Rabbit Production

By Josh Schaeffer
Types of Rabbit Production

- Fanciers
  - Pets, Breeding Stock, and Show Animals
- Laboratory
- Fur/Hair
  - Angora
  - Rex
- MEAT
  - Largest Rabbit Market
Basics Of Raising Meat Rabbits

- Breed Selection
- General Management Techniques
  - Understanding Rabbits
  - Housing
  - Feeding
  - Breeding
  - Health
  - Marketing
Breed Selection

- Meet demands
  - White
  - Fine-boned
- Expected litter size
  - 8-10 kits
- Personal preference
3 Most Popular Meat Breeds

- New Zealand (white)
Californian
Florida White
Understanding Rabbits

- Behavior
- Normals
  - Temp. 103.1 degrees F
  - Heart rate 180-350 beats per minute
  - Respiratory rate 40-65 breaths per minute
  - Hair coat
  - Mucous membranes
General Management Techniques

- **Housing**
  - Sanitary
  - Climate Control
  - Owner-friendly
  - Types- *If you can imagine it, then it exists!*
    - Hanging Hutches
    - Slants
    - Stacked
Hanging Hutches
Stacked---Climate Controlled
General Management Techniques

- Feeding
  - Fresh, Clean Water is essential
  - Pellets
    - Usually all that is needed
    - Hay not necessary
    - Formulated to meet rabbit needs
  - Hay and Grains
Feed Efficiencies of Common Meat Animals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BEEF</th>
<th>LAMB</th>
<th>HOG</th>
<th>CHICKEN</th>
<th>RABBIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8 lbs feed/lb gain</td>
<td>4 lbs feed/lb gain</td>
<td>2.5-3 lbs feed/lb gain</td>
<td>2 lbs feed/lb gain</td>
<td>4 lbs feed/lb gain</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
General Management Techniques

- **Breeding**
  - KEEP RECORDS!!!!!!
  - Doe is induced ovulator
    - In heat 14 out of 16 days
  - Gestation = 31-33 days
  - Breeding Schedule
    - Take doe to buck
    - Day 10-16: palpate
    - Day 28: add nest box
    - Day 31-33: doe kindles
General Management Techniques

- Post-kindling
  - Observe and count kits
  - Remove dead
  - Remove nest box 15 to 21 days post-kindling
  - Wean and rebreed on ~ day 30
    - Allows for 5 litters per year
General Management Techniques

- Health
  - Sanitation
  - *Pasteurellosis multocida*
  - External parasites
    - Flies
    - Fleas
    - Mites
  - Internal parasites
    - Not a major problem
General Management Techniques

- Marketing
  - Pricing
  - Live sale
  - Butchered rabbit
    - Health regulations
The Rabbit Industry

- GROWING
  - Especially in developing countries
- Current production estimated at 1.5 million tons
- Not large N. American market
  - No need for animal raised in confinement
  - Low demand-consumer ignorance
It’s GOOD

- Highly nutritious
- Fine Grained
- Mild flavored
- Fryer
- Roaster
- Inspection
  - Voluntary
  - Grading
Rabbit vs. the Rest
This is based on 1 pound of raw meat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEAT</th>
<th>PROTEIN</th>
<th>FAT</th>
<th>CALORIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rabbit</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>10.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veal</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>910</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>1190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>28.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>2050</td>
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</table>
NOT get Rich Quick!!

- Initial costs are high
  - Housing
  - Breeding Stock
  - Supplies
- Annual Costs
  - Feed
  - Health program
  - Upkeep
- Labor intensive
Works Cited

- Pavia, Audrey. *Rabbits for Dummies.*