

Government sets up task force on rabbit pellets



Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement, Dr. Anxious Masuka

The government has set up a task force to look into the current shortage of rabbit pellets, which is threatening to choke the rapid growth of the country's cuniculture sector, Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) President, Regis Nyamakanga, has revealed.

Nyamakanga told Bunny World in an interview that: "Over the past few months, we have received numerous reports of widespread shortages of rabbit pellets, which, if left unchecked could asphyxiate cuniculture production at a time when the industry is experiencing an upward trajectory.

"Some of the leading stock feed manufacturers have advised us that they are facing a serious shortage of maize bran, which is an essential ingredient in the production of rabbit pellets," he said. Zimbabwe's leading stock feed producers are Capital Foods, National Foods, Agrifoods and Pro Feeds.

The ZICORBA chief added that the government banned the importation of maize bran following last season's bumper harvest, prompting the widespread shortages of pellets.

Nyamakanga recently met with the Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement Minister, Dr. Anxious Masuka and lodged an appeal about the current shortage and skyrocketing cost of rabbit pellets.

"Over the past few months, we have received numerous reports of widespread shortages of rabbit pellets, which, if left unchecked could asphyxiate cuniculture production"

"I raised the issue of rabbit pellet shortages with the Minister during a meeting that he held with us, the leaders in the livestock industry, and he responded by tasking officials at the Livestock and Meat Advisory Council (LMAC) to engage milling companies to ensure that they released maize bran to stock feed companies," the ZICORBA chief said.

The rabbit industry has been growing steadily and is projected to benefit 1.8 million households in Zimbabwe through improved livelihoods and employment creation, he added.

Midesha imports pure breeds to bolster its rabbit production



Part of the pure breed rabbits that were recently imported by Medisha from South Africa

The Bulawayo-based corporate member of the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) has imported 50 pure breeds from South Africa to ramp up production at its rabbitry situated at the environs of Zimbabwe's second biggest city.

The breeding stock, which was imported from South Africa's leading rabbit breeders; Judy Stuart and Anton Gouws, include 45 New Zealand White and 5 Chinchilla Giganta rabbits, which are amongst the best rabbit breeds for meat.

Midesha (Private) Limited, Chief Executive, Mr Helmut Ncube, told Bunny World in an interview that the pure breeds import brings to 100 rabbits the number of breeding stock at his rabbitry.

"With a breeding stock of about 100 rabbits, this places Midesha in good stead to becoming the biggest breeder and rabbit meat producer in the greater Matebeleland region, which incorporates Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South," Ncube said.

Midesha is a diversified concern with business interests in farming, medical services and retail.

"As producers in the greater Matebeleland region, we have come together and agreed to ramp up production ahead of the establishment of a rabbit abattoir in Bulawayo in the next few months," Ncube said.

ZICORBA president Regis Nyamakanga recently announced that plans were underway to open Zimbabwe's second rabbit abattoir in Bulawayo as production and consumption of rabbit meat continues on an upward trajectory in the country.

Ncube said that within the next six months his rabbitry will be churning out between 350 and 500 rabbits for meat every

"As producers in the greater Matebeleland region, we have come together and agreed to ramp up production ahead of the establishment of a rabbit abattoir in Bulawayo in the next few months,"

month. "Other farmers in the region are each looking at selling from 100 to 350 rabbits for slaughter every month."



Midesha (Pvt) Limited, Chief Executive, Mr Helmut Ncube

Trainer of Trainers program produces first batch of graduates



The first batch of internationally certified rabbit trainers from the ten provinces of Zimbabwe pose for a photo after certification

The Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) in partnership with Kenya's state-owned National Rabbit Breeding and Training Institute (NRCTI) have produced the first batch of internationally certified rabbit farming trainers after an intensive two-day training workshop held in Harare recently.

The training, which was conducted by NCRTI Chief Executive Nathan Rotich, covered key areas such as techniques of rabbit production, husbandry, breeds and breeding, feeding, diseases, marketing and value chain.

"The training was very key for issues to do with selection of breeding stock, which is very important for any rabbit breeding enterprise. We also dealt with issues to do with diseases and diseases control. We discussed issues on rabbit management particularly focusing on housing. Then lastly, we discussed the topical issue of marketing and the various market segmentation which our farmers should consider," said Rotich.

The NCRTI Chief Executive was impressed with the level of participation of the Zimbabwean rabbit farmers, and encouraged them to read more and lead by example.

"I must say it was a privilege to work with a group of such enthusiastic farmers and as part of their mandate, the beneficiaries of our training, should be able to share the information we have given them with other farmers from their areas of operation," he said.

ZICORBA President Regis Nyamakanga revealed that the training was organised after a meticulous needs analysis undertaken at the inception of the association.

"At the launch of ZICORBA in 2020, we analysed the challenges that the industry was facing some of the issues included problems with production, processing and marketing.

In terms of training, we set up a training department within ZICORBA, which has been training our farmers on the best production methods and disease control.

"We added an international flair to our training so we roped in one of the best training organisations in Africa which offers international certification, that is the Kenyan NCRTI.

"We want our farmers to be able to produce rabbits from a position of knowledge not just a hit and miss approach," Nyamakanga said.

Some of the farmers who participated in the training expressed high hopes for the rabbit farming industry.

"With this training, I expect Zimbabwean farmers to deliver proven and to set international rabbit farming standards. I hope the training will assist us to stretch the industry so that we participate on a global scale and become big players in the rabbit meat market," said Mashonaland East farmer Wisdom Nyirenda.

Harare based rabbit farmer, Ike Mbava said "the training will ensure that we grow the rabbit farming industry in Zimbabwe which is still at its infancy."

Young farmer Leeroy Madzvimbo, from Bulawayo said "the training gave me a platform to learn from other seasoned farmers and to tap into their experiences. I hope to share all this with other farmers when I return back home."

Big vote of confidence for Guvamombe

Harare Chapter President Godknows Guvamombe has received a huge vote of confidence, after he retained his post in a plebiscite that was aimed at restructuring the Chapter executive leadership.

The elections were held after the National Executive sanctioned a petition from the Harare Chapter following performance inconsistencies amongst some of the provincial leadership members.

In an interview with Bunny World soon after the results, Guvamombe said he was planning a cocktail of interventions to rejuvenate Harare Chapter.

“I am humbled by the confidence shown in my capabilities by members of my constituency as shown by my re-election. With the support of my team, we are going to have a strategic planning meeting as soon as possible to ensure that as a Chapter our activities are in tandem with the vision and mission of ZICORBA.

As an executive, we will leave no farmer behind in our bid to make Harare the best performing Chapter out of all the 10 ZICORBA Chapters. To the elected leaders, let’s be there when duty calls in support of our members and the association,” Guvamombe said

The plebiscite also saw the re-election of Grace Chengeta as Secretary General, Shame Chibvongodze as Marketing and Publicity Secretary and Farlen Marume as Membership Secretary.

New comers are Mike Nyadzira and Matthew Hore who were elected Vice President and Chapter Treasurer, respectively.

The elections were overseen by Midlands Chapter President Rejoice Nyamanhindi and Mashonaland East Chapter Secretary General Wisdom Nyirenda.



**Godknows Guvamombe,
ZICORBA
Harare Chapter President**



**Mike Nyadzira, ZICORBA
Harare Chapter Vice President**



**Grace Chengeta, ZICORBA
Harare Chapter Secretary General**



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

Farmer Jane

KNOW YOUR BREEDS



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

*** BREED : GIANT ANGORA RABBIT**

RATING : * * * *



The Giant Angora, is a large rabbit that was created by breeding German angoras with other breeds like the Flemish Giant in order to make a bigger rabbit. It is a popular breed of rabbit developed for meat and angora wool production.

Distinct features: The Giant Angora has a commercial type body, with a very dense coat of white wool. They have ears that are lightly fringed and well tassled. Its coat contains 3 fiber types namely underwool, awn fluff and awn hair.

These huge rabbits have a lifespan of 7-12 years and weigh around 4.5-5.5 kgs when fully grown.



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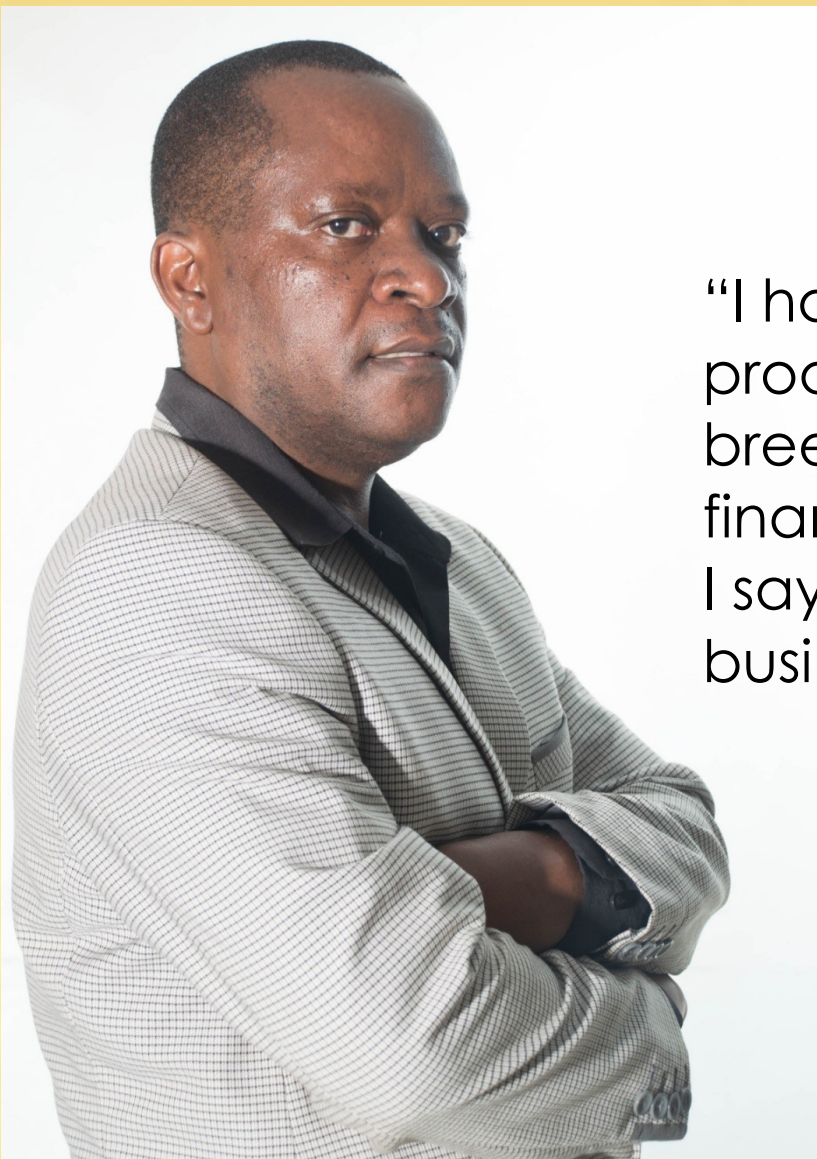
Trainer of Trainers highlights



The TOT course which was held in Harare, covered rabbit production, husbandry, breeds and breeding, feeding, diseases, marketing and value chain. The graduates from the training were issued with internationally recognized certificates.



Experienced banker takes charge of the Harare Chapter purse



“I have a strong passion for producing high yielding breeds that give maximum financial benefits to farmers. I say no to ‘Tsuro Magen’a’ business,”

Matthew Hore ZICORBA Harare Chapter Treasurer

Experienced banker and passionate rabbit farmer, Matthew Hore, has taken charge of the finances at ZICORBA’s Harare Chapter after he was elected Treasurer recently.

The elections, which were held following the dissolution of the old executive, saw Mr. Hore bagging the post without any challenger. The Treasurer’s post had remained vacant since the first elections for the Chapter held last year.

Mr. Hore, with more than two decades of banking experience, started backyard rabbit farming as a hobby in Harare’s Msasa suburb in 2016 up until 2019 when he decided to pursue the commercial route.

“I have a strong passion for producing high yielding breeds that give maximum financial benefits to farmers. I say no to ‘Tsuro Magen’a’ business,” said the incoming Harare Chapter finance boss in an interview with Bunny World.

He added that successful rabbit breeding required strict attention to

financial matters.

“I will seek to uphold good financial management at both individual and Chapter levels,” said Mr. Hore

He decided to run for the Treasurer’s post in order to fulfill his quest to assist fellow farmers in managing their finances.

Since the launch of ZICORBA in July 2020, the rabbit industry has gone through phenomenal changes, which are a direct consequence of the dynamic strategies that have been pursued by the current leadership. These have breathed life back into the cuniculture sector, which had been in a comatose.

“The industry is set to see a transformation through the efforts of ZICORBA as we take rabbit breeding to a new level and assist households to tap into the huge financial potential and health benefits that exists. Rabbit breeding is no longer a backyard business,” said an upbeat Mr. Hore.



Philippines sees rabbit meat as pork alternative



MANILA – Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary William Dar instructed Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) Director Reildrin Morales to support the production and distribution of rabbit for meat consumption and livelihood.

“We will see to it that we provide strong support for the massive production of rabbits to be distributed initially here in Caloocan, so we can show the world that rabbit meat can be a substitute for pork,” Dar said recently.

He added that DA will support the advocacy of the Association of Rabbit Meat Producers Inc., led by Artemio Veneracion Jr., for the development of the local rabbit industry.

BAI will facilitate the establishment of necessary guidelines and provide assistance for the industry, which is still considered to be at the infancy stage.

With the challenges brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic and the African swine fever (ASF) outbreak to the hog industry, Dar said rabbit meat can be a healthy alternative to pork.

Many hotels, restaurants, and entrepreneurs have developed different rabbit-based dishes.

The rabbit dispersal package includes a cage, two-month-old upgraded breed rabbit, automatic drinker, two kilograms of pellets, nest box, and a manual on rabbit raising - Philippine News Agency

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

It's magnifique



Chef Pablo

Roast rabbit with thyme



Ingredients

1 whole farmed rabbit (about 1.2kg)
2 tbsp thyme leaves
4-6 tbsp olive oil
12 small onions or shallots, peeled

Method

STEP 1

Joint the rabbit, cutting the legs into two pieces, the saddle into three and the shoulders and front into two. Heat oven to 220 Degrees Celsius.

STEP 2

Put the rabbit in a large roasting tin, season and add 1 tbsp of the thyme leaves. Add the oil and toss until the rabbit is well coated. Roast for 20 mins.

STEP 3

Add the onions or shallots and the garlic, then stir well and roast for another 15 mins, stirring again halfway through. Sprinkle over the remaining thyme before serving.



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