricultural production is leading to erosion of the natural resource base on which agriculture depends.

The sustainability of production is threatened by a vicious cycle of declining soil fertility and increasing problems of pests, diseases, and weeds. Moreover, the lack of knowledge on how to add value through proper storage, processing, and marketing impedes agricultural growth.

Promising technologies exist to address these problems, but their adoption is constrained by a lack of information packaged in appropriate formats, and poor communication channels for this information, between farmers and the research, extension, and education organizations that are supposed to address these issues.

ICS-Nigeria aims to assist in meeting these challenges by developing appropriate format materials for disseminating information and agricultural technologies to target user groups, while increasing capacity of farmer assistance organizations to produce information materials. At the same time, communication channels will be reinforced so that information flow is enhanced.

Agricultural technologies have been selected on the basis that they will lead to agricultural commercialization thereby enhancing rapid income generation for farmers and private sector practitioners. The project is taking advantage of existing agricultural development programs in Nigeria, national research institutes, and international research institutes in and out of Nigeria to identify these technologies. The project is also taking advantage of existing successful partnerships arising from recent and ongoing programs to enhance information flow.

ICS-Nigeria is funded by USAID.