

Zimbabwe imports 100 more pure rabbit breeds

South African-based award-winning rabbit breeder has clinched a deal to supply 100 pure breeds to Zimbabwe to help shore-up efforts by a plethora of the country's rabbit producers to bolster cuniculture production.

Judy Stuart, an internationally recognised rabbit breeder, told Bunny World that she was working with the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) to improve rabbit breeds in Zimbabwe.

"I am excited to be working with ZICORBA in their quest to build a vibrant rabbit farming industry in Zimbabwe. There is scope for rabbit farmers in South Africa and Zimbabwe to work together for the good of our industry," she said.

In November 2020, Stuart exported 160 pure breeds to ZICORBA members and on 19 April 2021, she dispatched an additional 100 pure breeds to ZICORBA, bringing to 260 the total exports of pure breeds to Zimbabwe in five months. The breeds were made up of Chinchilla Giganta, New Zealand Whites and Reds, American Sable, Cinnamon and Californian.

"This is our single largest export in more than four decades and we look to continue cooperating with our Zimbabwean partners as the cuniculture industry continues to grow in leaps and bounds," Stuart said.

Mrs Paidamoyo Nyamakanga, the Executive Director of Raymeg Consultants Group, whose firm imported the rabbits thanked the government of Zimbabwe for granting her company an import permit for the rabbits, saying this laid a strong foundation for the country's rabbit industry. Raymeg Holdings is a corporate member of ZICORBA.

"The rabbits will go a long way in boosting the capacity of the Zimbabwe rabbit industry to meet both local and international demand. Currently, we have huge orders for rabbit meat which we are not able to meet," Mrs. Nyamakanga said.



Judy Stuart and team preparing 100 pure breed rabbits for transportation to Harare, Zimbabwe

Raymeg Group owns Zimbabwe's first export approved rabbit abattoir with a capacity to slaughter 1 000 rabbits per day. The Harare based abattoir will be opened to the public in May 2021.

Recently, ZICORBA and Zimbabwe's top three stock feed manufacturers; Agrifoods, National Foods and Capital Foods, sealed a deal where registered ZICORBA members can buy rabbit pellets from Raymeg Retail outlets at subsidi-

"I am excited to be working with ZICORBA in their quest to build a vibrant rabbit farming industry in Zimbabwe."



*Judy Stuart,
South Africa based rabbit breeder*

dized prices.

The Raymeg Group has also entered into a deal with the country's top retail chains to buy veterinary-inspected rabbit meat from ZICORBA members.

Masvingo farmers urged to embrace rabbit farming

Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) Masvingo Provincial Coordinator and Youth Ambassador, Ms Shamiso Hamandishe, has urged local farmers to seriously consider venturing into rabbit farming as it is economically empowering.

In her key note address during a field day held at Mazare farm in Makore, ward 27, Gutu, Masvingo, Hamandishe said ZICORBA was prepared to work with serious rabbit farmers to ensure that their projects are profitable through acquiring of pure breeds, subsidized feed, good cuniculture practices and securing a reliable market for rabbit meat.

“ZICORBA as an association is looking to empowering marginalised groups like women, youths, the elderly and those living with disability. We are targeting about 1.8 million households for rabbit farming to ensure optimum production”

“We also have a pure breed programme, which will help our members to improve the quality of their breeding stock to ensure project viability by increasing the bone to meat ratio.” she said.



ZICORBA Masvingo Provincial Coordinator and Youth Ambassador, Ms Shamiso Hamandishe



Team ZICORBA assisting potential members to fill in registration forms in Masvingo

Hamandishe said value-addition was key in deriving maximum benefits from rabbit production.

“We do not just get meat from our rabbits. Rabbit urine can be harvested and used as organic manure, I know most of you are familiar with rabbit droppings only. Rabbit skins can also be used to make bags, mats, jackets and even belts. So, we need to understand that everything that comes from our rabbits can be converted into cash.” Said Hamandishe.

The field day, was used by the community as a platform to reflect on the lessons learnt from the first season of the government initiated Pfumvudza concept, as well as to ramp up rabbit production in the province.



Farmer Jane

“Knowing your breeds is a key factor in running a successful Rabbitry”

KNOW YOUR BREEDS



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

* BREED : CHECKERED GIANT RABBIT

The Checkered Giant Rabbit was bred by crossing the Great German spotted rabbit to a black Flemish Giant rabbit by Mr. Otto Reinhardt (Reinfalz, Germany)

Distinct Features: The Checkered Giant has a white coat with coloured markings hence the name "Checkered". It has a muscular build and slender body type. The body is long, has an arched back and the legs are long and powerful. They have a wide head and broad ears which are held firmly upright



Checkered Giant rabbits have a lifespan of 5-8 years and weigh around 5- 5.4 kgs when fully grown.

RATING : * * * * *



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ZICORBA in pictures



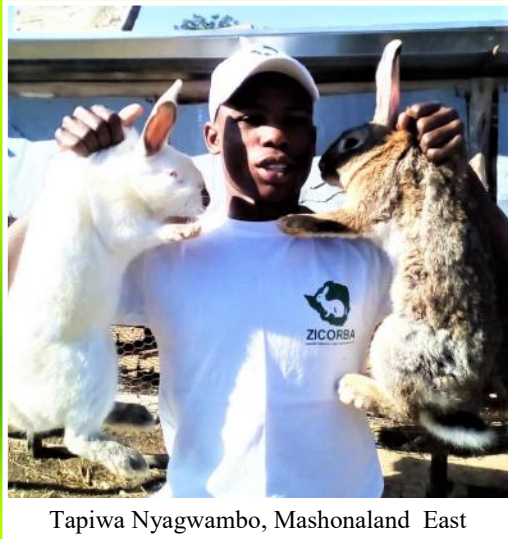
Ladies from Harare province chapter pose with their rabbits



Leeroy Madzvimbo , Mat North



Clive Chiduro, Mash West



Tapiwa Nyagwambo, Mashonaland East



Pinnel Nyanzara , Midlands



Mrs Annisia Katsidzira , Manicaland



Lovemore Mawodza , Bulawayo



Thabiso Gwemende , Mat South



Mrs Magret P Chipetu , Masvingo



“Dhewa” takes recruitment drive award



Harare Province Chapter President Godknows “Dhewa” Guvamombe at his rabbitry in Waterfalls, Harare

Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) has seen rapid growth in numbers of farmers coming on board, thanks to the passion and professionalism of its leadership.

Leading the pack in its recruitment drive, is none other than Godknows “Dhewa” Guvamombe, the association’s Harare Province Chapter President. An affable character who is hands-on and ready to come on hand on any rabbit farming related issues. For his efforts, he will be given an award by the ZICORBA Secretary General, Mrs Siphosethu Ncube Moyo.

“My inspiration is driven by the association’s commitment to develop the rabbit industry and assist farmers with marketing and technical knowledge,” said Mr Guvamombe who leads the biggest ZICORBA chapter.

“ZICORBA has done a lot in a short space of time. I can see it changing people’s lives, those that are willing to move it,” he added.

There is power in numbers! Since its formation last year in June, the Harare Province chief has been on a recruitment drive aimed at increasing critical mass of the association. On his own he can account for over two dozen members and

more are still coming.

In an interview with Bunny World on his role as a leader, Mr Guvamombe said ZICORBA wanted to assist rabbit farmers achieve what they have not achieved over the years.

“My strength in this business, is keeping rabbits and ensuring that they are well housed, following proper nutritional guidelines as well as mating techniques, which is key in rabbit farming” said Dhewa, as he is affectionately known in rabbit circles.

Mr. Guvamombe urged fellow members to continue with the spirit of togetherness, promoting and grooming each other.



Dhewa relaxing at home

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Rejoice Nyamanhindi

ZICORBA helps desperate farmer secure market for her rabbits

For Harare-based rabbit farmer, Thokozile Chiriya, securing a market her bunnies had been as illusive as chasing a mirage until the Zimbabwe Commercial Rabbit Breeders Association (ZICORBA) helped her secure a stable market for her rabbits.

“For the more than 20 years that I have been in rabbit farming, my biggest challenge had been to secure a market for my produce. It was hard and on one occasion in year 2000, I ended up giving away as many as 50 rabbits in one go as I had nowhere to sell them.

“I tried everything even informal markets but it all came to naught. Recently I took to different rabbit farming WhatsApp groups in the hope of getting a market for my rabbits but my hopes were dashed as no-one was willing to help.

“I had made up my mind to quit rabbit farming for good and as serendipity would have it, I received a call from ZICORBA officials who had seen my pleas on some WhatsApp groups. I was connected to a



ZICORBA-affiliated rabbit abattoir and in no time, I had sold 35 rabbits and received instant payment.

“I am planning to sell another 21 rabbits soon after feeding them to reach required weight. I am currently over the moon and I want to thank ZICORBA for being a genuine partner of rabbit farmers.

“Since the day I got a helping hand from ZICORBA, I decided to join the association to reap the full benefits of being a member. Now I am breeding rabbits to the fullest because the ZICORBA-affiliated rabbit abattoir promised to buy all my rabbits when they are ready for slaughter. I am a proud member of ZICORBA. I urge all those farmers sitting on the fence to join ZICORBA as it is the only genuine farmers’ partner out there”.



Harare based rabbit farmer and ZICORBA member Thokozile Chiriya showing off some of her rabbit stock

Gwemende appointed ZICORBA Youth Ambassador, Matabeleland South



Ms Thabiso Gwemende newly appointed ZICORBA Youth Ambassador and Provincial Coordinator for Matabeleland South

Ms Thabiso Gwemende has been appointed ZICORBA Youth Ambassador and Provincial Coordinator for Matabeleland South region, bringing to 10 the number of the association’s full-time staff.

ZICORBA Secretary General, Siphosethu Ncube-Moyo, said the appointment of Gwemende was part of the association’s agenda to effectively serve all rabbit farmers in Matabeleland South region, which covers Beit Bridge, Esigodini, Plumtree and Gwanda.

Ncube-Moyo said since ZICORBA was formed about eight months ago, there had been a surge in the number of rabbit farmers from all corners of Zimbabwe wishing to join the fledgling association.

“We are humbled by the massive response to the launch of our association, which is the home of all progressive rabbit farmers Zimbabwe. We are now set to fully support the Government’s five-year Livestock Growth Plan, which has a special focus on small livestock production,” Ncube-Moyo said.

Reacting to her appointment, Gwemende said: “I feel honoured to be entrusted with such an important role in this very important and progressive organisation. I am particularly enthused to be working for an organisation that believes in delivering life-changing programmes for our people”.

‘It’s not an easy road but it is highly rewarding’ - Major E

My name is Ephraim M Chirango alias “Major E”, a strong-willed young man very passionate about farming and whose values are firmly grounded in production. I developed interest for rabbits and guinea pig farming in 2000 when I was 9 years of age. It was a profound start when my dad bought the animals for me, by then I was in grade 4 learning at Fungisai Government Primary School in Chitungwiza.

Since then I developed interest for agriculture and throughout my years of transitioning from adolescence to youth. As a young man of honor and values, first things first I attained my education, with Ordinary Level passes and proudly hold a higher diploma in Travel, Tourism and hospitality management.

We all start from somewhere and my journey as a rabbit farmer wasn't as easy as I anticipated. I faced so many challenges, including lack of knowledge, which resulted in a number of deaths. Often, I would receive criticism "hauna maoko eTsuru_" and all those sorts of demotivating words. However, none of the words discouraged me, because here I proudly stand, with the courage and patience and determination to keep me going.

After relocating to Hopley in 2012 my rabbits tremendously multiplied. At this moment I realized that I was called for this "chido chakava chipo". I became very influential in our society as I made quite a mark as far as rabbit farming was concerned. Everyone admired my work as I could supply local canteens and other food outlets.

I approached Adelaide Acres Conference Center in Harare and secured a contract to supply them with rabbit meat. However, it was very unfortunate that I could not supply them with meat as my produce wasn't up to standard. Poor breeds and substandard feed resulted in a low bone to meat ratio hence my end product failed to meet the customers' expectations.

After completing my diploma in 2014, I went to South Africa in search of greener pastures. It was even harder in a foreign land such that I had to return home in October the same year. Then I finally resolved to throw in my hat as a full-time farmer. It was a gradual process of learning how to master the art of production.

I started acquiring new and better breeds such as New Zealand Red, Californian, Flemish giant and other Cross breeds. I also managed to construct better cages but due to economic meltdown and lack of capital my project did not flourish as I expected but I managed to earn a living through my rabbit business as a backyard farmer.

The arrival of ZICORBA on the scene has brought about a positive energy with the hope of bettering our breeding stock through pure breeds, better bargaining power as well as a safe and secure market for rabbits. With this positive vibe around, I'm now looking forward to repairing my old and rusty cages. I am not where I want to be but in few years to come I will be recognized commercial rabbit farmer.



Rabbit breeder Ephraim M Chirango alias “Major E”

Hard work and perseverance is rewarding- Katsidzira



Annisia Katsidzira at her rabbitry in Headlands

My name is Annisia Katsidzira, an upcoming rabbit farmer based in Headlands, Makoni District located in Manicaland Province. My rabbit journey got off to a false start which almost forced me to quit rabbit farming. Here is my story:

I started my rabbit rearing journey last year in April with two does that had already mated. Fortunately, both gave birth, with one blessing me with eight kits and the other ten. Instantly my rabbitry grew from two to 20 rabbits.

One morning I woke up to a shattering sight of a broken into rabbitry. A thief came and stole the two does and 14 kits. I was left with four weaners, that is two does and two bucks. I was gutted. I contemplated quitting rabbit farming.

To avoid in breeding, I exchanged one of the bucks for another buck and I sold the other one. In the process of trying to organise myself, a friend advised me to join ZICOBRA. By seeing photos of other members and their rabbitries as well the upward trajectory of the association's activities, I was encouraged and vowed to become serious about rabbit farming.

I now have a passion and the zeal for serious rabbit farming. From being a backyard farmer, I want to be a commercial rabbit farmer of note in Manicaland. Currently I have 23 rabbits and I am aiming to have more than 100 by year end.

I would like to encourage all women to go into rabbit farming as it is less costly, easy to run and very interesting to do.

GO WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE, GO FOR RABBIT FARMING! You will never go wrong.

WE ARE ZICORBA *Celebrating Zimbabwe @ 41*



Farmers feed the Nation



Africa's New White Meat - Rabbit



Rabbit meat is a slowly growing part of Africa's diet, with a burgeoning industry in South Africa and Nigeria, and a group of hardcore rabbit farmers promoting the meat as cheap, healthy and environmentally friendly. But will it take off? Critics say they're reluctant to eat animals that are considered pets.

Could rabbit be the new white meat for Africa?

African farmers are looking for a new solution for the continent's growing appetite for meat. Africa's population is set to nearly double in the next three decades, to 2.5 billion. The answer to those many, many new mouths to feed, they say, could lie with the humble bunny.

In the past decade, South Africa's largest rabbit meat supplier has added nearly 150 rabbit farms to its stable. And breeders recently created a South African breed, the Phendula, which translates to "the answer."

Independent farmer Gavin Grgurin keeps 500 rabbits at his farm outside Johannesburg. He says he thinks it's the meat of the future.

"As National Council, we've been saying for the last 12- to 15-odd years that rabbit is the potential of being the savior of Africa from a protein point of view. The reasons beyond that all are a multitude," Grgurin said.

For one, he says, rabbit meat is high in protein and low in fat and cholesterol. They take up little space and don't eat much.

They require less water than chickens, and put out less waste than cows. Rabbits, Grgurin says, may be the greenest meat.

"There's a lot of negatives that are currently happening around carbon impact on the planet, specifically around feed-lotting of animals on a large scale. We talk about cattle and beef that are put into feedlots. So, you get huge carbon footprints there. Rabbits' carbon footprint is minimal compared to the rest," Grgurin said.

But can they make the leap from pet to plate?

Sloane Meat Market manager Richard Letcher says he's noticed South Africans' appetite for meat is expanding to more unconventional options. His shop is one of the few in Johannesburg that stocks rabbit, but it's still moving quite slowly.

"What has changed within our environment over the last year is there's been a lot more of our requests for goat meat which we haven't sold before," Letcher said.

He reasons that rabbit, which is still slow moving, could see the same growth. But has he taken the bite? He cited the single biggest reason people give for not eating rabbit.

"I haven't got my mind around eating my pet at this point, so, no," Letcher said.

It tastes like chicken.
Sort of chicken. It is
not hard like beef. It
is very nice and soft

His colleague, meat cutter Mnelisi Smakade, says he's missing out. He loves rabbit meat.

"It tastes like chicken. Sort of chicken. It's not hard like beef. It's very nice and soft," Smakade said.

As Africa's population is set to nearly double by the year 2050, food supply -- especially protein -- is a major concern. Could the humble rabbit fill that gap -- and millions of stomachs?

“ 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

**RECIPE
OF
THE
MONTH**

POT ROASTED RABBIT

By FANNIE MCCOY



INGREDIENTS

- 5 slice bacon
- 1 ½ pound rabbit, cut up
- ground red pepper
- ground black pepper
- 1 cup flour
- 4 oz fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 clove garlic, minced
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 tsp dry mustard

In a skillet cook bacon until crisp, drain on a paper towel, reserving the drippings in the skillet. Crumble the cooked bacon and set aside.

Season rabbit with red and black pepper. Coat with flour. Now brown rabbit in bacon drippings in skillet over medium heat, remove rabbit from skillet.

Reserve 4 tablespoons drippings in skillet, add mushrooms, onions, green pepper, and garlic to reserved drippings . Cook about 5 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally.

Stir chicken broth, Worcestershire sauce, and dry mustard into vegetables in skillet. Now add rabbit to the skillet. Bring mixture to a boil. Cover and simmer for about 55 minutes or until rabbit is tender.

Put rabbit in a serving platter. Spoon fat off mixture in skillet. Spoon mixture over rabbit. Sprinkle with crumbled bacon.

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