



ZICORBA assists Botswana rabbit farmers set up first abattoir



Raymeg abattoir, Zimbabwe's first rabbit abattoir and one of the biggest in Africa constructed at a cost well over US\$ 1 million

Players in Zimbabwe's buoyant rabbit industry are in talks with their Botswana counterparts to assist the latter in setting up their first rabbit abattoir, top officials have confirmed.

This follows hot on the heels of the recent opening of Zimbabwe's first rabbit abattoir, one of the biggest in Africa, in an investment worth over US\$1 million.

The Harare-based rabbit meat processing facility, which was commissioned in September 2021, has a capacity to slaughter between 2,5 tonnes and 3,5 tonnes of rabbit per eight-hour shift per day. It has so far been well-received by rabbit farmers across Zimbabwe.

Botswana's Northern Rabbit Breeders Association (NORBA) president Timbu Iris Ntjenje confirmed that her organisation had approached its Zimbabwean counterpart to help Botswana establish a rabbit abattoir in Francis Town, the second biggest city in the country.

"Although rabbit farming is relatively new in Botswana and consumption of rabbit meat is still low in the country, we have seen an uptick in the number of people venturing in cuniculture production in recent months. We have also been receiving a number of enquiries about rabbit meat and in readiness for an upswing in demand for rabbit meat in the

country, we are planning to set up our own rabbit abattoir in Francis Town," the NORBA boss said.

"Since rabbit meat processing is still an uncharted territory for us, we approached our counterparts in Zimbabwe for them to help us set up our first rabbit abattoir here in Botswana. We are also toying with the idea of running the abattoir as joint venture with our Zimbabwean partners. We are looking at different options and the feasibility of doing so," Ntjenje said in an interview with Bunny World.

Botswana is a mineral and agriculture-rich landlocked southern African country of just over 2 million people. It shares borders with Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) president Regis Nyamakanga confirmed the developments, saying cuniculture production was catching-on like wild-fire in Africa.

"In addition to our talks with the Botswana, I also recently spoke to the president of Zambian rabbit producers who also sought our advice on how to set up a rabbit abattoir in Zambia. They wanted a facility that slaughters about 300 rabbits per day. We shared our experience with them. We are also aware of plans in Nigeria to set up rabbit slaughter facilities as part of a government-funded initiative," Nyamakanga said.

Mudzingwa wows Makoni small-scale farmers



ZICORBA National Training and Technical Advisor Garisanai Mudzingwa (far left) addressing farmers on best cuniculture practices

Hundreds of small-scale farmers in Makoni district have embraced rabbit farming following a top-notch presentation by ZICORBA National Training and Technical Advisor Garisanai Mudzingwa.

Mudzingwa's presentation during the official launch of the Makoni Small Scale Farmers Association held at plot 7 Alpha Range in Rusape, cast commercial rabbit farming into the spotlight as most farmers in the area considered it more of a hobby.

"The awareness discussion was a major success as we saw seasoned and budding small scale farmers expressing interest in joining the rabbit farming revolution as well as being ZICORBA members. Existing rabbit farmers were more interested in how they could scale-up their production.

"The main thrust of the presentation was to show our farmers how rabbit breeding can be run as a commercially viable business. We covered issues to do with selection of breeding stock, which is key for any rabbit breeding enterprise. We also dealt with issues to do with diseases and diseases control. We discussed rabbit management particularly focusing on housing and lastly, we discussed the topical issue of marketing, segmentation and profitability which excited most of our farmers," said Mudzingwa.

The ZICORBA National Training and Technical Advisor also highlighted to the farmers the progress that has been made so far in ensuring that commercial rabbit farming becomes a viable business.

"The farmers were excited about the work which ZICORBA is doing in promoting rabbit farming, however the issue of the rabbit meat abattoir and the rabbit meat centre were the show stoppers. A lot of questions were generated from this area which resulted in farmers asking that I be called back on stage for a second round of question and answer. The issue of

a ready market thrilled all the farmers present which resulted in a lot of enquiries at the end of the event," he said.

The Makoni Small Scale Farmers Association official launch was held under the theme transforming the economy through enhancing sustainable agricultural systems and was attended by agricultural financing companies, equipment companies, agricultural experts as well as seed and fertilizer companies.



ZICORBA National Training and Technical Advisor Garisanai Mudzingwa

Midlands Chapter welcomes pure breed rabbits donation



Rejoyce Nyamanhindi
ZICORBA Midlands
Chapter president

By
Rejoyce Nyamanhindi
Midlands Chapter president

ZICORBA Midlands Chapter is destined for greatness as two of its members have received pure breeds this month. This has turned out to be a good start for 2022 with Kwekwe group setting targets of massive supply of rabbits to the abattoir. Our new Midlands Coordinator Nothando Ncube has introduced rabbit meat at her leisure centre called Garden 33, which is the first of its kind in Kwekwe.

Gweru is well represented with our new member Mr. Daniel Pswarai, who once kept thousands of rabbits but had stopped because of lack of market. He has reestablished his rabbitry and is geared to raise the ZICORBA flag high. Kurima tso kurima mari.

In Gokwe, we have our Chapter Secretary General Mrs. Anna Mary Gapa who has great passion for rabbit farming and membership drive. We are expecting many members from her area to join this year!

We have our youngest farmer in Mvuma, who attended the Trainer of Trainers course, which was organized by ZICORBA and delivered by an international trainer. He is conducting training sessions for our Chapter members!

As the Midlands Chapter, this year we want to increase our membership and to work collaboratively to boost our production. We will be visiting each other to motivate and learn from each other. Our goal is to start supplying rabbit meat constantly from end of March.

Happy rabbit farming!!!



Nothando Ncube
ZICORBA Midlands
Chapter Coordinator

Matabeleland rabbit farmers in collaborative farming

By
Ratidzo Thelma Chiwombe
Bulawayo Chapter Marketing and Publicity Secretary

The ZICORBA Bulawayo Chapter is actively embarking on its 3-month goal to visit all member rabbitries by April 2022. At our last AGM it was agreed that collaborative farming was the key to attaining the desired levels of production. This is why we are striving to combine efforts in order to propel the Chapter forward. The first step is through scheduled Member rabbitry visits.

This move will enable Members to showcase their rabbitries, share ideas, problems and solutions with other experienced breeders. Members will also be able to access training and technical support from our Chapters certified trainers.

I believe on-the-ground-assistance is crucial in order to track progress and productivity levels in our Chapter. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to conduct these visits and relied on online trainings, meetings and data collection. Now going forward, we want to physically see what challenges our members are facing in their rabbitries and to ascertain what is lacking in terms of infrastructure, breeding stock, feed, hygiene and breeding practices. I believe that by adopting this all-hands-on-deck approach, our agenda to transition farmers from backyard farming to commercial production will be realised.

As the Matabeleland region is poised to become the epicentre of rabbit production, it is paramount that members are equipped with the necessary tools to ramp up production in order to meet the ever-increasing demand for rabbit meat!



Bulawayo Youth Ambassadors visiting one of the Members' rabbitry

Mavhenyengwa elected President of Masvingo Chapter



**Kudakwashe Mavhenyengwa ,
ZICORBA Masvingo Chapter President holds his
Trainer of Trainers international certification**

Prominent rabbit farmer, Kudakwashe Mavhenyengwa popularly known as Wabbits Rabbitry, was recently elected as the substantive president of ZICORBA Masvingo Chapter following the expiry of the tenure of the interim Lydia Chimbari-led executive.

Mavhenyengwa leads a strong six-member executive, which includes Secretary General Rudo Sithole; Treasurer Lydia Chikundi; Membership Secretary Shamiso Hamadishe; Marketing and Publicity Secretary Sydney Madzivanyika and Secretary for Inspection and Certification Joyce Tamirepi.

The chapter vice president post was not contested and remains vacant.

Speaking to Bunny World, after his victory, the Mavhenyengwa promised to deliver sweeping changes that will see growth of the commercial rabbit breeding sector in Masvingo.

"I have been in the rabbit farming sector since 2004 and now possess a lot of knowledge and experience that I would want to utilise to ensure that Masvingo becomes the hub of commercial rabbit farming in Zimbabwe. With the help of my colleagues in this executive, we can do more," Mavhenyengwa said.

The elections were supervised by Rejoice Nyamanhindi and Leeroy Madzvimbo, both Chapter executive members of Midlands and Bulawayo, respectively.

ZICORBA Secretary General Mrs. Siphosethu Ncube Moyo thanked members of the Masvingo Chapter for voting in their numbers and for the maturity they displayed during the plebiscite reminding them that there were no winners or losers as the province would now benefit by having a substantive executive.



**Lydia Chikundi
Chapter Treasurer**



**Rudo Sithole
Chapter Secretary General**



**"Knowing your breeds
is a key factor in
running a successful
rabbity"**

Farmer Jane

**KNOW
YOUR
BREEDS**



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

*** BREED : AMERICAN SABLE RABBIT**

The American Sable is a commercial breed that was developed by Otto Brock in 1924. By crossbreeding many purebred Chinchillas, he developed the American Sable rabbit with different coloring. Recessive genes in the Chinchilla lines produced an entirely new color, with an identical body shape.

Distinct Features: The main colour of these rabbits is sepia brown with darker sepia brown over the back, feet, face, ears and tail. It has graduated coloring with a sepia brown over the flanks that darkens on the face, ears, feet, back and tail.

RATING : * * * * *

American Sable rabbits have a lifespan of 5-10 years and weigh around 4- 4.5 kgs when fully grown.



JOIN NOW AND BECOME A MEMBER



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Doyenne of the rabbit industry : Paidamoyo Nyamakanga



Mrs Paidamoyo Nyamakanga Raymeg Holdings Executive Director

Famed for her contribution to the growth of the rabbit sector in Zimbabwe, Mrs. Paidamoyo Nyamakanga has broken the glass ceiling in an industry which was predominantly male to become the doyenne of the fastest growing livestock industry sub-sector.

Not only has she turned the fortunes of the rabbit industry in Zimbabwe for the better by introducing game changing strategies, but has also lured women and youths in agriculture to join the bandwagon.

Mrs. Nyamakanga's journey in the cuniculture industry started a few years back but made a significant impact in 2021 when she embarked on a pure-breed roll out programme that has seen many rabbit farmers throughout the country benefiting from donations of pure breed rabbits, feed, cages as well as training.

"To date over 200 pure breed rabbits have been donated to farmers in Zimbabwe's 10 provinces. From the first round of donations, over 300 kits have so far been kindled, increasing the pool of pure breed rabbits in the country," she said.

"I sleep better at night if I know that I made a good impact in people's lives and made a positive difference that will outlive me," she added.

The Executive Director of Raymeg Holdings, Mrs. Nyamakanga is a holder of a Master of Arts in International Studies from the University of Nairobi. She boasts of over 15 years experience in international relations, international trade, international policy analysis,

public relations, marketing, business development, human resources, project management and general management.

Raymeg Holdings is a diversified company with interests spanning strategic communication, farming, real estate, leisure resorts as well as retail and finance.

Wife to the first ZICORBA National President, Mr. Regis Nyamakanga, she is also an advocacy specialist with experience working in the business membership organisations fraternity in East Africa.

Raymeg built from scratch a US\$1 million export-certified abattoir in Harare which has a capacity to slaughter between 2,5 and 3,5 tonnes of rabbits in a single 8-hour shift. The facility, the first-ever rabbit slaughter house in the country, is also certified by the Halaal Council of Zimbabwe to ensure that it distributes rabbit meat countrywide.

The Raymeg Holdings boss told Bunny World in an interview that boosting capacity of local rabbit farmers by her company bode well for Zimbabwe's only rabbit abattoir, a project she oversaw to its completion.

"The abattoir has a capacity to slaughter between 2 500 to 3 500 rabbits in a single 8-hour shift and we encourage local farmers to raise rabbits which can be supplied to the abattoir," said Mrs. Nyamakanga.

In line with expansion projects for the industry that's so dear to her heart, Mrs. Nyamakanga also highlighted the construction of a rabbit meat hub currently in the pipeline.

"In the first half of this year a rabbit meat hub, the first of its kind in Africa which will be the centre for rabbit distribution will be opened in Harare," she told Bunny World.

Driven by passion to grow the rabbit industry in Zimbabwe and the upliftment of women and youths, Mrs. Nyamakanga's desire is to see more women participate in the rabbit industry.

"Many women and youths included have welcomed rabbit rearing as a sustainable income generating project and have been actively participating in the programme," said the Raymeg boss.

Apart from managing the abattoir and the new rabbit meat hub, Mrs. Nyamakanga runs a rabbitry in Harare with over 500 pure breed rabbits. Her intention after the second round of pure breed rollout is to increase the pure breed breeding stock at the rabbitry to more than 2 000.

She also sees a huge potential in the rabbit sector and believes that if the cuniculture industry is well supported it has the potential to contribute immensely to the country's Gross Domestic Product.

"Zimbabwe can easily become the world's leading rabbit meat producer if more farmers are supported to reach their potential," said an upbeat Mrs. Nyamakanga.

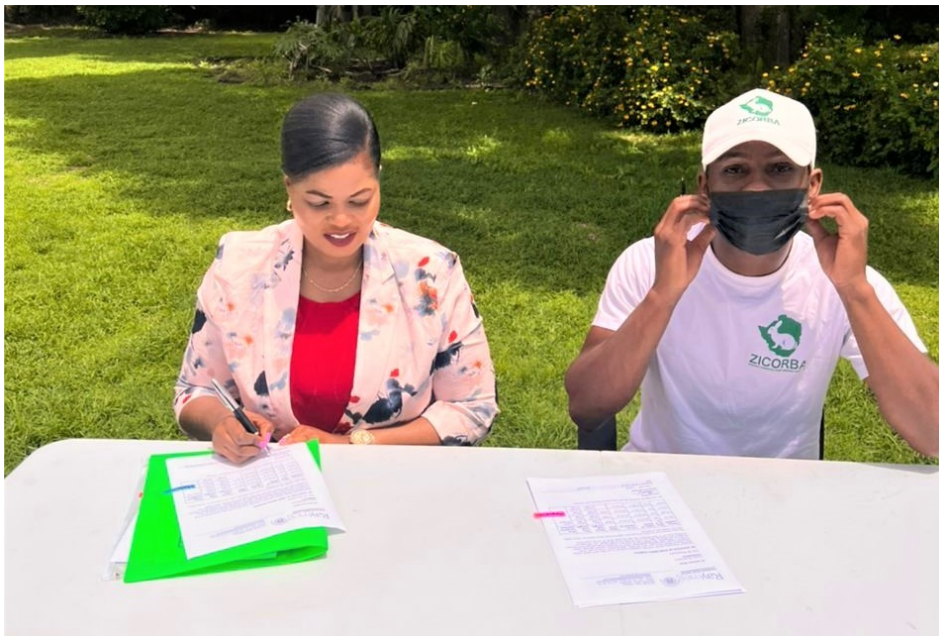
The ardent reader and philanthropist, heads a staff compliment of more than 50 in Zimbabwe. Raymeg also has operations in South Africa, Kenya and the Horn of Africa region.

"She is results driven, a team player, a great mentor with exceptional interpersonal and communication skills," said one of her staff members

Mrs. Nyamakanga is also an environmentalist at heart who enjoys planting trees to beautify the environment.



Raymeg pure breeds distribution



ZICORBA members from various provinces receive pure breed rabbits from Raymeg Executive Director Mrs. Paidamoyo Nyamakanga recently



Youths Venture into Rabbit Farming for Self-Employment



Youths in Nyahururu Sub-County have ventured into rabbit farming as a way of creating self-employment due to the scarcity of job opportunities.

The Chairperson of a youth self-help group at Lower Cosite village in Nyahururu town, Peter Kinyua, said they joined and embarked on rabbit farming to create employment for themselves.

“It’s high time we as youths join and share ideas in order to create job opportunities. We must admit that there are no jobs in Kenya and that doesn’t mean we stay idle. That’s why we have come together to start up a project of rabbit farming to earn a living,” he added.

“It’s high time we as youths join and share ideas in order to create job opportunities. We must admit that there are no jobs in Kenya and that doesn’t mean we stay idle. That’s why we have come together to start up a project of rabbit farming to earn a living,”

A member of the group, Fredrick Chege said they did not venture into rabbit farming for meat alone, but also for their urine which he said had many agricultural benefits.

“Rabbit urine is highly valued in the agricultural sector. Many counties that practice agriculture use it as a pesticide to control pests that destroy crops,” he explained.

“Rabbits have huge benefits that many people don’t know. We have done enough research before coming to a consensus to venture into this kind of farming. We have realized that rabbits not only provide white meat, which is of good health to consumers, but also produce very beneficial urine,” Chege went on.

He claimed a rabbit produces an average of 350ml of urine every day and so 10 rabbits for instance can give a farmer about three litres of urine which translates to Sh900 daily as a litre of rabbit urine goes for Sh300.

In Kenya, rabbit farming has been improving over the last decade. According to Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical (FAOSTAT) – Kenya report, rabbit population increased from 534,000 in 2010 to 961,000 in 2015.

In 2010, the government through the Ministry of Livestock Development initiated a Rabbit Production Project in 22 districts spread across the country, following the Impact Assessment Report (2006) by National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme (NALEP) which had identified rabbit production as a means to address food security and boost income for small scale farmers.

Source; Kenya News Agency

Whole roasted 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

rabbis - 1 whole rabbit
water
vinegar - equal parts with water
bacon - 5.5 oz (150 g) for stuffing
oil - 6 tablespoons
onions - 3 heads
water - 1 1/2 cups, hot
salt
black pepper
bay leaf
lemons - 1/2 a lemon's zest and juice
flour - 1 tsp

Method

Wash and clean the rabbit, salt it well and leave it for 12-24 hours in a marinade of equal parts water and vinegar.

Wash it from the marinade and stuff with pieces of bacon. Separately, sauté the crushed onions in oil. Put the onions in an oven dish and put the rabbit on top.

Soak it with hot water, add salt, pepper, bay leaf and lemon peel to taste. Put the rabbit to bake under foil.

Once the rabbit softens, pour on the sauce consisting of flour diluted with lemon juice. Finish roasting the rabbit for another 30 minutes or until fully ready, and finally remove the foil.

If you love delicious home-cooked food, we recommend you try out our other popular recipes such as Roasted Rabbit and Rabbit Soup.


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