

ZICORBA secures market for rabbit meat

The Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) has secured a market for rabbit meat locally, setting the stage for healthy competition in the white meat sector in Zimbabwe, a top official of the Association has said.

ZICORBA president, Regis Nyamakanga, confirmed in an interview with *Bunny World* that the Association and one of its corporate members had successfully concluded discussions with leading retail organisations to “sell veterinary inspected” rabbit meat.

“We will soon formally launch rabbit meat on the local market, following successful trial-runs during the month of March. Our target is to go full throttle in April 2021,” Nyamakanga said.

The ZICORBA chief added that securing a long-term market for rabbit meat had been top on the agenda of the Association since it was established in July 2020.

“We are excited to have found a market for our farmers, something that has been a mirage for many years. We made a promise when we launched ZICORBA last July that we meant business and that all the challenges facing the rabbit industry for many years will be tackled with much gusto. That is what we are doing,” he said.

Nyamakanga said that the condition agreed to with leading retail chains was that all rabbit meat to be sold to them would be processed at an approved and certified abattoir.



ZICORBA President Regis Nyamakanga appreciates packaged rabbit meat destined for the local market

Zimbabwe’s first export approved abattoir, with a capacity to process one tonne of rabbit meat per day, will be commissioned in Harare in April opening the floodgates for trading of rabbit meat in the country.

“We will be working with the Department of Veterinary Services and Government Meat Inspectors to ensure that all the rabbit meat is inspected and certified before it is released on to the market to ensure that our consumers eat healthy and quality meat,” Nyamakanga said.

“The ZICORBA inspection and certification teams will also work with Vet Office-

.....Potential for 25 tonnes every month

ers across the country to ensure that farmers who supply rabbit meat to the abattoir keep their rabbits in healthy conditions,” he added.

One of the challenges that had held back the growth of the local rabbit meat market was lack of consistent supply and in this regard, ZICORBA is working on a countrywide contract growing scheme, which will also be launched in April 2021.

“There is a potential uptake of 20 to 25 tonnes of rabbit meat on the Zimbabwean market every month, if we ramp up rabbit production,” he said.

Rabbit is one of the healthiest, leanest, and most environmentally friendly meats you can eat. Compared to beef, pork, lamb, turkey, veal, and chicken, rabbit has the highest percentage of protein, the lowest percentage of fat, and the fewest calories per pound.

Nyamakanga said ZICORBA was currently exploring a number of export markets for rabbit meat and that COVID-19 restrictions permitting a team of ZICORBA marketing experts will soon visit these markets for face-to-face meetings.



e-market for rabbits launched in Zimbabwe



The first online trading market for rabbits in the Southern African region will be launched in Zimbabwe next month on the back of an anticipated spike in rabbit trading in the region, a top industry official has said.

Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) Head of Innovation Hub, Rejoice Nyamanhindi, told Bunny World in an interview that the idea for an e-market for rabbits was to bring producers closer to the market.

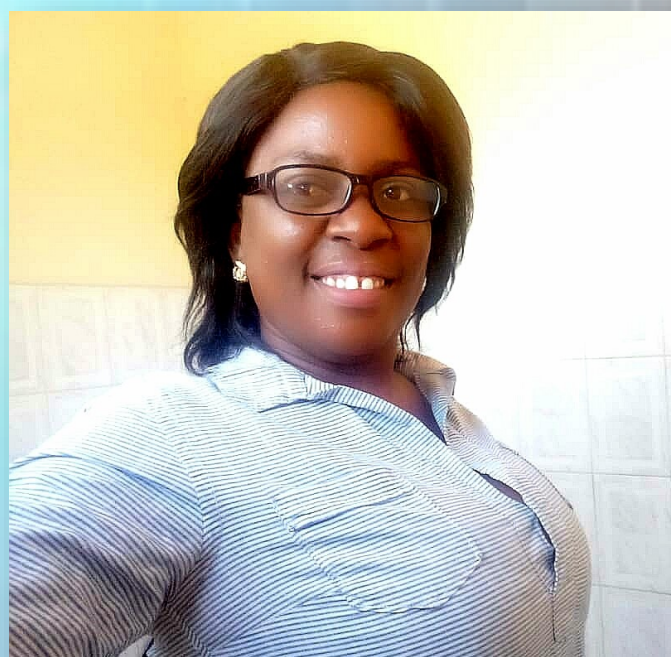
“Our IT developers are currently working on the online trading platform for rabbits and related items in time for its launch in April 2021. We do not only want to bring the market closer to rabbit producers in the region but to foster transparency in rabbit trading,” Nyamanhindi, who is also the head of the trading platform, said.

She said the e-market for rabbits would be underwritten by ZICORBA, the Confederation of African Rabbit Producers (CARAP) and a Zimbabwean based diversified group of companies Raymeg Consultants Private Limited Group.

“Through the e-market for rabbits, we will make available live rabbits, including imported pure breeds, hybrids and rabbits for meat and fur; rabbit feed, medicines, rabbit feeding systems and mesh wire and equipment for making rabbit hutches, among other things,” Nyamanhindi said.

The e-market for rabbits would also be key in capturing vital statistics for the rabbit industry, bringing the much-needed break from the past where key information on this important sector in Zimbabwe and the Southern African region had been scant.

“Although our initial focus is on Zimbabwe and the southern African region, we plan to broaden the catchment area for the market to the African continent and the rest of world,” she said.



Rejoice Nyamanhindi
ZICORBA Head of Innovation Hub

Rabbits are a quick-breeding source of low-fat, high-protein meat and have long been enjoyed as a food by many people across the world. A fine-grained white meat, it can be substituted for chicken in many recipes.

Until the increase in beef consumption in the 1960s, rabbit was popular in different parts of the world. Today, the interest in lower fat diets and healthy eating combined with an ongoing pursuit by chefs and foodies of novel and organic foods has led to a global resurgence in the production of rabbits for meat.

The most common types used for meat production are New Zealand whites and reds, Californians, Chinchilla Giganta, Cinnamon and Flemish giant.

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Regis Nyamakanga

Rejoice Nyamanhindi

Ndebele lands Secretary for Inspectorate and Certification post

Ms Winnie Ndebele has been elected as the ZICORBA Secretary for inspectorate and certification following an election that was held on the 11th of March. The position had remained vacant ever since a substantive national executive committee was voted into office late 2020. Bunny World sat down with Ms Ndebele to know her better.



Ms. Winnie Ndebele

Who is Winnie Ndebele?

I am a rabbit breeder from Masvingo ZICORBA Chapter, with a vast experience in the Agricultural Sector with great expertise in the Research and Specialist Services in the Ministry of Agriculture. Equipped with an MSc in Animal Breeding (Belgium), BSc Animal Science (UZ- Zimbabwe), BSc Special Honours Monitoring and Evaluation (Lupane State University) Diploma in Agric (Esigodini Agricultural College), Diploma in Project Management (UZ) and Senior Management Diploma (UZ). I am currently employed in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Rural Resettlement as a Research Specialist in the Livestock Division.

Given your vast experience and qualifications, what can ZICORBA members expect from you?

I am a small-scale rabbit producer although my interest has more to do with research and development of the Livestock industry. Many a times, rabbits have been produced at higher costs which in turn does not give enough return per dollar to the farmer or producer. It is this close analysis that gives me the urge to offer my services to the ZICORBA family for development and growth of the rabbit industry. Rabbit production falls under Livestock Division in the Ministry of Agriculture and has the potential of sustaining livelihoods. More research into rabbitry is required with a thrust on breed improvement, feed formulation and conversion efficiency.

What is your vision for your newly appointed role as Secretary for inspectorate and certification?

I want to push for a rabbit industry with proper standards, animal health ethics, well researched methodologies and up to date feed formulation standards which should see farmers making the maximum profit possible from their projects. With the current production trends, cuniculture has taken an upward trend in terms of uptake and adoption and it is my duty to assist rabbit producers in feed formulations to reduce feed costs as well as managing and maintaining certified, healthy and disease-free rabbits.



Farmer Jane

“Knowing your breeds is a key factor in running a successful Rabbitry”

**KNOW
YOUR
BREEDS**



Join Zimbabwe's only collective voice of rabbit farmers and grow your business today

* BREED : BELGIAN HARE

The Belgian Hare is not a true hare but a select breed of domestic rabbit that has been bred over time to resemble the wild hare

Distinct Features: it has a distinctive slender and wiry frame with long and powerful legs. The fore feet of a Belgian Hare are usually long and fine boned and perfectly straight while their hind feet are long, fine and flat. The fur colour is usually bright tin rust with red or orange tint

RATING : * * *

Belgian Hares have a lifespan of 5-8 years and weigh around 2.7- 4.1 kgs when fully grown.



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Belinda wins performance-based award

18-year-old Belinda Nyakabau has been awarded the Provincial Coordinator of the month award by the ZICORBA leadership as a result of her hard work, perseverance and fortitude in her role as ZICORBA youth ambassador for Mashonaland Central and West provinces.

Belinda runs a successful rabbitry in Chinhoyi which has a breeding stock of 15 rabbits. Bunny World caught up the young breeder to try and get an insight into her business as well as her plans in the rabbit industry.



Belinda Nyakabau

How did you start your rabbit breeding journey?

My breeding journey started when I was seven years old as a result of my father being a rabbit breeder. He gave each of us a doe as part of his skills transfer and grooming for all of his children. My rabbit

Zicorba has helped me to learn more as I share information within WhatsApp groups and as I research and visit youths and other farmers. Outside of knowledge, ZICORBA has given us hope of a formal rabbit market which I believe is work in progress. It's exciting times ahead with ZICORBA!



What do you think should be done to encourage more women to be rabbit breeders?

Zicorba can encourage more women by giving them more assistance in terms of procurement of good breeds and shelter and also having some competitions and giving them prizes as an incentive. Zicorba should make programmes on radio and TV in addition to the media it is already using. It should increase its assistance to even some disabled as women are usually the caregivers and would benefit a lot from the income generated from rabbit breeding.

Future plans



Provincial Coordinator of the Month, Belinda Nyakabau at her rabbitry in Chinhoyi

stock grew to over 20 under the guidance of my father as I was still in primary school. Since then, I have never looked back. I hope to establish myself as one of the top young female rabbit breeders in the country.

Your experiences with Zicorba

As a youth Ambassador, my experiences with Zicorba have been very positive and productive to say the least. I meet different rabbit farmers on my routine job visits which has allowed me to also learn a lot as other rabbit farmers are doing superbly well in my provinces of operation.

It is everyone's dream to run a successful project which grows and is well rewarding. In this regard I am planning to have more rabbits so that I can reap the financial rewards associated with this project. Outside of money, I want to be a role model in the rabbit industry to youths and in particular young girls. I also want the community to learn more from me in regards to the best practices in cuniculture production.



International Women's Day

Committed to long term growth of the rabbit industry

.....Pleasure in bunnies



Harare based rabbit breeder Diana Zinyemba

From two bunnies, she has grown her stock to 150 rabbits made up of 20 bucks and 130 does.

What started as a hobby for the budding farmer, wife and a mother of one, Diana Zinyemba, has proved to be a worthwhile venture as her project has grown exponentially in the last one year. From two bunnies, she has grown her stock to 150 rabbits made up of 20 bucks and 130 does.

“I have always had a passion for pets and I started by keeping two rabbits and when they started breeding, I realised that I could make a business out of it. The biggest challenge I faced was on the prices of cages for raising my rabbits and I received a boost on that front,” she said.

Zinyemba has also taken the initiative to impart rabbit growing skills to young women and youths in her community to grow the industry. “I was encouraged by a fellow lady who is my mentor in the industry to share knowledge and skills to other potential players in order to grow the industry and so far, I have a team of 10 women and youths who are learning my rabbitry.

“Running a rabbit business is as good as running any other big venture anywhere in the world and I am glad to be part of the group of people making a difference in the community through rabbit farming.”

On balancing work and family life, Zinyemba who is also employed full time in the legal fraternity said: “I am grateful for the support that I receive from my family who encourage me to realise my dreams.”

Zinyemba added that she has benefited immensely from knowledge sharing available by tapping into the wealth of skills resources in ZICORBA. As part of her networking sessions Zinyemba was able to secure a boost in her capacity recently as she received a shot in the arm from a local entity which is part of the ZICORBA. She received 5 does and one buck which have already started kindling. “I am planning to grow my breeding stock from 10 to at least 50 in the next one year,” she said.



Diana Zinyemba at her rabbitry

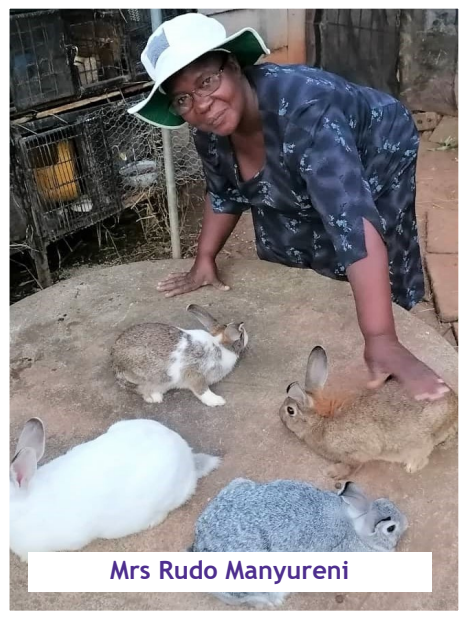
ZICORBA celebrates IWD 2021



Lydia Chimbari aka Mai Sigauke



Mrs Annisia Katsidzira



Mrs Rudo Manyureni



Nothando Ncube



Belinda Nyakabau



Shamiso Hamandishe

#ChooseToChallenge



Let's talk about Mange

There are three different strains of Mange that affects rabbits.

1. Sarcoptic Mange (*sarcoptes scabiei*)
2. Ear Mange (*psoroptes cuniculi*)
3. Burrowing Mite Mange (*trixacarus caviar*)

We are going to focus on Sarcoptic Mange which is most prevalent in rabbits and their production.

Mange is spread by fleas, lice and mites. It can be spread directly by frequent contact of affected and healthy animals.

Mange mites either burrow under the skin or inhabit their follicles or oil glands in the skin. These mites are microscopic (meaning they can be detected via a microscope, mostly can not be seen through a naked eye). A small population of mites is always present on the first but if it balloons out of proportion, symptoms of mange then occur, especially if the animal has a weak immune system.

Signs and Symptoms

Hair loss

Scratching which may increase hair loss and even expose skin to scratching hence it's breakage increasing the risk of infection

- ◆ skin irritation
- ◆ grey hard skin and coat
- ◆ lesions
- ◆ dandruff- tiny pieces of skin flaking away
- ◆ thick skin- if not treated properly, the skin thickens
- ◆ poor sleep- because of itching, rabbits have less sleep hours, thereby reducing the feed conversion efficiency and a negative impact on growth rate.



Diagnosis

Often presents as a white or a beige crust along the eyes, ears, mouth, nose and toes and often had a faint foul smell.

In severe cases, rabbits may develop anemia and loose white blood cells and may die in a matter of weeks.

Treatment

Topical ointment that kills mites may be found over the counter as well as dips and shampoos in vet shops.

- ◆ Antibiotics or antifungal medication may be needed if the rabbit develops an infection. Since the disease is infectious, it is wise to treat all your animals including those that are healthy and do not show signs of infection.
- ◆ Ivermectin and Eprinomectin are highly effective in managing Sarcoptic Mange infestations.
- ◆ Oral ivermectin in drinking water/ injectable ivermectin administered subcutaneously, at 3 doses every fortnight may be effective.
- ◆ Selamectin injected on the shoulder blades once a month for 3 consecutive months is recommended until the mange symptoms disappear.

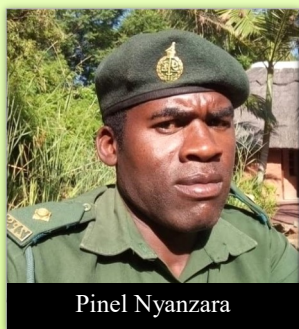
Prevention

- ◆ Always maintain a clean Rabbitry, free of dust and waste. General hygiene to eradicate any mites and mite eggs in the area should be practiced at ALL times

For more information about rabbit breeding and related issues, you can send your questions or comments to Winnie via all ZICORBA social media platforms.

ZICORBA; The only collective voice of rabbit breeders in Zimbabwe

Invest in good breeds and reap rich rewards



Pinel Nyanzara

Hie farmers! My name is Pinel Nyanzara, a member of the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services and also a rabbit breeder based in the Whawha Prison complex.

I started rearing rabbits in 2007 by then it was just a backyard project. In 2009, I stopped my rabbit project as I had decided to pursue an academic qualification at Gweru Polytechnic where I was doing Diesel Plant

Fitting. Because I was studying during the day and during the night going to work, this stressed me a lot leaving with no time for active involvement in the rabbit project.

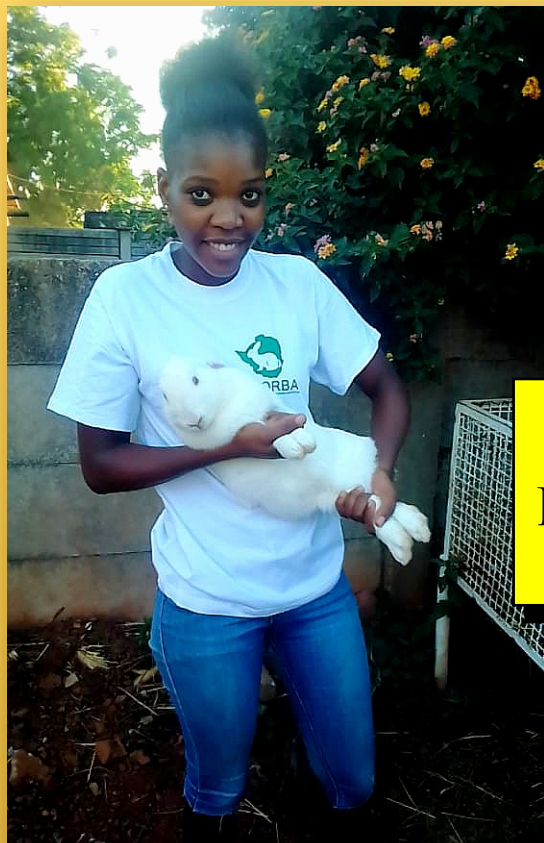
In 2011 after I had completed my studies my first-born child asked me to buy him rabbits. We argued for long before I gave in to his request in 2015. I had a small 4 compartment cage and I bought 4 rabbits, 3 does and 1 buck. All these were standard rabbits and we used to feed them with green vegetables and “chinzungu”.

Because of my child’s passion, I decided to look for good rabbit breeds and I bought good breeds from other established rabbit breeders. By 2016 I had good breeding stock including Californian, Cinnamon and Chinchilla.

I joined ZICORBA to ensure that I become a member of a big family of rabbit breeders and with my experience I want to take this association to a higher level. Currently my rabbitry is thriving and I have 45 rabbits, breeding stock and I am reaping the rewards. Allow me to encourage rabbit farmers who are not serious with their projects to seriously invest in good breeds as this is a lucrative business.



Pinel Nyanzara (right) at his rabbitry with one of his friends



Thabiso Gwemende at her rabbitry in Bulawayo

My name is Thabiso Gwemende, a female aged 26 from Bulawayo. I started rabbitry last year August as a hobby because I had seen a friend keeping them. I bought a pure breed New Zealand white doe to kick start my rabbit breeding journey.

Later in the year around November I read about ZICORBA activities in the newspaper and was really fascinated by this association. I researched more about the organization by following its activities on social media as well as enquiring from other rabbit breeders. I was happy with what I found out about the association and I decided to be part of the family.

I AM IN GOOD HANDS: GWEMENDE

I have a total of 9 rabbits now and I hope to increase the number as I want to be able to supply large quantities of rabbit meat to different places.

Currently I am working on acquiring more cages so that I can increase my breeding stock to a highly productive number.

Am happy with being part of the Zicorba family because I have a feeling am in good hands and I will grow to be a renowned and prosperous rabbit farmer. Hopefully somewhere along the journey there will be plans to assist upcoming farmers to secure modern durable cages.



In rabbits, I found a better place to grow my money

Hassan Amara plans to open a restaurant, the first one of its kind, in Kampala to sell rabbit nyama choma and fry samoosas, sausages and hamburgers made from the meat, writes Lominda Afedraru.

The young farmer has entered into a business agreement with a rabbit meat processing company called Back and Door Rabbit Beef Company where he is required to supply between 20 to 30 rabbits per month.

It is now a common belief that the young people form a big part of the future farmers who are expected to represent the immense possibilities that the future holds in terms of capacity to impact lives and create safer and healthier spaces for them to engage in agriculture.

Hassan Amara, 15, a Senior Three student at Muyenga High school in Kampala is not an exception. Amara attended the first school farm camp at Gayaza High School while in Senior One three years ago. He was so impressed with the farming initiatives by students from various schools across the country and this inspired him to venture into rabbit keeping.

How he started

When Amara joined Senior One in 2017, he had no idea about farming. However at his school, the teachers engaged the students in various urban farming activities. He picked interest in rabbit keeping.

“I used to go to the school rabbit farm comprising of 350 rabbits. I got involved in feeding them with vegetables. When I went to our home in Kisugu, Kampala for my first holiday, I constructed a small cage and purchased four rabbits each at Shs42,000 which I started breeding. The initial capital I used was from my pocket money savings,” Amara narrated.

His rabbits have produced and multiplied to 250 now and he has expanded the cages to accommodate the number. Since he attended the first school camp, he has never missed others because for him learning about the various farming initiatives is a continuous process. Amara has managed to employ one person who takes care of his rabbits while he is at school pursuing his studies. He is able to pay him Shs70,000 per month as his mother supervises the farm.

Benefits

Amara says his mother is the bread winner of the family and he has two siblings who are in Senior Six, one in Senior Four

and one is in Primary Four. He is helping his mother through the rabbit business to help clear some school dues for his two brothers who are in Senior Six. He is also depending on the rabbit business to clear his education bills.

Challenges

Some of the challenges he grapples with are diseases such as coccidiosis and salmonellosis, but he has managed to stem them through good rabbit husbandry practices. Amara says for a farmer to keep rabbits successfully, he must maintain high hygiene standards. “The cages must be well-ventilated and clean while water containers must be cleaned daily to protect the rabbits from diseases. We encourage farmers to keep a close eye on their rabbits, give them the correct diet, update vaccinations, regular health checks to keep diseases at bay.”

The animals need vaccines from week five to protect against myxomatosis and haemorrhagic disease, which cause intense suffering. A farmer should also watch out against bloat by giving the rabbits dry plants.

Marketing and sales

The young farmer has entered into a business agreement with a rabbit meat processing company called Back and Door Rabbit Beef Company where he is required to supply between 20 to 30 rabbits per month. He also sells the rabbits to the local communities and the selling price is determined by the weight of the rabbit. Those that weigh between six and seven kilogrammes are sold at Shs80,000, the ones weighing between two and five kilogrammes are sold at Shs40,000 or Shs50,000 depending on the type of customers and those weighing one and two kilogrammes at Shs30,000.

Hassan Amara plans to open a restaurant, the first one of its kind, in Kampala to sell rabbit nyama choma and fry samoosas, sausages and hamburgers made from the meat



Hassan Amara (right) holding one of his rabbits during an annual school farm camp

“ Besides being tasty, Rabbit meat is suitable for special diets such as those for the aged, heart disease patients, low sodium diets and weight reduction diets ”



SCOTTISH RABBIT CURRY

It's magnifique



Chef Pablo

**RECIPE
OF
THE
MONTH**

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 (2-to 2 1/2-pound rabbit), cut into serving pieces
- 1/2 cup chopped British or Canadian bacon
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons mild curry paste
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups pearl onions
- 2 cups button mushrooms
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Basmatic rice (optional), for serving

PREPARATION

1. In a Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium heat and sauté the rabbit pieces until well browned, about 15 minutes. Remove from the pan and reserve.
2. Using the same pan you browned the rabbit in, and without wiping it out, sauté the bacon over medium heat until it's browned and has rendered its fat in the pan, about 10 minutes. Add the flour and cook, whisking constantly, until it is dissolved, about 3 minutes. Add the curry paste and stir to combine well with the flour mixture. Stir in the chicken broth, 1/4 cup at a time. The pan contents now will have the consistency of a thin sauce.
3. Reduce the heat to medium-low and add the browned rabbit pieces along with the onions, mushrooms, celery, and salt. Simmer the dish, stirring occasionally, until the meat is cooked through, the onions are tender, and the sauce has thickened up, about 1 1/2 hours. Serve warm, preferably over rice.



ADAPTED FROM BRIAN YARVIN

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