



ZICORBA engages experts to produce own feedas the price of pellets bites



Nyamakanga says the sharp rise in the price of pellets is threatening the viability of rabbit farmers

Rabbit farmers lobby group Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) has engaged top experts to help it produce own rabbit pellets to ward off the sharp rise in the cost of stockfeed and halt the erosion on farmers’ profit margins, a top official has said.

President Regis Nyamakanga said the ZICORBA pellet-making project, which will be launched in next month (May 2022) and implemented in phases, was expected to slash the cost of rabbit feed by about 50 percent.

“We have assembled a team of experts to work with us in producing our own feed. The process will entail training of our own people on feed formulation and mixing, engaging farmers to produce essential ingredients for the production of rabbit pellets and commissioning of the pellet making plant,” Nyamakanga said.

A medium-scale pellet-making machine had already been procured, he said adding that more such machines would be imported soon and commissioned in different parts of the country to ensure that farmers have easy access to the ZICORBA pellets.

The ZICORBA pellets are expected to hit the market in the next 6 to 12 months.

“The prices of rabbit pellets have shot up in recent months and the situation is threatening to drive many farmers out of business. As a representative body of rabbit farmers, we could not allow this to go unchecked. We had to take action,” Nyamakanga said.

Feed account for about 70 percent of cost of rabbit production. Other input costs include rabbit cages, medicines, breeding stock and labour, the prices of which have also been on a rise for several months making rabbit production less competitive compared to other types of livestock.

“In view of the sharp rise in our cost of production, ZICORBA had to devise ways to temporarily manage the situation. This included negotiating for price discounts with leading stockfeed companies such as Agrifoods, Capital Foods, National Foods and Hyperfeed.

“We are also about to finalise a deal with GAIN, a leading distributor of stockfeed, for our farmers to access rabbit pellets at a discount from their 166 branches dotted across the country.

“While these measures bring relief to our farmers, we are acutely aware that this is not sustainable. We need a lasting solution to the persistent increases in the cost of rabbit feed hence the plan to produce our own rabbit pellets,” the ZICORBA chief said.

Nyamakanga said by producing own feed, ZICORBA was aiming at lowering the cost of production by about 30 to 50 percent and in turn enable rabbit meat to compete effectively with other types of meat such as pork, fish, chicken and beef.

Since its formation in July 2020, ZICORBA has been promoting the production of rabbits to improve the livelihoods of about 1.8 million households in Zimbabwe, create employment for youth and women and contribute to the country’s gross domestic product (GDP).

There are immense benefits associated with eating rabbit meat. More than 1 million tonnes of rabbit meat are consumed worldwide per year, accounting for about \$7.5 billion in revenue.

ZICORBA scoops the coveted Best Newcomer Award at ZITF



President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa presenting an award to ZICORBA for being the best new comer exhibitor at ZITF

The Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) scooped the coveted Best Newcomer Award at the just ended Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) 2022.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa presented the award to ZICORBA incoming Secretary General Ntokozo Sibanda and outgoing SG Siphosethu Ncube-Moyo at a colourful ceremony held at the ZITF grounds in Bulawayo at the weekend.

ZICORBA was formed in July 2020 to champion the interests of rabbit farmers in Zimbabwe. It is one of the strongest brands in corporate Zimbabwe. The Association's stand at the ZITF was a major centre of attraction. Many top level visitors thronged the stand where different rabbit breeds, feed and medicines were on display.

"Over 2500 people visited the stand during the exhibition. A number of organisations, including the Zimbabwe Prison Services (ZPS), expressed interest in partnering ZICORBA in rabbit production. We also registered a number of farmers who want to join the Association," Sibanda said.

"It was also pleasing to note that a large number of youth who visited the stand were keen on taking up rabbit farming as a sustainable project and it is an area which we are going to engage other strategic partners on," she added.

"This award is testament that ZICORBA is a force to reckon with not only in Zimbabwe but on the African continent. On a daily basis we receive enquires from farmers across the continent wishing to partner with us. We owe this award to our members, and the rabbit farmers in general," Sibanda said.

ZICORBA Secretary General Ntokozo Sibanda (left) Leroy Madzvimbo (centre) and Siphosethu Ncube-Moyo (right) pose with trophy won by ZICORBA at the ZITF



#ZITF2022 in Pictures



Chengeta takes the reigns at Harare Chapter, Mbava deputises



Mrs. Grace Chengeta
ZICORBA Harare
Chapter President

Prominent rabbit farmer, Mrs. Grace Chengeta, has taken over as President of the Harare Chapter of the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA), making her the fifth female regional president of Zimbabwe's sole rabbit farming lobby group. Chengeta joins the league of other female Chapter Presidents in ZICORBA, namely Siphosethu Ncube-Moyo, Bulawayo; Ntokozo Sibanda, Matabeleland region; Kholiwe Kafungura, Mashonaland East and Rejoyce Nyamanhindi, Midlands.

ZICORBA, which was launched in July 2020 to champion the interests of a plethora of rabbit farmers in Zimbabwe, is one of the most gender-sensitive organizations in Zimbabwe with more than 50 percent of its members being women.

In addition, more than 60 percent of positions in ZICORBA's top decision organ, the national executive, are filled by women, mostly youth. The powerful role of National Secretary General is also held by a woman.

Chengeta took over as President of Harare Chapter, ZICORBA's biggest region by members, this month following the recent resignation of Godknows Gvamombe. Chengeta was previously Chapter Secretary General.

A well-known rabbit breeder, Mr. Innocent Mbava, assumed the role of Vice Chapter President this month, after Mike Nyanzira stepped down from the position. And an upcoming rabbit farmer, Eric Taruwona, took over from Chengeta as Chapter Secretary General.

Meanwhile, Mr James Samhembere has taken over from Wisdom Nyirenda as Secretary General for the Mashonaland East Chapter. Samhembere is a successful businessman and farmer.

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

The Association has 14 full-time staff, headed by a National Coordinator. Other roles include National Training Coordinator and Technical advisor, Communications Officer, Web Master and 10 Provincial Coordinators/Youth Ambassadors.

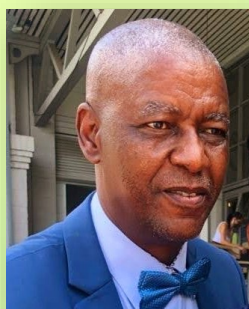
ZICORBA aims to broaden rabbit farming among the majority of Zimbabweans, in particular women and youth. Its target is to cover 1.8 million households, create employment, and contribute to the country's gross domestic product.



Mr. Innocent Mbava,
ZICORBA Harare Chapter
Vice President



Mr. Eric Taruwona
ZICORBA Harare Chapter
Secretary General



Mr. James Samhembere
ZICORBA Mash East Chapter
Secretary General

Midlands Chapter holds strategic planning workshop

The ZICORBA Midlands Chapter held its strategic planning workshop on April 30, with a pledge to become one of the biggest rabbit producing regions in Zimbabwe.

The meeting, which was attended by representatives from feed distributor GAIN, Veterinary Distributors and Farmers Choice, attracted farmers from various parts of Midlands province. ZICORBA National President, Regis Nyamakanga, also attended the workshop.

Chapter President Rejoyce Nyamanhindi said her region was poised to become one of the biggest and best in ZICORBA. She urged those farmers who have not joined ZICORBA to do so.

ZICORBA National Training and Technical Coordinator, Garisanai Mudzingwa, gave a talk on the art of commercial rabbit keeping.



Rabbit farming stakeholders who were part of the Midlands strategic planning workshop recently held in Gweru

ZICORBA launches young farmers' club



Kingston Rakupeni showing off his recently acquired 18 doe cage funded by Raymeg Consultants

The Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) has launched a Young Rabbit-Farmers' Club to propel youth into commercial cuniculture production. The initiative, which is being funded by Raymeg Consultants Private Limited (Raymeg), is aimed at benefiting youth in the country's 10 provinces. Raymeg is a corporate member of ZICORBA. It owns the country's only rabbit abattoir and one of the biggest rabbitries in Zimbabwe. Since ZICORBA was launched in July 2020, the association has taken a deliberate stance to economically empower youth and women by assisting them with breeding stock and in setting up hutches or rabbit cages. Bunny World caught up with one of the members of ZICORBA's Young Rabbit-Farmers Club, Kingston Rakupeni, who is also ZICORBA Youth Ambassador for Manicaland. **Below is an excerpt of the interview:**

BW: What is the Young Rabbit-Farmers' Club all about?

KR: This initiative is about empowering youth to venture into the cash economy through commercial rabbit production. Under the programme youth in Manicaland, Mashonaland, Matabeleland, Midlands, Harare and Masvingo provinces, who are members of ZICORBA receive a donation of pure breeds and cages from Raymeg, which will help kick-start them into commercial rabbit farmers.

Lack of funding to buy breeding stock and rabbit cages has been a major stumbling block in our quest to move from subsistence to commercial rabbit production. The latest initiative by ZICORBA and Raymeg has broken the logjam! I personally received breeding stock and a metal cage, which can accommodate 18 does and 100 weaners. My dreams of becoming a commercial rabbit farmer are finally coming true, thanks to ZICORBA and Raymeg!

BW: How does the cage donation help in your endeavour to commercialise?

KR: The metal cage is strong and durable requiring less repairs over time, hence it will lower my production costs. It is secure from the most common threats at a rabbitry, including thieves, rodents and other predators. The cage is also hygienic and is fitted with self-cleaning feature resulting in less occurrence of parasites and disease outbreaks. It also enables me to collect rabbit waste, namely urine and droppings which can be sold or alternatively used as organic fertilizer at my farm. I can safely say the cage was the missing piece in my my commercial rabbit farming puzzle, mind you it is the most expensive part of setting up a rabbitry.

BW: How are you influencing other youth in your area to venture into commercial rabbit farming?

KR: I intend to use the donated rabbit cage mainly as a demonstration site for other young farmers in my area, where they can visit and practically learn various aspects of commercial rabbit farming like standard cage setup, different commercial rabbit breeds, breeding process and breeding. I will also do on-site rabbit training sessions at my rabbitry.

BW: Any parting words to young farmers out there?

KR: I encourage young farmers out there to join ZICORBA, the home for rabbit production. Together we can then hold each others' hands and start the journey towards one of the most successful enterprises – commercial rabbit production. Rabbit farming is a highly profitable venture that can keep my fellow youth from engaging in drug abuse, prostitution and many other abhorrent activities. Kurima tsuro kukohwa mari!

Chef Mbongeni scoops top price at the ZICORBA Cook Off competition



Winner of the inaugural ZICORBA Rabbit Cook-Off Chef Mbongeni Ncube receiving his prize from Mrs Nkomo

Chef Mbongeni Ncube of Africa Suns Holiday Inn Bulawayo, popularly known as Chef Nigel, came top at the inaugural ZICORBA Cook Off competition held in Bulawayo early this month. His stuffed rabbit dish carried the day (see page 8 for full details).

The second position went to Chef Craig Shurah of Chef Shurah's Catering, who is known as Chef Shurah. He prepared seared rabbit steak with mixed seasonal vegetables and Cheddar cheese topping. Chef Kudakwashe Mhari from Cresta Churchill hotel Bulawayo came third in a competition.

Other contestants were Chef Silent Madongwe known as Chef Nash; Chef Ryan Hendrikse and Chef Violet Violet Mwanza. Chef Zinzi catered for the guests as she served a 2 Course Gourmet Meal.

Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) deputy CEO, Ms Stella Nkomo, Plate Catering company founder and an International Executive Chef, Dayne Pigors; and Executive Chef Brighton Nekatambe were judges at the event which attracted more than 150 culinary fanatics.

The outgoing ZICORBA Secretary General Siphosethu Ncube-Moyo said the Cook Off competition was meant to popularize the consumption of rabbit meat in Zimbabwe because of its immense health benefits.

"Rabbit is one of the best white meats available on the market today. It has a high percentage of easily digestible protein and contains the least amount of fat among all the other available meats. The meat has low in calorie value compared to other meats. It is almost cholesterol free and therefore heart patient friendly," Ncube-Moyo said.



Chef Craig Shurah came second in the competition



Chef Kudakwashe Mhari scooped the third prize

“Rabbit Cook-Off” Highlights



Hosted by Bulawayo Chapter @ Tin Cup Pub & Grill (Bulawayo)





Hopping on the trend: Vietnamese farmer finds fortune in rabbits



Picture of a commercial rabbit farming set up

Theng Giang, Vietnam — Đặng Hong Phúc was one of the first large-scale rabbit breeders in Cho Gao District, in the Mekong Delta province of Tien Giang, turning to them after failing to make ends meet in raising other livestock.

Rabbits raising has proved to be a valuable income to Phúc, 37, as demand from restaurants has grown.

Phúc's rabbit farm in Long Bình Điền Commune has over 4,500 rabbits. On average, his farm sells about 120 rabbits each day with a total weight of more than 300kg of meat - worth about \$900.

Phúc said that in the past, his family tried raising chickens, ducks, pigs, and goats, but the profits never materialised in the same way.

Seven years ago, he went to Đồng Nai Province. Realising rabbit meat was popular in the market, Phúc decided to raise rabbits himself.

He went to Vĩnh Phúc Province in the north to buy baby rabbits, buying just 20 rabbits at first.

He said: "The rabbits are easy to raise - their main source of feed is vegetables, which are locally available and not too costly. A female rabbit has an average five babies after 45 days."

A ready-to-sell rabbit has an average weight of 2.3kg with prices of \$3/kg. Baby rabbits can be sold after four months, once they weigh over 2kg, according to Phúc. Realising the potential of the market, a year later Phúc invested in expandable cages for more than 1,000 rabbits.

"I have expanding cages and installed ventilation and cooling systems, so the rabbits can develop well," he said.

While not only bringing high economic efficiency for the family, Phúc's farm provides quality baby rabbits to local breeders. He is happy to share his breeding experiences, and provide support loans to local breeders who want to start in the business.

However, he said, when expanding the scale of rabbit farm, he had to look for customers in the southern provinces and the Central Highlands. His business was growing thanks to the number of restaurants he was supplying, so Phúc decided to become the purchaser from local rabbit breeding households.

He connected with farming households to set up a system with him as the focal point, responsible for providing baby rabbits, technology, materials for cages, feed and product consumption.

In addition to selling meat rabbits, Phúc also sells rabbits as house pets to traders, and while the requirements for nursing and technology are higher, the economic value of each rabbit also increases.

"After seven years of raising rabbits, my family has a stable income", he said.

All 30 rabbit-breeding farms in Phúc's breeding system run efficiently. Raising rabbits is more stable than chickens or pigs in general.

"Since switching to rabbit farming, local households in the system have all become better off and everyone is happy," Phúc said.

According to senior officials at Long Bình Điền Commune authorities, the rabbit raising model of Phúc was one of the typical household examples in the area. "It is learned by many people. Currently, Phúc's model is opening a new direction for many households, so the authorities are also very supportive," the official said. —VNS

Stuffed rabbit leg with mash potatoes and cinnamon butternut

“ 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



Recipe by
Chef Mbongeni Ncube



Ingredients

2 rabbit legs (hind)	50g Tomato puree	50ml fresh cream
3leaves spinach	50ml tomato Ketchup	Salt
1pallet mushrooms	Butternut	Ground black pepper
1 head garlic	10g ground cinnamon	Mixed herbs
7baby carrots	Sugar	500ml vegetable stock
3 small onions	2 potatoes	1l rabbit stock
50g Gouda cheese (grated)	25g margarine	

Instructions

Filling

Cut mushrooms, 3cloves garlic, 2 carrots and 1 onion into a fine dice and sweat. Season with salt and pepper. Leave to cool for a few minutes and add the cheese. Blanch spinach leaves in vegetable stock and refresh in cold water. Wrap the filling into 2 balls using the spinach.

Rabbit legs

Using a finger gently pull out the upper bone from the meat leaving a pocket. Again, pull out the lower bone turning the meat inside out to leave it like a lollipop. Cut off the tip of the bone at a 45° angle. Stuff the pocket with the filling, tightly wrapping the meat in foil paper leaving out the bone. Boil for 15-20minutes in rabbit stock

Sauce

Chop 1onion, 1 baby carrot, 4cloves garlic and sweat. Add tomato puree and cook over medium heat for 3-5mins then add the tomato sauce and rabbit stock. Season with salt, pepper and mixed herbs and leave to simmer.

After boiling the rabbit remove from foil paper and braise in sauce for at least 10mins.

Garnish and plate as desired.



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