

Zimbabwe's first rabbit abattoir – a trend setter



Raymeg Holdings Executive Director, Paidamoyo Nyamakanga, giving guidance to her team at Zimbabwe's only export approved rabbit abattoir

Construction of Zimbabwe's first export certified rabbit abattoir is complete, thrusting rabbit meat firmly on to the country's white meat sub-sector, which was until recently a preserve of pork, chicken and fish.

The abattoir, which is one of the biggest rabbit meat processing facilities in Africa, has an installed capacity of between 2,5 tonnes and 3,5 tonnes of rabbit meat per single day shift. It is wholly-owned by Raymeg Consultants Private Limited, a corporate member of the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA).

Raymeg is a diversified group with interests in agriculture, real estate, energy, private security, leisure and resorts, fishery and aquatic sectors as well as strategic communication and media management.

Executive Director, Mrs Paidamoyo Nyamakanga, told Bunny World in an interview that the abattoir, situated on a 2, 5-acre plot in Waterfalls, Harare, had generated much interest on the domestic and export rabbit market.

"Since construction of the abattoir was completed at the beginning of this month (July), we received a flood of enquires from potential local and external customers. The response from rabbit farmers has also been humbling. During our first week of operation, we bought nearly 1 000 live rabbits, mainly from Harare and its environs.

"In readiness for the opening of the abattoir we signed trade agreements with some of Zimbabwe's largest supermarket chains, namely Pick 'n Pay and TM Supermarkets, Spar Zimbabwe and Choppies. Rabbit meat is currently available in these outlets.

"While we are encouraged by the response from the local market, we feel that the price of rabbit meat is still much higher than that of other competing white meats such as chicken, beef and fish. For us to effectively compete on the white meat subsector and entrench rabbit meat on the local market, we need to revisit the prices of rabbits and rabbit meat, lest the rabbit sector remains a backyard operation," said Mrs. Nyamakanga.

Depending on the scale of production in Zimbabwe, Raymeg Holdings would consider opening smaller abattoirs in other major centres in Zimbabwe, she said.

The Raymeg boss said plans were afoot to open a multi-million-dollar retail outlet in Harare, which will serve as a hub for the supply of rabbit meat and rabbit products in the country.

Raymeg Holdings recently launched a Stock Feed Division, which distributes rabbit pellets and other feeds manufactured by Agrifoods, National Foods and Capital Foods. A veterinary shop is also in the pipeline.



Lydia Chimbari elected President of Masvingo Chapter



*Ms Lydia Chimbari,
ZICORBA Masvingo Chapter President*

Prominent rabbit farmer and mine worker, Ms Lydia Chimbari also known as Mai Sigauke, was recently elected as president of ZICORBA Masvingo Chapter following the departure of the Enias Chisuwa-led executive.

Mai Sigauke leads a strong seven-member executive, which includes Vice President Enos Masvaike; Secretary General Rudo Sithole; Membership Secretary Shamiso Hamadishe; Marketing and Publicity Secretary Sydney Madzivanyika and Secretary for Inspection and Certification Plaxedes Chikundi.

ZICORBA Secretary General, Siphosethu Ncube Moyo told Bunny World that the new Masvingo Chapter Executive was elected following the departure from ZICORBA of former Chapter president Enias Chisuwa, Vice President Believe Masunga and Chapter SG Astar Chinhamo last month. The exit of the trio led to the dissolution of the previous Chapter Executive.

The elections were supervised by Mr. Godknows Guvamombe and Simbarashe Chiwa, both members of the National Executive and presidents of Harare and Manicaland Chapters, respectively.

Mrs. Ncube Moyo thanked members of the Masvingo Chapter for voting in their numbers and for the maturity they displayed during the plebiscite.

ZICORBA has operations in all the country's 10 provinces namely Bulawayo, Harare, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Masvingo, Midlands, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South.

The Association has full time staff, National Coordinator, Training Coordinator and Technical advisor, Communications Officer, Webmaster and Provincial Coordinators/Youth Ambassadors.

ZICORBA aims to broaden rabbit farming among the majority of Zimbabweans, in particular women and youth. Its target is to cover 1.8 million households, create employment, and contribute to the country's gross domestic product.



*Enos Masvaike,
ZICORBA Masvingo Chapter
Vice President*



*Rudo Sithole,
ZICORBA Masvingo Chapter
Secretary General*



Farmer Jane

**KNOW
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BREEDS**



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voice of rabbit farmers and grow
your business today*

*** BREED : CINNAMON RABBIT**

The Cinnamon Rabbit is a breed that was accidentally bred in 1962 and subsequently named for its coat colour by Belle and Fred Houseman. It is mainly kept for meat and fur.

Distinct Features: The Cinnamon rabbit is a medium sized rabbit covered in a beautiful ground cinnamon-coloured coat with its nose, ears, belly and paws covered with smoky grey/black colour. It has a commercial body with hips deeper and wider than the shoulders, a head proportionate to the body and erect ears.

RATING : * * * *

Cinnamon rabbits have a lifespan of 5-8 years and weigh around 3.5- 5 kgs when fully grown.



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Sibanda takes the reigns at Mat South Chapter

Rabbit breeder and senior civil servant Ms Ntokozo Sibanda has taken over the reigns at ZICORBA Matabeleland South Chapter as the organisation prepares to reposition itself to meet its present and future challenges, Secretary General Siphosethu Ncube-Moyo said.

Ncube Moyo said the new ZICORBA President for Matabeleland South would work with Chapter Coordinator and Youth Ambassador Thabiso Gwemende in building ZICORBA structures in one of the most populous provinces in Zimbabwe.

Matabeleland South Chapter covers an area with an estimated population of nearly one million people and it includes key strategic towns of Beit Bridge, West Nicholson, Gwanda, Filabusi, Maphisa, Plumtree and Esigodini.

“As we bolster membership numbers and ramp up our production, we are looking at Matabeleland South as one of the key growth areas for our organisation. We have tasked Sibanda to rebuild ZICORBA structures in the region in readiness for a number of key projects planned for the area,” Ncube Moyo said in an interview.

ZICORBA was formed in July 2020 and has structures in all the country’s 10 provinces. The organisation has also entered into strategic partnerships with other rabbit producers in other African countries.

Ms Sibanda is a rabbit breeder and a senior official in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries Water and Rural Resettlement.



*Ms Ntokozo Sibanda,
ZICORBA Matabeleland South Chapter President*



*Thabiso Gwemende,
ZICORBA Mat South Chapter
Provincial Coordinator
& Youth Ambassador*

Fare ye well Andreas

ZICORBA is saddened by the death of Andreas Livaditakis, a former member and top rabbit breeder, who succumbed to COVID-19 related complications in Harare this month. He was 49.

Spokesman, Shame Chibvongodze said the late Andreas was part of the now defunct Mashonaland Rabbit Breeders Association. He took a break from rabbit breeding in 2002 and resumed breeding in 2019 when he imported pure breeds from South Africa.

He kept Californian, Chinchilla Giganta, Cinnamon and New Zealand White breeds. His ambition was for pure breeds to reach all corners of Zimbabwe to revitalise the country’s gene pool.

“Andreas joined ZICORBA in July 2020 and left the Association early this year. We are saddened by his demise. Zimbabwe has lost one its most passionate rabbit breeders, to the pandemic.

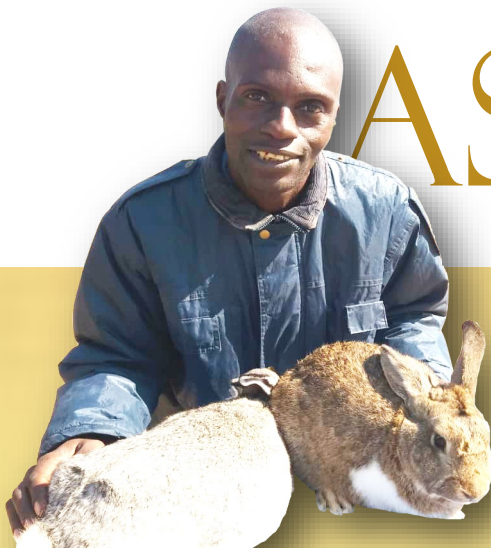
“Our condolences also go to ZICORBA members who have been directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19.

“Let me take this opportunity to urge all our valued members to mask-up, practice social distance and to vaccinate against COVID-19,” Chibvongodze said.

Rest In Eternal Peace Andreas, the rabbit industry will never be the same!



The late Andreas Livaditakis



ASK GARI

RABBIT FARMING DEMYSTIFIED



Garisanai Mudzingwa
ZICORBA National Training Coordinator

Hi Gari, I recently lost 2 rabbits to bloat but I don't really understand this disease. Can you please shed more light so that I don't repeat the same mistake?

Dear farmer, bloating is the most killer disease in most rabbitries especially in young rabbits. This is typically the result of excess green food. A buildup of gases in the stomach occurs from fermentation being unable to escape and by irregular feeding. So regardless of what ever food the farmer is giving he/she should stick to feeding times. Bloat can be controlled by removing water then give hay only for 24 to 48hrs. I hope this will end your challenges with bloat.

Hi Gari, what is the best way to deal with mange?

Dear farmer, mange is caused by mites which burrows into the skin of the rabbit. Treat by injecting 0.2 to 0.3mls of ivermectin. Mange can be avoided by constructing self-cleaning cages and practising general hygiene on the rabbitry. Farmers should also quarantine all new stock for at least 14 days and disinfect cages with virukil or jik whenever there is an outbreak of a disease. This is the best way to deal with mange.

Hi Gari, my bunnies just won't mate! I double checked to ensure that it's a doe and buck but nothing is happening. What could be the problem?

Dear farmer, no rabbit should be expected to reproduce unless it is in superb physical condition. Very young and too old rabbits are not fit to be parents. Over or underweight rabbits do not produce the best stock. The doe should be given high quality foods in the weeks prior to mating. She needs to gear up to the demands placed on her body from pregnancy, birth and rearing.

The buck is also very important because he gets a greater opportunity to pass more of his good qualities than a female. It is best to always mate rabbits early in the morning or late in the evening. Once your rabbits are in prime condition, mating can commence. Introduce the doe to the buck's cage never the reverse. The buck will constantly follow the doe around, indicating his desire to mate. If she is receptive, the doe will eventually stop so he can mate her. Mating can take some seconds. If the buck has been successful, he will usually fall over on his side, or he may grunt or stamp his foot. I hope you can pick out where you are going wrong with your mating process, from this explanation.

Hi Gari, what is the best way to proceed with weaners? I have 10 kits that I am expecting to wean in the next 2 weeks. Your expert advice is much appreciated.

Dear farmer, management of weaners is one of the major problems that inexperienced farmers fail to handle. I would encourage farmers to always give weaners hay before any feed for the first 2 or 3 weeks from weaning, that will help their digestive system and avoid them from bloating and having diarrhoea. Once the initial 2-3 weeks period is over, the farmer can safely introduce other feeds without risking losing his or her bunnies.



Chiwa dreams big, plans to set up the first rabbit retail shop and barbeque centre in Mutare

ZICORBA Chapter President for Manicaland, Simbarashe Chiwa, plans to open the first rabbit retail shop and barbeque centre in Mutare, the provincial capital for Manicaland region in the eastern part of Zimbabwe.

This is part of Chiwa's ambitious three-year commercialisation plan of his rabbitry in Mutare, which will be anchored on the use of top breeds to bolster production.

The Manicaland Chapter boss was born and bred in Mutare. He recently graduated in Quantity Surveying at National University of Science and Technology of Zimbabwe.

Chiwa started keeping rabbits as a hobby during his primary school days but stopped when he went to high school. His interest in rearing rabbits was reignited in 2020 when he was searching for an activity or business that communicates with one of his innermost love – food.

"I started reading literature on cuniculture and joining farming and entrepreneurship social groups. I then got my first breeding stock of 4 does and 1 buck from a relative and started breeding. I bought more along the way and in no time, my rabbits increased to about 20 but due to my limited time at home I gave the rabbits to some friends to keep them for me. By mid to late last year, they had increased to 60, all of which were indigenous breeds; Zika or Tsuru Magen'a," he said.

The Manicaland Chapter boss has set his sights on turning his rabbit farming project into a commercial enterprise through an ambitious three-year plan.

"Starting this year, I drew up a personal three-year plan, with 2021 being a practical experimental year, 2022 meant for going fully commercial and 2023 being the year for expansion. With this in mind I started culling most of my indigenous breeds and leaving only 5 does for cross breeding purposes.

"I also managed to secure more breeds such as New Zealand White, Cinnamon, Flemish Giant, Californian and Angora. I can say so far so good with the practical experiments and research. I hope to be writing my own results in future and probably come up with my own breed," Chiwa said

Chiwa also revealed that he plans to set up a rabbit meat retail shop in Mutare as part of his commercialisation project.

"I already have a partner who has committed a part of his plot for the commercial production of rabbits. With this partner we will also be rolling out a lean protein shop in Mutare where people will buy healthiest protein meats. With this in mind I also have plans of setting up a braai centre with rabbit meat being the main delicacy," he said.

The Manicaland chapter President expressed optimism about the future of rabbit farming in Manicaland as well as the whole of Zimbabwe.

"There have been a lot of major events that have been slowly taking place in the rabbit industry with the biggest one being the formation of ZICORBA. The Association has seen a huge revival of the rabbit



Simbarashe Chiwa,
ZICORBA Manicaland Chapter President

farming industry, with farmers receiving training, pure breeds as well as stock feed discounts.

"The current game changer is the recently launched Raymeg abattoir which will enable farmers to access safe and hygienic slaughter facilities which has been the missing cog in opening up the mainstream retail market where standards are an issue.

"So, going forward I see rabbit farmers who go commercial being able to recoup their expenses and making a sizeable profit. Soon rabbit meat will be competing with chicken, fish and pork in the white meat sector in Zimbabwe," Chiwa said.





Eswatini Rabbit Farmers' Club launched



Elson Khoza,
Spokesman of Eswatini Rabbit Farmers' Club

Eswatini Rabbit Farmers' Club has been launched to represent the interest of rabbit farmers in the Kingdom formerly known as Swaziland as cuniculture production continues on an upward trajectory in the southern African monarchy.

Spokesman Elson Khoza told Bunny World in an interview that his organization was working with State and non-State actors to transform rabbit production from a largely backyard operation into a commercial enterprise.

"We have a substantial number of backyard rabbit producers and several commercial ones operating at different levels. Through the Club, the art and science of rabbit production is being gradually taught and we have made tremendous progress, including trading of rabbit meat in niche markets," Khoza said.

"One of the aims of the Club is to come up with an organized platform of marketing rabbit products locally and beyond. Through the poultry extension section of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Eswatini government is striving to assist the club to achieve its goals. Other partners are also coming in to help promote the rabbit industry in the country.

"Currently, a state-owned enterprise tasked with the promotion of nature conservation in the country is setting up community rabbit production schemes in targeted strategic areas throughout the country. Each one of the project communities is being provided with an appropriate structure, rabbit cages and other accessories, including a starter pack of 20 rabbits. For a start, the community members will work as a team to run the project. In the long run, individually they are expected to set up independent projects," Khoza added.

"....Through the Club, the art and science of rabbit production is being gradually taught and we have made tremendous progress, including trading of rabbit meat in niche markets."

He said rabbit production was also being taught in schools to promote cuniculture production in the country.

"As a teaching aid, rabbit production enterprise projects are well established in the country's secondary schools. A practical approach is being promoted in conducting lessons on various key aspects of commercial rabbit production, thus leveraging robust establishment of the enterprise throughout the country.

"As a source of quality breeding stock, the Natal Rabbit Club in South Africa has played a pivotal role in supporting our Club. Locally, the Queen Mother's Department and the government's veterinary department have played a pivotal role in facilitating the importation of quality stock from SA and the acquisition of valuable knowledge and skills on the enterprise especially through consistently funding educational trips to the annual Royal Shows in Pietermaritzburg also in South Africa," he said.

Khoza added that his club draws its inspiration from the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA), which has achieved major milestones in just one year.

Joining ZICORBA is as easy as ABC



Visit our Head Office located at Number 15 Collosium Building, 7th Avenue, Harare Showgrounds and meet our friendly staff who are ready to answer any questions which you might have regarding the registration process.

For those who cannot access our offices, we will link you with our provincial representatives who will assist you online.

It is as simple as that !

Once you are convinced that ZICORBA is the right place for you as a serious rabbit farmer, you fill in our simplified registration form.

For any grey areas, our representatives will be available to give clarity.

On completion of the form, the ZICORBA executive will do due diligence on the applicant.



Upon successful vetting during the due diligence process, the successful candidate pays the requisite membership and subscription fees and you are good to go.

So what are you waiting for? Join now, its as easy as A B C!



Grilled and marinated rabbit

“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”

It's magnifique



Chef Pablo



Ingredients

1.2 kg rabbit, preferably wild, jointed
1 handful fresh thyme and rosemary, leaves picked
4 cloves garlic, peeled
olive oil
1 lemon, zest and juice of
1 teaspoon honey
4 thick slices higher-welfare pancetta
salt
freshly ground black pepper

Method

Using a pestle and mortar, or a liquidizer, bash or whiz up the thyme and rosemary leaves to a pulp, then add the garlic cloves and bash or whiz again. Stir in 8 tablespoons of olive oil, the lemon zest and juice and the honey, and pour this over the rabbit. Put the meat to one side and let it come to room temperature while you light your barbecue.

Get a couple of sprigs of fresh thyme and tie them together like a little brush. Each time you turn the meat, dab it with a little of the marinade to give you a lovely encrusted layer of flavour.

Keeping the marinade to one side, remove the pieces of meat and season with salt and pepper. Sandwich the pancetta between the 2 pieces of belly using 3 skewers. Put the legs and shoulder on the barbecue. When they've been cooking for 10 minutes, put the belly on. After another 10 minutes put the saddle and ribs on. Make sure you turn the meat over every so often.

Look after it by controlling the temperature and basting it continuously with the marinade. Cut three-quarters of the way through each kidney and open them out like a book. Cut the liver into 4 pieces and push one piece on to each remaining skewer, followed by a kidney and more liver.

When all the pieces of meat are beautifully cooked, add your skewered bits of kidney and liver on to the barbecue and cook until golden, along with your 2 remaining slices of pancetta. After a few minutes, when the pancetta is browned, put it on top of the meat at the cooler end of the barbecue

You can serve the rabbit with any white beans, or roast potatoes, or grilled vegetables, or different salads.


ZICORBA
ZIMBABWE COMMERCIAL RABBIT BREEDERS ASSOCIATION



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