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Popular Article

Entrepreneurship in Broiler Rabbit Rearing and its importance

Dr. Ramya Narmeta

Assistant Professor (LPM), Livestock Farm Complex, College of Veterinary Science, Korutla,
Jagtial district, Telangana

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the state of being an *entrepreneur*, who organizes, manages, assumes the risk of a business, and enjoys the rewards. He/she is an innovator with his/her new ideas, goods, and services for running the business. He/she utilizes his/her time, energy, and resources to create an output for consumers in return for monetary benefits.

Rabbit rearing is an important source of protein as well as income in rural and hilly areas where opportunities are limited and even women can be actively involved in income generation for their family needs. It is an affordable enterprise with low stock and high benefits when compared to other livestock enterprises effectively utilizing kitchen wastes for rabbit feeding. Commonly New Zealand White, Californian White, Chinchilla, Flemish giant, APAU faun, APAU black, etc rabbits can be reared for meat purpose.

Advantages of Rabbit Rearing:

- Rabbits are excellent breeders and produce 8-12 kits per litter.
- Rabbit meat contains more protein and less fat than other types of meat.
- Rabbit meat is rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids and categorized as white meat.
- Rabbits can be reared in small groups with available kitchen wastes and few concentrates.
- They can be fed with high forage and low grain diets not competitive with human food.
- Feed conversion efficiency is 2.5-3.0 on high grain diet and 3.5-4.0 on high forage grain-free diet.



- Initial investment is low and quick returns within two months since inception, so easy to repayment.
- Residual feed plus rabbit manure can be used for vermicompost thus fertilizing the vegetable crops or fields.
- Rabbit rearing is suitable for small-scale as well as large-scale commercial production.
- The gestation period is 30 days, so at least five litters can be produced from each breeding doe.

Management of Rabbit rearing:

An entrepreneur starting with 10 does and 2 bucks as a parent stock can achieve 5-6 bunnies per litter at the time of weaning (30 days – 45 days). They can be housed in hutches or cages or deep litter systems. The does selected for breeding must have at least 6 bunnies in each litter by the 21st day. The young kits do not open their eyes by 10-12 days and depend fully on their mother for milk so proper care has to be taken during this period.

For the survivability of kits, it should be a minimum of 40-50g weight for broiler rabbits. Litter size is an important trait for mothering ability. The optimum value for litter weight at 21 days is 1.2-1.5 kg. Litter weight at weaning must be more than 3 kg (450g each). More number of weaned bunnies is always advantageous. Rabbits attaining 2kg bodyweight at a lower age are assumed to be better converters of feed.

They can be handled by scuffing the loose skin over the neck region with one hand and the other hand supporting the hindquarters. Young rabbits can be lifted by grasping them firmly over the loins, the fingers on one side and the thumb on the other.

By the end of the year, an entrepreneur can sell 25-30 young rabbits per year. It can be marketed by 90 days of age. Each young rabbit weighing an average 2 kg can be sold for profitable prices (for eg. 30 x Rs 300/kg x 2 = 18000). This amount can be additional support for financial needs.

Conclusion

Rabbit rearing can be beneficial for rural youth and women's empowerment by providing opportunities for self-sufficiency and also to improve nutritional standards which can be achieved by consuming rabbit meat.

