



BUNNY WORLD

NEWSLETTER



ZICORBA

ZIMBABWE COMMERCIAL RABBIT BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Member of the Livestock and Meat Advisory Council

Zimbabwe's only Collective
Voice of Rabbit Farmers

December
2021

'Zimbabwe rabbit meat market poised for major growth in 2022'



Zimbabwe's nascent rabbit meat market is poised for a major upturn in 2022 on the back of a raft of initiatives set to be unveiled by industry players during the course of year, a top industry official has said.

In her end of year message to the country's rabbit farmers, the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) Secretary General, Siphosethu Ncube Moyo, said the domestic market for rabbit meat was projected to grow by at least 50 percent over the next 12 months.

"Our estimation is that between 2,5 tonnes and 3,5 tonnes of rabbit meat is being consumed on the local market per month currently, bringing to about 30 tonnes per year. We expect this figure to increase by about 15 tonnes at the end of 2022.

"While rabbit meat is currently being sold in major supermarket chains, eateries, hotels and restaurants, we are working with leading industry players to ensure that new innovative ways of marketing rabbit meat are introduced on the domestic market in the coming 12 months. We are very confident that our plans will yield positive results, catapulting rabbit meat into becoming one of the leading meat dishes in the country," Ncube-Moyo said.

She revealed that ZICORBA had been undertaking an incisive analysis of costs across the rabbit meat value chain to ensure that the industry was competitive in juxtaposition with other meats such as pork, chicken, fish and crocodile.

"This study is very important for us to avoid pitfalls that befell

some rabbit industries elsewhere that collapsed due to the application of archaic production and marketing approaches which left many farmers deep in the doldrums. We have learnt the importance of involving everyone in the rabbit meat value chain to ensure the success of our industry", she said.

ZICORBA had dispatched some of its top officials to study the export market for rabbit meat in Africa, Middle East and Asia (AMEA) region and there were prospects that Zimbabwe could be exporting rabbit meat before the end of 2022.

"Before this happens, we would like to ensure that our production is at the level which can sustain both the local and the export markets. For us, this is key and we will soon be engaging with our farmers to ensure that this vision is actualised. We will come up with some incentives for them to produce more," Ncube-Moyo said.



ZICORBA Secretary General, Siphosethu Ncube Moyo

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Issue No.12

FREE

Zimbabwe's first rabbit meat distribution hub in the offing



Raymeg's rabbit meat hub under construction in Harare's Waterfalls suburb

The construction of Zimbabwe's first rabbit meat distribution hub is nearing completion in Harare's Waterfalls suburb, setting the stage for a sustained growth of cuniculture production in the southern African country.

This follows hot on the heels of the recent opening in Harare of Zimbabwe's first rabbit abattoir early this year. The abattoir, which has a capacity to slaughter upwards of 3 500 rabbits per single eight-hour shift, is one of the biggest in Africa.

The country's second rabbit abattoir is planned for Bulawayo next year, which will be followed by the launch of satellite abattoirs in major centres in Zimbabwe.

Rabbit meat producer Raymeg Consultants Private Limited (Raymeg), which owns Zimbabwe's first rabbit slaughterhouse, is also the sole investor in the country's rabbit meat distribution hub, which will be the first such facility in Africa.

Raymeg is one of the corporate members of the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA). It has interests in agriculture, real estate, strategic communication, leisure and resorts and energy and has operations in a number of countries in southern, eastern and the Horn of Africa.

Raymeg Executive Director, Paidamoyo Nyamakanga, told *Bunny World* in an interview that the rabbit meat distribution hub was set to be opened during the first half of 2022.

"We are excited to launch another first in the rabbit industry in Zimbabwe and the Africa region. Our rabbit meat distribution hub naturally complements the rabbit abattoir that we

launched recently. It will have the capacity to handle at least 50 tonnes of rabbit meat per month, which will be distributed to major centres in Zimbabwe," she said.

Nyamakanga said other smaller rabbit meat distribution centres will be opened in main regions of the country soon to complement the satellite rabbit slaughter houses that are planned for these centres. Raymeg distributes rabbit meat through the country's largest supermarket chains: Pick & Pay, Spar Zimbabwe, Choppies and Surrey Meats.

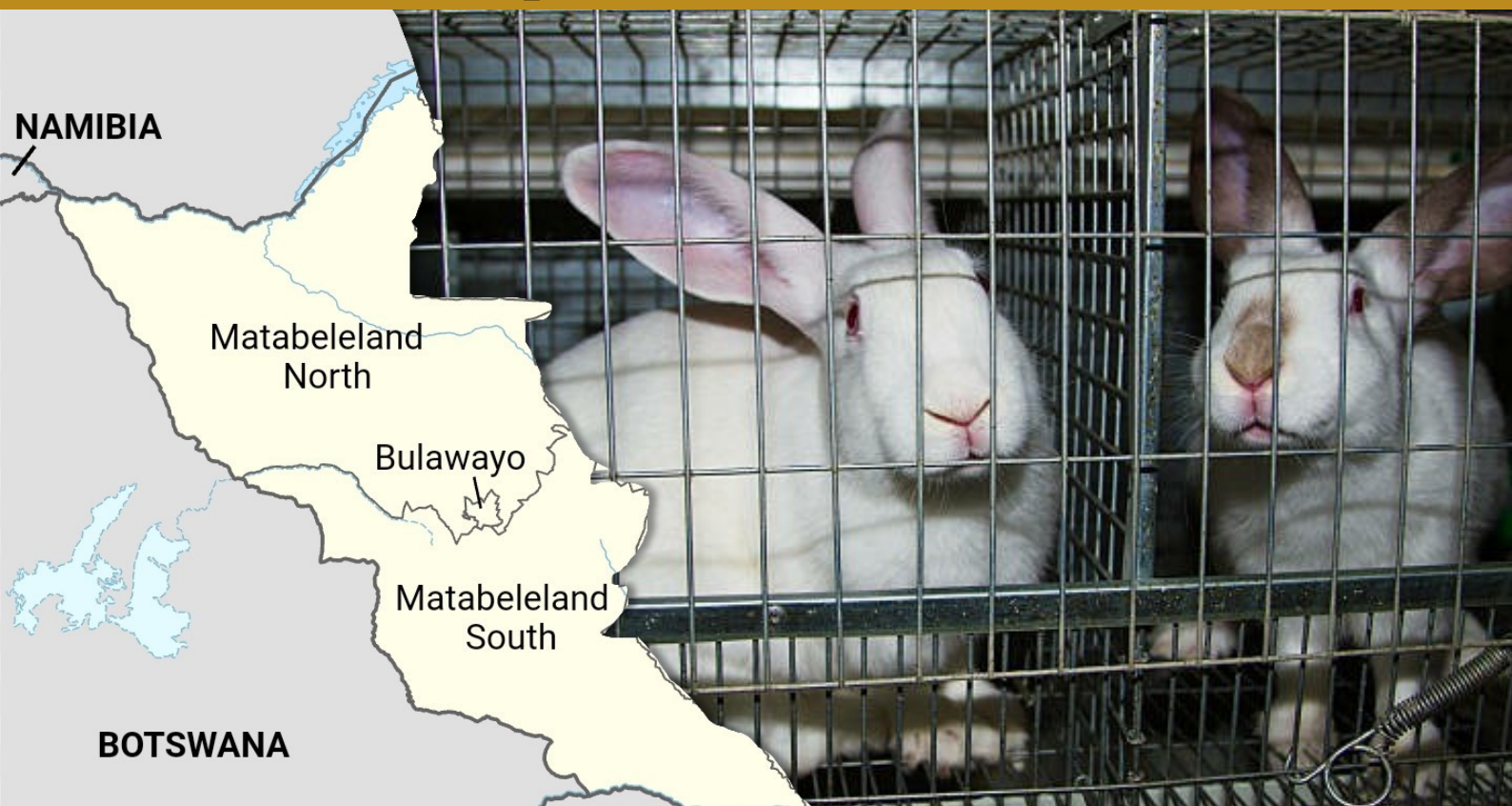
"We have a very clear strategy of taking the rabbit meat to every household in Zimbabwe and of making rabbit production one of the mainstays of Zimbabwe agricultural sector. And this we will do in the shortest possible time," the Raymeg boss said.

Mrs Nyamakanga revealed that through its sister company, Raymeg was toying with the idea of launching game-changing initiatives in South Africa, where the rabbit industry has been reeling under the weight of the recent collapse of one of the country's biggest rabbit abattoirs, which left many producers there in dire straits.



Raymeg Consultants Pvt Ltd Executive Director, Paidamoyo Nyamakanga

Matabeleland region poised to become the epicenter of rabbit production in Zimbabwe



Graphic showing Matabeleland region and rabbit farming

ZICORBA Bulawayo Chapter recently held its inaugural annual general meeting under the theme "combining efforts to increase production and visibility". In this issue of Bunny World (BW), we feature an interview with Chapter Secretary General Sijabulisiwe Mpofu (SM) to shed more light on the AGM.

BW: How did you manage to hold this meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic?

SM: We held our AGM on a virtual platform to ensure that as many members as possible could attend the crucial meeting regardless of their location. More importantly, we wanted to ensure the safety of our members as the COVID-19 pandemic is still very much around, and exacerbated by emergence of new variants.

BW: What were the major/topical issues discussed?

Our discussions were centered on two topics - collaborative farming and upgrading to commercial farming. We deliberated on increasing collaborative farming efforts between members by helping each other as best we can. Accountability of Members to ZICORBA as well as to other members was identified as key to ramping production.

Our broad agenda is to transition most of our Members from backyard farming to commercial rabbit production. The end-game is to make Bulawayo and the greater Matabeleland region the nucleus of rabbit production in Zimbabwe. This can only be possible through working collaboratively.

BW: What are the major resolutions that were passed?

We agreed on target production per each member, which are reviewed every three months. The next production cycle runs

from January to 31 March 2022. Another key outcome from the meeting was to popularize and to create our own market for rabbit meat in the greater Matabeleland region.

We also agreed to give our community outreach efforts more gusto, targeting especially youth and women. Our aim is to improve livelihoods, create employment and uplift the lives of our people through rabbit farming.

I strongly believe our 'all-hands-on deck' approach will catapult ZICORBA into one of the most progressive and results oriented farming organisations in Zimbabwe.

BW: What is the significance of holding AGM's?

I would like to point out that, "failure to plan is planning to fail". For us we see an AGM as an important cog in our development agenda. This is where we involve all Chapter Members in strategy conceptualization, development, and in crafting of the implementation matrix. We are at a very crucial stage of the rabbit farming revolution in Zimbabwe and as such, we have to be focused on how we synergize Chapter level efforts with National efforts.



Bulawayo Chapter Secretary General, Sijabulisiwe Mpofu

SA-based farmer to bring rabbit rearing expertise back home

South Africa-based horticulture and rabbit farmer, Innes Ncube, says she plans on using her experience to set up a thriving rabbitry in Zimbabwe on the back of the recent surge in demand for rabbit meat in the country.

The Krugersdorp farmer said the Zimbabwean market was showing so much potential, hence her desire to invest in a second rabbitry in her home country.

“My husband and I, have a farm here in South Africa. We started rabbit farming last year with the vision of being one of the top suppliers of rabbit meat and the business has been very good. This year we started a rabbitry back home in Zimbabwe since there is a growing market for rabbit meat,” Ncube said in an interview with Bunny World.

“I want to create a niche market for rabbit meat and establish myself as one of the biggest producers in the Matebeleland region. I intend on using only purebreds so that I maximise on their food conversion ratio and ensure that my productivity levels are high,” she said.

Ncube said she will soon be transferring some of her breeding stock from South Africa to Zimbabwe to boost operations at her farm in Mapane.

“In South Africa, we have 50 does and 10 bucks as our breeding stock. It is from this pool where we also aim to complement our Zimbabwean project. We hope to grow it to this same level or even bigger, whilst maintaining best international practices.” she said.

Ncube said the advent of ZICORBA had catalysed the process of the uptake of commercial rabbit farming in Zimbabwe and this had helped her in making the decision to set up a rabbitry in the country.

“I am grateful to the work being done by ZICORBA as this has put commercial rabbit farming on the spotlight. There should be more trainings and more awareness campaigns on rabbit farming”. she said.



Innes Ncube at her farm in Krugersdorp, South Africa

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



Farmer Jane

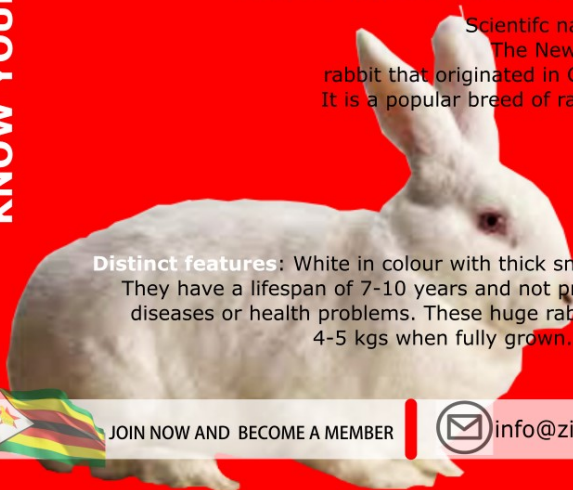
KNOW YOUR BREEDS



ZICORBA
ZIMBABWE COMMERCIAL RABBIT BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

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

* BREED : NEW ZEALAND WHITE RABBIT



Scientific name : *Oryctolagus cuniculus*
The New Zealand White, is a large rabbit that originated in California but imported from New Zealand. It is a popular breed of rabbit originally developed for meat and fur.

RATING : * * * *

Distinct features: White in colour with thick snowy fur and red eyes. They have a lifespan of 7-10 years and not prone to any specific diseases or health problems. These huge rabbits weigh around 4-5 kgs when fully grown.



JOIN NOW AND BECOME A MEMBER



info@zicorba.com



+263 777 535 079

President's End of Year Message



Since our Executive was elected into office in December 2020, several issues have dominated our Association's agenda. 2021 will go down in the annals of history as the most defining year for the rabbit farming subsector in Zimbabwe.

The leadership of the Association took big and bold decisions to revive the industry, which was in a state of comatose. I am happy to report that our industry is starting to fully appreciate the far-reaching and long-lasting implications of these decisions.

On the production side, we sought and obtained assistance to import pure breeds to bolster our breeding stock and to shore-up our output, which had been faltering for many years. The National Executive engaged leading stock feed companies, namely Agri-foods, Capital Foods and National Foods, to negotiate for price discounts, which helped lower the cost of production for our members.

In addition, we employed a full-time Training and Technical Coordinator, who rolled-out an intensive training programme for our farmers across the country. We also launched a Trainer of Trainers (TOT) programme together with the help of the Kenya National Rabbit Training Institute to enhance the capacity of our farmers.

Although the prices of cages remained beyond the reach of the majority of rabbit farmers, the leadership of the Association identified a number of professional welders and negotiated with them to produce rabbit cages for our farmers at relatively "reasonable" prices.

During the course of the year, the country's first abattoir was launched, creating the much-needed market for rabbit farmers. The abattoir, which has the capacity to slaughter upwards of 3 500 rabbits per single eight-hour shift, is one of the biggest in Africa and is built to export specifications. Throughput at the slaughter facility has been on a steady increase since it was opened in August.

Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association President, Regis Nyamakanga

Consumption of rabbit meat in the country has been on a steady increase and currently between 2,5 tonnes and 3,5 tonnes of rabbit meat is sold on the domestic market every month. Rabbit meat is available in leading supermarket chains such as Choppies, Pick 'n Pay and Spar Zimbabwe. Surrey Meats is the largest distributor of rabbit meat in the country.

In addition, a number of eateries, restaurants and hotels have included rabbit meat on their menus, helping to popularize the consumption of rabbit.

The timing of these developments could not have been better. The government launched its five- year Livestock Development Plan, which places greater emphasis on small livestock – rabbits included! Rabbit production is now part of the national development agenda and we anticipate that about 1.8 million households will partake in rabbit production. This will not only lead to job creation but will improve livelihoods and contribute to the national fiscus.

The current pandemic took a knock on our industry and some of our members succumbed to it. Our heartfelt condolences to their families. Unfortunately, we are not yet out of the woods. We encourage our farmers to continue to observe COVID-19 protocols.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are confident in our commitment and resolve to rebuild Zimbabwe's rabbit industry into one of the best in Africa.

I wish to thank our members and the leadership of ZICORBA for their unwavering support during the course of year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a peaceful, safe and prosperous New Year. I look forward to your continued support in the months ahead.





Young farmer dumps poultry farming for rich pickings in rabbit production



Mike Guest showing off his newly acquired metal cages at his rabbitry

Bulawayo-based rabbit breeder Mike Guest says he does not regret dumping poultry farming to venture into rabbit production as he is already witnessing positive growth of his new venture.

The major factors that lured Guest to rabbit farming was the low project set up costs as well as the relatively low mortality rates associated with cuniculture production compared to chicken rearing.

"I have always been fascinated with starting my own business and poultry was the first thing that came to my mind. However, the high production costs and mortality rate pushed me to look for an alternative venture, which came in the form of rabbit farming. The major pull factors into rabbit farming were the low set-up and running costs as well as low mortality rate. I believe I made the best choice as I can see positive growth of my business unlike when I was doing chickens." he said in an interview with Bunny World.

Guest also acknowledged the role ZICORBA had played in ensuring that he ventured into rabbit farming.

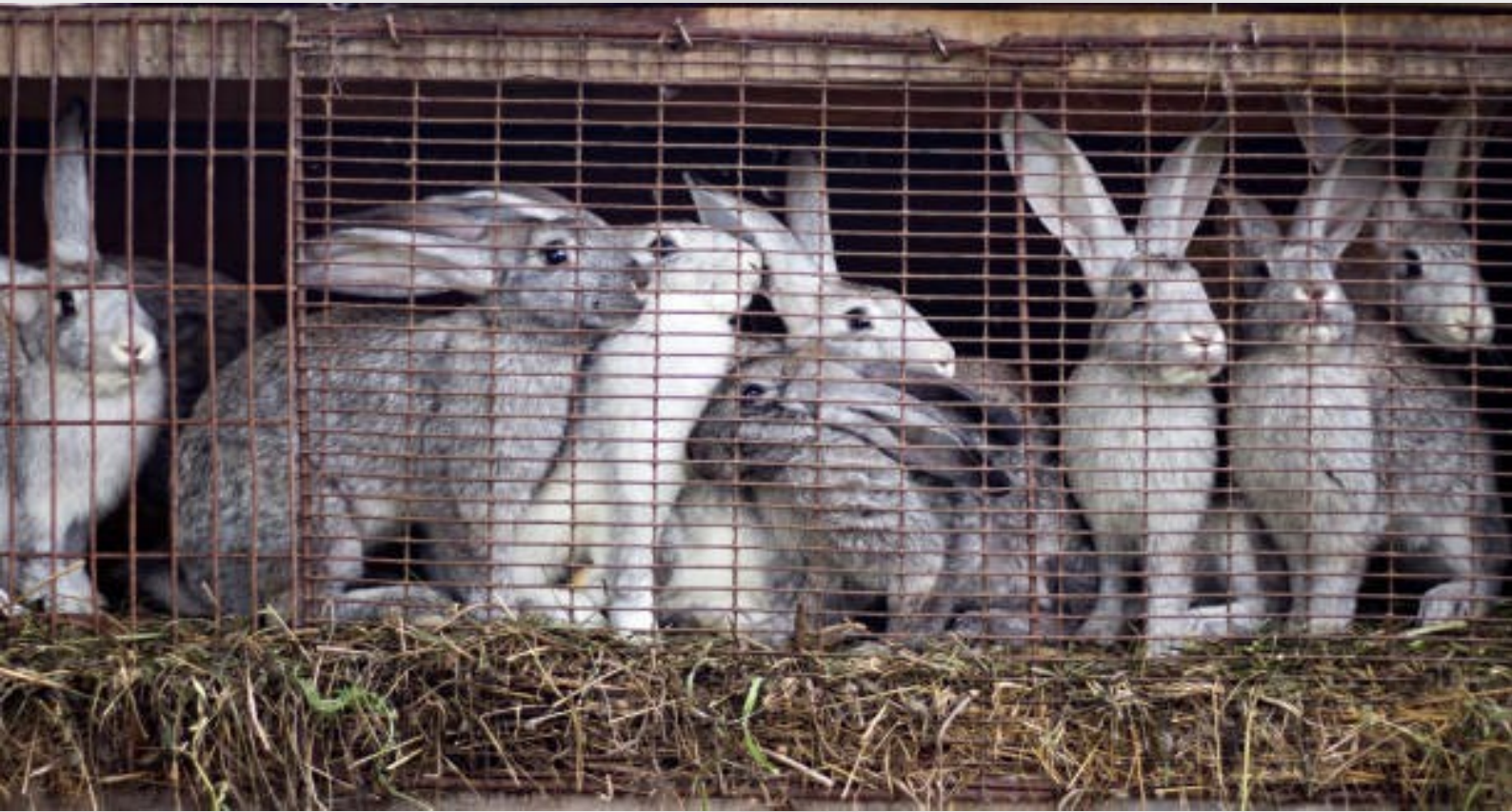
"ZICORBA is usually on the radio, newspapers and social media, and this has cast a light on rabbit farming, making it one of the most talked about low-capital agricultural based projects. As a member of the association I have learnt firsthand that being around people of a like mind enables one to derive inspiration, learn and grow. You get to learn a lot of the don'ts from other experiences thereby making the business less risky." he said.

Taking a peek into the future, Guest sees himself becoming one of the biggest suppliers of rabbit meat in the country and beyond.

"The end-game for me is to be one of the biggest rabbit meat exporters and suppliers to the local market. I aim to achieve this in the next five years. Currently I am selling 100 rabbits per month and I plan on hitting 500 in the next six months. With this growth trajectory, my aim is to reach an optimum target of 5000 rabbits per month in the next five years and this should make me one of the biggest suppliers in the country." Guest said.



Philippines priest breeds rabbit to fight hunger



A Catholic priest in the Philippines has launched a “rabbit station” as a way of helping the hungry in Manila’s poorest communities.

Breeding rabbits is a solution to battling the hunger the pandemic has brought to many families, according to Father Eduardo Vasquez, a priest in the Kalookan suburb of the Philippine capital.

“In just one year, two rabbits can multiply to more than a hundred. Imagine if there are hundreds of pairs that we can distribute to poor families. It’s the perfect response to the problem of hunger,” he told Catholic run Radio Veritas this week.

He said rabbit farming was the “best alternative” to pork or chicken, which were becoming more and more expensive.

Job losses stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic have driven up poverty in the Philippines as more people go hungry.

While eating rabbit is quite common in other parts of the world, it is unusual in the Philippines, even among the poor. Rabbits are almost entirely kept as pets.

Father Vazquez, however, said now is the time to change this mindset.

“Rabbit meat is the perfect answer to the problem of hunger. We have to teach the poor how to produce their own food. We have to teach them that rabbit meat is a very good alternative,” he said.

He said he began breeding rabbits for the poor while working with squatters and homeless people in his diocese.

“In just one year, I noticed how fast they multiplied. And rabbit meat is delicious too,” he said.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Several rabbits were cooked so that people could taste the meat, while 75 breeding pairs were blessed and distributed to slum dwellers.

With the support of local government leaders, Father Vazquez has more than 100 pairs of rabbits for his breeding and distribution project.

He aims to distribute at least 100,000 rabbits to poor families who would be shown how to propagate them for food purposes.

“They will undergo a training workshop on how to properly raise and breed the rabbits under the tutelage of the ‘father of rabbitry’ in the Philippines, Artemio Veneracion, Jr.,” Father Vazquez said.

Veneracion, president of the Association of Rabbit Meat Producers, has been advocating rabbit farming to decrease market dependence on pork, chicken and beef for years.

“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

Baked rabbit & potatoes



Ingredients

1 rabbit
Potatoes
1 glass of white wine
4-5 garlic cloves
Pepper

Method

To prepare the rabbit in the oven with potatoes, we will first clean the rabbit, you can prepare the rabbit whole or in pieces. I did it in chunks, it gets done faster.

Put the rabbit in pieces on an oven-safe tray, salt it and add pepper. We sprinkle with a little oil, we put it in the oven at 180°C.

While we peel some potatoes, we can cut them into not very fat slices or we can make fried potatoes and add them later.

In a mortar we will put the minced garlic, crush the garlic well and add some herbs and the glass of white wine.

After about 15 minutes of the rabbit in the oven, add the potatoes and sprinkle over the rabbit and the potatoes the mortar and a little water.

We put it back in the oven, we leave it until it is golden and the potatoes are tender.

We will sprinkle juice over the rabbit as it is done, if it stays dry, we will add a little more water or white wine.

When it is done, we take out and serve.


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ZICORBA



+263 777 535 079



info@zicorba.com



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VISIT US AT

Head Office

15 Collosium Building

7th Street

Harare Showgrounds

Editorial Team

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