

Zimbabwe Rabbit Meat to Take Centre Stage at Victoria Falls Food & Wine Festival



Insert ZICORBA President Regis Nyamakanga (left) and The 2026 Victoria Falls Food & Wine Festival organiser Mr Patrick Musonza (right)

Thousands of visitors from across the globe are expected to sample Zimbabwean rabbit meat at the upcoming Victoria Falls Food & Wine Festival, as the country positions rabbit production as a flagship agricultural and culinary product on the continental and global stage.

The international festival will run from 08 to 11 October in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe's premier tourist destination, bringing together chefs, food producers, artists, and cultural practitioners from across Africa and beyond.

Speaking ahead of the event, Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) president Mr Regis Nyamakanga said the festival presents a strategic platform to showcase both rabbit meat and the broader rabbit value chain.

"This festival gives us a powerful opportunity to introduce rabbit meat to an international audience while marketing Zimbabwe's rabbit industry, which is one of the most organised and developed in Africa," said Nyamakanga.

He said rabbit meat aligns well with modern consumer trends due to its health benefits, sustainability, and efficiency of production.

"Rabbit meat is healthy, sustainable, and well suited to today's consumer demands. By placing it alongside world class cuisine at an international festival, we are positioning Zimbabwe as a serious player in alternative livestock production," he said.

Festival organiser Mr Patrick Musonza said preparations were at an advanced stage, with strong international participation already confirmed.

"We have confirmation from more than 10 African countries participating in the 2026 edition of the festival," said Musonza.

"The 2026 Victoria Falls Food & Wine Festival theme, 'Flavours of Africa: Innovation, Sustainability and Cultural Exchange', reflects our commitment to positioning food as a driver of economic growth, cultural diplomacy, and regional integration," he said.

Musonza said the festival is deliberately aligned with Africa Union Agenda 2063 and Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 1 and 2 (NDS1 & NDS2) through its focus on value addition, agro industrialisation, youth participation, creative industries, tourism development, and cross border trade.

"Through food, wine, culture, and the creative economy, the festival supports Agenda 2063's vision of an integrated, prosperous, and people-driven Africa, while advancing Zimbabwe's NDS priorities on tourism growth, agriculture value chains, job creation, and export led development," said Musonza.

He said the week-long festival will feature live cooking demonstrations by leading chefs, food exhibitions, wine tastings, cultural performances, fashion showcases, and curated experiences designed to promote culinary and experiential tourism.

"Set against one of the world's most iconic natural wonders, the festival will showcase Africa's creativity, innovation, and cultural richness," he said. "Victoria Falls provides a unique backdrop that elevates the experience and attracts a truly global audience."

Musonza added that the festival aims to foster cross border collaboration, encouraging the exchange of ideas, flavours, and traditions through shared culinary and cultural experiences, while strengthening Africa to Africa trade and cultural linkages.

How a Single Gifted Doe Turned into a Thriving Commercial Rabbitry



Mr Tinofirei Carrington Mutanha at his rabbitry in Domboshava, Mashonaland East Province

Tinofirei Carrington Mutanha, a rabbit farmer based in Domboshava's Showgrounds area, on the outskirts of Harare, is steadily building a promising commercial rabbitry; one that began with just a single rabbit in December 2023.

The project started modestly when Mutanha received one rabbit as a gift from a church mate. Initially intended for consumption, the rabbit turned out to be a doe, and that discovery led to a different decision: to keep and breed it instead. To support breeding, Mutanha later purchased a buck for \$10, and the doe went on to produce 10 kits, marking the first tangible growth of the enterprise.

At the early stages, rabbit production was driven more by enthusiasm than technical knowledge. However, a visit from a fellow farmer introduced Mutanha to the concept of pure rabbit breeds, an idea that initially seemed unnecessary, given the low cost of the first breeding stock. That interaction, however, prompted further research and inquiry into genetics, productivity, and commercial rabbit farming.

This research culminated in the purchase of a pure-bred New Zealand White rabbit for \$50, a decision that marked a turning point in the project. From then on, Mutanha began intentionally connecting with reputable rabbit farmers, learning through shared experiences, observation, and continuous knowledge exchange.

Further growth was supported by capacity-building initiatives. When ZICORBA conducted a rabbit production training at

Parirewa High School in Domboshava, Mutanha participated and gained practical insights into improved management and breeding practices. Shortly thereafter, the project was strengthened with the acquisition of California White does from Kiver Rabbits, significantly improving the quality and productivity of the stock.

Today, Mutanha's rabbitry focuses on three main breeds: New Zealand White, valued for its bulk and growth rate; California White, known for efficiency and consistency and Cinnamon, which adds genetic diversity to the herd.

From a single doe, the project has grown to over 200 rabbits, with sufficient infrastructure and space to allow for further expansion. Having identified a niche market for rabbit products in Zimbabwe, Mutanha now intends to transition fully into commercial production, with plans to double the operation within the year, resources permitting.

The growth of the rabbitry has been attributed to a combination of research, borrowed ideas, knowledge sharing, hands-on experience, and strong personal commitment. Mutanha acknowledges Kiver Rabbits, Vivam, and Bryton Rabbitries as key contributors to the quality of breeding stock currently anchoring the project.

What began as a small, almost incidental decision has evolved into a structured and forward-looking agricultural enterprise, demonstrating how passion, learning, and persistence can transform humble beginnings into a viable commercial venture.

From Curiosity to Commercial Success: Million Moyo's Rabbitry Journey



Million Moyo showing visitors his rabbitry (insert organic fertiliser being produced and packaged at Mr Moyo's rabbitry)

“One does not need a huge budget to start rabbit farming. What you need is curiosity, commitment, and the willingness to learn.” Million Moyo

What began as casual curiosity has grown into one of the most promising rabbit farming enterprises in Zimbabwe's second largest city, Bulawayo. Million Moyo started his rabbitry project in 2022, inspired by his love for animal documentaries. One day, a rabbit breeding video on YouTube caught his attention and that moment changed everything.

“I started learning immediately,” he recalls. “I searched for rabbit breeding in Zimbabwe, found the association president's contact, and was advised to join ZICORBA, which I did straight away.” What attracted him most to rabbits was their healthy meat, organic production value, and low start-up costs, making the enterprise accessible and sustainable.

Located near Bulawayo, Million's rabbitry currently has 106 breeding females and 9 bucks, made up of New Zealand Whites, Chinchillas, and a few Californians. Rather than rushing to scale up, he has taken a deliberate approach; keeping numbers manageable while carefully studying the market.

Day-to-day operations are overseen by his niece, whom he personally trained. “She has mastered the industry with confidence,” he says proudly. Technical guidance from ZICORBA, particularly on breeding standards, has played a key role in strengthening the project.

Beyond meat production, the rabbitry integrates rabbit urine into horticulture, using it as an organic input and selling excess supply. Notably, the project is among the first in the country to brand and package concentrated rabbit urine for farming, signalling a move toward value addition.

The enterprise is also responding to market demand. By mating 11 does per week, the rabbitry is preparing to meet a new supply agreement for 50 carcasses per week to a Bulawayo-based hotel.

Million is keenly aware of the broader social impact. “Unemployment is a serious challenge in our community,” he says. “This project is part of our long-term effort to contribute to job creation and livelihoods.”

His vision is bold. Over the next 12 months, Million aims to expand to 1,000 breeders. Within two years, he hopes to establish a rabbit breeding and training centre, creating a hub for skills development and farmer empowerment.

From a single YouTube video to a growing commercial enterprise with community impact, Million Moyo's journey reflects what is possible when passion meets knowledge and when farmers dare to think differently.



Mr Millon Moyo at his rabbitry near Bulawayo

Rabbit Farming Fun Fact

POWERED BY
ZICORBA TRAINING DEPARTMENT

Did you know that rabbits are some of the most efficient meat producers in the animal world?

Unlike cattle and sheep, rabbits can turn simple forage—like grasses, leaves, and kitchen greens—into high-quality meat faster and with far less feed.

That means more meat, less feed, and lower costs, making rabbits a smart, sustainable choice for smallholder and urban farmers alike!



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ZICORBA will be part of the exhibitors @ the Victoria Falls Food & Wine Festival



Botswana Sets Its Sights on a Landmark Rabbit Industry Project



Tipare Chairperson, Timbu Iris Ntjenje, outside her rabbitry in Francistown

Botswana is poised to enter the rabbit farming space in a big way following the acquisition of a two and half-hectare (25-acre) parcel of land in Francistown by TIPARE Private Limited, a wholly Botswana-owned company.

Disclosing the development, TIPARE Chairperson Ms Timbu Iris Ntjenje said the company intends to establish Botswana's largest and most integrated rabbit farming project, positioning Francistown, located on the border with Zimbabwe, as a strategic hub for both production and cross-border trade.

The proposed project goes far beyond primary production. Plans

include the establishment of a commercial rabbit farm, a rabbit training centre, a tannery, a rabbit meat hub, a rabbit meat restaurant, and a rabbit abattoir; all of which would be first-of-their-kind facilities in Botswana.

Once implemented, the initiative is expected to anchor a complete rabbit value chain in the diamond-rich country, creating opportunities for skills development, employment, value addition, and agri-industrial growth.

TIPARE's board brings together regional expertise with a proven track record. The company's directors are Timbu Iris Ntjenje (chairperson), Paidamoyo Nyamakanga, and Regis Nyamakanga.

Paidamoyo and Regis Nyamakanga are prominent rabbit farmers in Zimbabwe and are widely recognised as pioneers of Zimbabwe's only rabbit abattoir, which is also among the largest on the African continent. They operate the biggest rabbitry in Zimbabwe and have successfully led the development and commercialisation of a diverse range of rabbit meat products, helping to grow and formalise the sector.

Their involvement brings tested production models, processing expertise, and downstream innovation to the Botswana project; experience TIPARE hopes to replicate and adapt to the local market.

With Francistown's proximity to Zimbabwe and its established trade corridors, TIPARE believes the project is well positioned to serve as a regional centre for rabbit production, processing, and training, strengthening collaboration between farmers across borders.

If successfully implemented, the initiative could mark a turning point for rabbit farming in Botswana, laying the foundation for a new livestock subsector anchored on sustainability, value addition, and regional knowledge transfer.



Tipare Chairperson, Timbu Iris Ntjenje, poses for a photo with different rabbit breeds at her rabbitry

Rabbit Recipe

Roasted Rabbit

Ingredients

1 Medium Rabbit (1.2 kg)
2 1/2 Tablespoons Olive oil
2 Teaspoons Salt
1 Teaspoon Black Pepper
2 Teaspoons fresh Thyme
2 Teaspoons fresh Rosemary
1 Teaspoon smoked Paprika
2 Tablespoons White wine Vinegar
1 large Onion
1 large Green Pepper
1 large Red Pepper
2 large cloves of Garlic
1 Tablespoon Soy Sauce



Directions

Cut the whole rabbit into desired pieces and place them in a bowl.

Finely chop the garlic, rosemary, and thyme, then add them with the rest of the marinade ingredients. Mix well and rub into the meat until fully coated.

Cover and leave to marinate for at least 2 hours.

While the rabbit marinates, cut the peppers and onion into medium-sized pieces and arrange them at the bottom of an ovenproof dish.

Lightly drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt.

Place the marinated rabbit pieces on top of the peppers.

Cover with foil and bake in the oven at 180°C (350°F) for 1 hour.

Remove the foil and bake uncovered for about 15 minutes until lightly browned.

Transfer to a serving dish, garnish with fresh thyme and the cooked peppers, and serve.



+263 777 535 079



info@zicorba.com



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Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association



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_zicorba

VISIT US AT

Head Office

15 Collosium Building

7th Street

Harare Showgrounds

Editorial Team

Writer and Editor

Regis Nyamakanga

Layout and Design

Lloyd Mangoh



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