



June-July
2022

African rabbit producers throw their weight behind ZICORBA



From top left;

Nigeria's Oyo State Rabbit Farmers and Breeders Association president, Pastor Josephine Oyelami ; Rabbit Farmers Association of Zambia president, Chris Daka ; Botswana's Northern Rabbit Breeders Association (NORBA) president, Timbu Iris Ntjenje ; Rabbit Breeders Association of Kenya (RABAK) president Peter Waiganjo ; Chief Executive of National Rabbit Training Institute of Kenya, Nathan Rotich ; Buck and Doe of Uganda president Maggie Lukowe ; Mozambique Rabbit Producers Association president Edwardo Daveto and Zimbabwe's Livestock and Meat Advisory Council (LMAC) Chief Executive, Dr Renneth Mano

African rabbit producers and Zimbabwean authorities have congratulated the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) on its second anniversary dubbing it one of the most innovative and successful rabbit farmers' lobby groups on the continent.

Nigeria's Oyo State Rabbit Farmers and Breeders Association president, Pastor Josephine Oyelami, pledged her organisation's continued cooperation with ZICORBA in the development of a strong African rabbit farming sector.

Rabbit Farmers Association of Zambia president, Chris Daka, said ZICORBA's achievements over the past two years were inspirational while Anton Gouws, an Executive of South Africa's Gauteng Rabbit Breeders Association (GRBA), said his organisation would continue to play a part in the growth and development of the rabbit industry in Zimbabwe.

Timbu Iris Ntjenje, the president of Botswana's Northern Rabbit Breeders Association (NORBA) said rabbit farmers in Botswana were encouraged by ZICORBA's achievements over a relatively short space of time. She said NORBA was in talks with its Zimbabwean counterparts on the possibility of importing rabbit meat and rabbit breeding stock from the latter.

Rabbit Breeders Association of Kenya (RABAK) president Peter Waiganjo pledged his organisation's continued support to ZICOR-

BA and Zimbabwe's rabbit industry while Mr Nathan Rotich, the Chief Executive of National Rabbit Training Institute of Kenya, said Zimbabwe was poised to play a leading role on rabbit production in Africa.

Buck and Doe of Uganda president Maggie Lukowe said she hoped that the partnership between her organisation and ZICORBA would continue to grow in leaps and bounds for the benefit of rabbit producers in Africa.

Mozambique Rabbit Producers Association president Edwardo Daveto threw his organisation's weight behind ZICORBA. "We pledge our full support to the vision, mission, strategy of ZICORBA and looking forward to greater cooperation between our two organisations."

Zimbabwe's Livestock and Meat Advisory Council (LMAC) Chief Executive, Dr Renneth Mano, said ZICORBA, which is the youngest livestock value-chains in the country, had made tremendous efforts in coming up with innovative ways to reorganise and re-energise the rabbit production sector.

The LMAC boss said ZICORBA had adopted a different approach in dealing with challenges in the sector by treating the problems as opportunities and crafting solutions to overcome them. LMAC is an umbrella body that represents 13 livestock associations.

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Special Anniversary Edition



FREE

Zim Chefs battle it out in national rabbit meat Cook Off



Part of the Chefs who competed in the Bulawayo and Manicaland rabbit meat Cook –Off competitions

Zimbabwe Chefs will battle it out in the ZICORBA's rabbit meat Cook Off Competition scheduled for Harare at the end of October this year.

This follows the successful hosting of ZICORBA's inaugural rabbit meat Cook Off Competition held in April in Zimbabwe's second largest city of Bulawayo and the Battle of the Chefs competition held in the eastern town of Rusape in March.

Cook Off Competitions are part of a variety of strategies employed by rabbit farmers' lobby group, the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA), to popularise the consumption of rabbit meat in the country due to its immense health benefits.

ZICORBA Harare Chapter President Grace Chengeta told Bunny World in an interview that 14 Chefs from the country's various hotels and top restaurants will take part in the competition which will be held in Harare on October 29.

"We are hoping that the upcoming rabbit meat Cook Off Competition will help us first and foremost to promote the ZICOR-

BA brand not only in Harare but across the whole country. The magnitude of the event is also expected to raise awareness about the growing rabbit industry which is being dubbed the next 'Zim Gold'. We also want people to experience how tasty and healthy rabbit meat can be through the various dishes that will be prepared by the country's professional Chefs," Chengeta said.

She said a number of companies and top hotels had already shown strong interest in the event, which will be held at a popular venue in Harare. And top band and DJ are billed to perform at the Cook Off Competition, which will be the biggest event in Zimbabwe's culinary industry this year.

"Fourteen Chefs from all over Zimbabwe will battle it out in the event that will be attended by ZICORBA members, individuals, corporate players in the rabbit and associated industries. We expect informative presentations on rabbit meat industry, a feel of the benefits of rabbit meat, hands on experience on how to prepare rabbit meat, entertainment, networking and business opportunities. It will be the biggest such event in the country laced with lots of fun."

Chief Rusike hails ZICORBA's rabbit production training programmes

Chief Rusike, born Aron Muchenje Mashave, from Goromonzi in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland East Province, has urged his community to share and exchange knowledge on commercial rabbit farming to ensure that new and upcoming farmers practice best international practices and run profitable projects.

He said this during a practical-based rabbit training workshop hosted by Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) Mashonaland East Chapter in Goromonzi South.

Chief Rusike said the training, which was attended by more than 30 farmers in his community, would bolster ongoing and upcoming rabbit projects as the Goromonzi South constituency had already embraced rabbit farming as a viable project.

"I like to thank Mr Garisanai Mudzingwa from ZICORBA for this eye-opening training on how to run a profitable rabbit farming enterprise. I would also like to thank our gracious host Mr James Samhembere for giving up the platform to learn more at his rabbitry with practicals on site. Those with eyes and ears have heard and seen for themselves. It is now their task to share this valuable information with those who could not attend so that that no farmer is left behind in implementing these very good techniques that we learnt," he said

The traditional leader also encouraged ZICORBA to offer regular trainings to ensure that farmers continue to have access to practical and useful information at their fingertips.

"I hope this is not the beginning of the end but the beginning of a journey that will culminate in a series of more training for my community to ensure that they are continuously sharpened in terms of the best rabbit farming practices. The more we learn, the better we become and the more profitable our projects become. I believe rabbit farming will financially empower the Goromonzi south community if done properly," Chief Rusike said.



Chief Rusike giving a vote of thanks

Face-to-face training entrenches acquisition of knowledge



ZICORBA National Training Coordinator and Technical Advisor, Garisanai Mudzingwa

ZICORBA Mashonaland East Chapter has applauded the National Training Coordinator and Technical Advisor, Mr Garisanai Mudzingwa, for conducting the first practical rabbit production training workshop in the region, a top official has said.

Speaking on the side-lines of that training held in Goromonzi South, Mashonaland East Chapter President Mrs Kholiwe Kafungura said the practical training gave her members an edge due to the power of demonstration presented at Mr Samhembere's rabbitry.

The training was held at plot number 15 Dunstan Farm belonging to Mr James Samhembere and attended by more than 30 local farmers with a local chief being the guest of honour.

"We always learn a lot on our WhatsApp Training group but it lacks in visuals and demonstration, however today Mr Mudzingwa quenched our thirst for knowledge by showing us what we usually learn in theory. Reading some of these things and seeing them in real life is a completely different experience so as a chapter we applaud Mr Mudzingwa for taking his time to give us a feel of the practical side of commercial rabbit farming," she said.

Mrs Alison Hill a rabbit farmer based in Ruwa Mashonaland echoed the same sentiments.

"The training was indepth besides the fact that it was conducted in a single day. Mr Samhembere's rabbitry follows the dictates of a commercial rabbitry set up so it was very easy to follow what Mr Mudzingwa was saying as most of the things were right in front of us. We learnt a lot on housing, breed selection and different types of breeds, feeding, record keeping and mating which was the most popular topic. All I can say is the training was on point and job well done to Mr Mudzingwa."

Joe Chipanga from Seke Mashonaland East said he hoped that more face-to-face trainings by Mudzingwa would be held to ensure that acquisition of knowledge was entrenched.

"This was my first time to attend a face-to-face practical-based training and it was worth it. I think I learnt a lot more in one day than I had over the past years on my own. Some of the things that I was doing wrong at my rabbitry were corrected today by Gari. He is truly a fountain of knowledge when it comes to rabbit farming. As a Chapter we need more of these trainings if we are to grow as commercial rabbit farmers," Chipanga said.



ZICORBA 2nd Anniversary celebrations in pics





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Tamirepi assumes powerful SG role at Masvingo Chapter

Ms Joyce Tamirepi, a well-known farmer and businesswoman in Mashava, Masvingo, last month took over the powerful role of Secretary General of ZICORBA's Masvingo Chapter following the resignation of Rudo Sithole to join an international non-governmental organisation.

Before her new role, Tamirepi was Chapter Secretary for Inspection and Certification.

Bunny World (**BW**) caught up with Tamirepi to get insights into what makes her tick. Below is a summary of an interview with her.

BW: Who is Joyce Tamirepi?

JT: I am a businesswoman and farmer based in Mashava, Masvingo province, specialising in crops like soya beans, maize, sorghum. I am also into horticulture concentrating on potatoes onions and vegetables. In addition to rearing rabbits, I also do commercial poultry farming.



Ms Joyce Tamirepi, Masvingo Chapter Secretary General

BW: How did your rabbit farming journey begin?

JT: I ventured into rabbit farming in 2021 after being inspired by a friend. My journey started with one buck, two does and three weaners. The first six months were not easy at all because I had the wrong type of breeds and had to spend a lot of money on feeds and turnover was very low.

To learn more about rabbit farming, I joined ZICORBA in August 2021 and received one buck and one doe pure breed Chinchilla rabbits from Raymeg Holdings, in February 2022. With this boost my focus shifted to working on my breeds replacing indigenous breeds at my rabbitry. I am proud to say that at the moment I have four bucks and seven does as well as 50 weaners and 40 kits. I am now working on being a major rabbit breeder in Masvingo.

BW: What experience or expertise do you bring to your new assignment as Chapter Secretary General

I am a businesswoman, farmer and a teacher by profession with vast experience in retail. Outside of that I was Inspection and Certification Secretary for Masvingo Chapter before my recent appointment. I want to make sure that rabbit farming becomes very profitable for farmers in Masvingo. As a Chapter we will be pushing for a central position where all the Masvingo ZICORBA members can bring their rabbits and sell them, that way we also monitor a lot of issues like hygiene and encourage members to use the correct methods of rearing rabbits. We want to organize ourselves as a Chapter to sell rabbits to hotels, restaurants, take-aways and individuals as a way of boosting our capacity to fulfil orders.

BW: What are your words of encouragement to budding rabbit farmers?

JT: I would want to encourage budding farmers to take rabbit farming seriously as it is a very lucrative business venture which requires a small space but grows in a very short space of time. I recommend that youths and women take up rabbit farming to empower themselves financially.



Rabbit farmer Mudonhi dreams big



Ms Monica Mudonhi holding a pure breed New Zealand White rabbit

Monica Mudonhi (66) braces the winter cold as she does her daily routine of replenishing food troughs with pellets and making sure that her rabbits also have adequate water and hay. It's six o'clock in the morning and the widow and mother of two decides to retire at her front porch, sipping a hot cup of coffee as she admires her flourishing rabbitry.

Looking back at how her journey started with just nine rabbits donated by Raymeg Holdings, a corporate member of the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA), Mrs Mudonhi is all smiles as her rabbitry now boasts of a staggering population of 75 rabbits.

She takes Bunny World down memory lane on how she started her rabbitry and the challenges that she faced as she lacked the much-needed knowledge about the business and how she overcame with assistance from ZICORBA.

"Having started rabbit farming sometime in October last year, I almost gave up on rabbit farming due to lack of knowledge and poor management. I even lost some rabbits to dogs and that was very frustrating. As a farmer, I thought that rabbit farming would be a stroll in the park but the practical side of keeping rabbits proved me otherwise," she said.

Through training offered by ZICORBA to its members, Mrs Mudonhi turned the tide and started to apprehend the tenets of commercial rabbit farming which was evidenced in the boom of her rabbit stock.

"As the training started to sink in, positive results naturally followed. At one time I got kits from four does at once and this

really brought out the rabbit farmer in me. I was so inspired by how my rabbits were responding to the new management style that I had introduced after implementing what I had learnt from training.

"Since then, I have never looked back and I hope to become one of the biggest breeders in Mashonaland East. With the breeding stock assistance that I got from Raymeg Holdings as well as the continued training and technical assistance that I get from ZICORBA, the sky is the limit," she said.

Mrs. Mudonhi who is also the ZICORBA Mashonaland East Chapter Vice President, encouraged budding rabbit farmers to embrace their projects fully as cuniculture had the potential to financially empower them if done by the book.

"I used to treat my rabbit farming business as a hobby, until I met other farmers in ZICORBA groups who changed my perspective. Cuniculture like any other business, you reap what you sow. It is very lucrative especially with the recent surge in demand for rabbit meat in the market."

"There is need to start with the right type of housing, breeding stock and quality feeds if one is to enjoy the benefits of rabbit farming. I also encourage farmers to implement bio security measures as rabbits like any other livestock, are prone to diseases. If you follow this, you won't go wrong." said Mrs Mudonhi.

The anticipated growth in local and global demand for rabbit meat presents boundless opportunities for local breeders like Mrs. Mudonhi, to ramp up production and take advantage of the expanding market.

Across The Borders



Botswana scouts for rabbit meat in Zimbabwe



NORBA members sharing a rabbit meat dish

Botswana's Northern Rabbit Breeders Association (NORBA) is in talks with the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) for the latter to supply it with rabbit meat, a top official has said.

NORBA President Timbu Iris Ntjenje told a series of workshops held for farmers in Botswana recently that although demand for rabbit meat was on the rise in the country, local production was still lagging.

"We have approached our friends in Zimbabwe to supply us with rabbit meat to meet local demand while we ramp up our production.

"NORBA is looking for about 1.5 tonnes of rabbit meat from Zimbabwe per month to start with. We see our cooperation with ZICORBA expanding to other areas of common interests," she said.

Ntjenje urged farmers efforts to increase rabbit production in Botswana would be underpinned by importation of quality breeding stock also from Zimbabwe, training of farmers and increased biosecurity.

NORBA's roadshows to promote the consumption of rabbit meat in Botswana had been well received with a number of hotels, restaurants and supermarkets adding rabbit meat to their menus and product lines, respectively, she said.

“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 Zinzile Y. Masiye



Asian Rabbit Fried Rice

Ingredients

2 cups cooked Jasmine rice
300g chopped rabbit meat
20mls hoisin sauce
20mls oyster sauce
20mls sweet chilli sauce
20mls soy sauce

10mls sesame oil
1 large chopped red pepper
1 large chopped yellow pepper
1 large green pepper
1tsp crushed garlic
1tsp crushed ginger

1tsp chopped chilli
50g bean sprouts
2 fresh lemons
1 bunch fresh coriander
1 chopped red onion

Directions

In a Wok or Deep pan
Add your sesame oil and heat
Add chilli, ginger, and garlic and fry
Add rabbit meat and fry
Add chopped peppers and chopped onions and fry
Add, hoisin, sweet chilli, soy and oyster sauce and cook
Add cooked rice and fry
Add a splash off lemon juice
Add chopped coriander
Top with bean sprouts and garnish with a slice of lemon and you are done.

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