



RABBIT FARMING: SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS IN INDIA A REVIEW

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Rabbit Farming: Socio Economic Status in India - A Review

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ABSTRACT

Rabbit was introduced in India as an alternative source of meat production. The commercial rearing in Kerala has been started within private and Government sector. In four districts of Kerala the scheme for rabbit development is being implemented. Kerala Agricultural University has setup the ICAR project for rabbit breeding in 1984. This study shows that Soviet Chinchilla as maximum birth weight of 62 g. While the average body weight at 12 weeks of age was maximum of New Zealand White being 1539 g. Good breeds, good feeding management using local available seeds and millets, good sanitation and disease management, are some factors of success of rabbitry in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh

Key Words: Rabbit Farming, Kerala

INTRODUCTION

Rabbit was introduced in India in the last decade as an alternative source of meat production. A number of entrepreneurs have established private rabbit farms in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Goa, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Tamil Nadu. Rabbit meat is wholesome, tasty with appreciable juiciness and tenderness. It contains a high amount of protein and low amounts of fat and cholesterol (Lebas et al. 1986; Das & Bujarbarua 2005). Thus people in India showed great acceptance of consumption of rabbit meat. In addition, rabbit has a quite high dressing percentage when compared to ruminants, ranging between 50-65% (Lebas et al. 1986; Roiron et al. 1992). The heritability of different carcass traits is medium to high, and therefore carcass traits might be considered in rabbit selection and breeding. It has been reported that different factors, such as age at slaughter, weight at slaughter, breed, and sex, have an influence on different carcass traits (Parigi-Bini et al. 1992; Bianospino et al. 2006; Gašperlin et al. 2006; Metzger et al. 2006). Rabbit rearing can become remunerative, when scientific management of rabbits is done by keeping in view their natural behaviour. As medium sized rabbits are more productive, heavy weighted does are useful in breeding. Lifting the rabbits by ear reduces their

reproduction rate and bunnies touched before 7 days of age do not get mother's milk and die. Such practical behaviour instinct becomes the basis for success in rabbit management. Careful management practices can only ensure a steady production of healthy and vigorous bunnies (young ones). Those who started rabbitries to become rich overnight have not stacked up golden bunnies as per expectation. The reasons are clear, if you start with a unit of 100 females plus 20 males, the expenses for the first year will amount to rupees one lakh. This will include the cost of cages, feed, medicine, labour and rent of the shed. This is a big outlay for an ordinary person getting immediate returns. However, to start a rabbit business one does not need a large initial integument. A few doe's with a ram or buck is enough to start; once the kindling begins the herd rapidly increases in size, so that very soon one can slaughter the young males. Because the does produce offspring regularly they form a regular source of income instead of a large amount at once.

Two factors are responsible for successful rabbit rearing are acquiring veterinary skill and vicinity of market for selling rabbit meat and wool. A farm of 200 rabbit flock can become viable only in areas having a well organized market for wool and meat. The poor farmers, however, can start rabbit rearing only as backyard rearing. This will supplement his

income and provide meat for home, but he cannot depend solely on it.

In the context of our country livestock plays a vital role in the economy of our country. Moreover, the major supply of protein comes from the livestock sector of our country. According to the department of livestock services about 36 percent of the total animal protein comes from the livestock products in our everyday life. Countries 25 percent peoples are directly engaged in livestock sector, and 50 percent peoples are partly associated in livestock production. Last year, the contribution of livestock sub-sector to the GDP was 2.95 percent, which was estimated about 17.32 percent GDP to agriculture. Last year, the growth of livestock in GDP was 7.23 percent. In this back drop production of animal species has become a vital factor. Rabbit farming as a source of income has not yet gained popularity among the common people of our country. The rural people of our country can be involved in rabbit farming for changing their socio-economic status. As rabbit farming is easily manageable and sustainable it has a bright future potential in our country as a source of income as well as a source of protein.

Rabbit rearing started gaining popularity in the beginning of 19th century in Western Europe. Rabbit Farming in India is of recent origin and is largely on experimental scale. Rabbit farming and rabbit meat is very popular in whole NE Region and in Eastern Region. Rabbit meat has yet not been accepted as a regular diet item. However in places like Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh rabbit meat is available in Restaurants and Dabas. Rabbits are more efficient feed converters than other animals and convert feed with high cellulose content to high quality protein. Certain breeds like German Angora, Russian Angora yield precious wool. Rabbit breeding is useful for increasing employment potential in rural sector.

Kerala Agricultural University has setup the ICAR project for rabbit breeding in 1984. This study shows that Soviet Chinchilla as maximum birth weight of 62 g. While the average body weight at 12 weeks of age was maximum of New Zealand White being 1539 g. The litter size was highest in Soviet Chinchilla and it was 4.9 in number. The litter

weight at weaning was highest in the cross of New Zealand White and Soviet Chinchilla being 2537 g. Carcass traits showed that the highest dressing percentage at 12 weeks age was in the cross of ND and New Zealand White being 60%. Genetic growth is a significant source of variation for litter size and it was found to be highest in winter followed by autumn and summer and lowest in raining season. Pre-weaning mortality is highest in kids born during these summer season.

The level of production ranges between 200 g to 60 g. The level of production of Angora wool is between 200 g to 600 g per animal per year. The wool sells at an average price of Rs. 800/kg. Angora rabbit hair blends with other fibres like wool, silk, polyester and improves the performance while reducing cost. The rabbit wool has 49.54% carbon, 6.52% hydrogen and 4.02% sulphur. Rabbit hair resists the action of boiling strong acetic acid and cold dilute hydrochloric acid. Dilute nitric acid turns it yellow. The rabbit hair fibres which are usually dyed are Mohaire and Cashimere. Dyed with crome dyes, it has a two tone effect. It mixes well with wool because of its fine texture and diameter. Angora fibre has lowest specific weight (1.2 g/cm^3) if compared to other natural textile raw material. It is smoother than wool and its moisture retention is 2% lower than that of wool. Angora rabbit is popular in Kullu valley in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Tamil Nadu. Russia Angora is better suited to Tamil Nadu.

The rabbit project at Garsa was undertaken to study the performance of various breeds. The study showed that Angora, New Zealand White and Soviet Chinchilla had much better adaptability and had maximum survival rate. The fur quality of Soviet Chinchilla and Grey Giant is the best. The rabbit project at Palampur showed that the highest combining ability is possessed by New Zealand White, which also has maximum growth rate.

In Karnataka 6 rabbit breeding farms with 200-300 rabbits in each has been setup. The slaughtering age of rabbit in these farms is between 4 to 6 months within average weight of 3 kg.

The commercial rearing in Kerala has been started within private and Government sector. In four districts of Kerala the scheme for rabbit development is being implemented. The

districts are Trivandrum, Eduki, Quilon and Pathanamthitta.

The rabbits require proper feed containing rice bran, groundnut cake, jaggery, soaked gram and wheat. They are also given approximately 100 g leafy vegetables per day. The cages for rabbits are usually 36"/20"/18". Medical care of the animals is most important and regular deworming against coccidiosis is necessary.

Rabbit farming is dependent on proper feeding and health care. For meat type the breeds recommended are New Zealand White, Russia Grey Giant, Soviet Chinchilla, White Giant, California and Flemish Giant. For fur purposes the breeds recommended are: German, French and English Angora. For fancy varieties the recommended breeds are: Polish, Palameno, Havana and Florida. Heavy breeds are Bauscat, White Giant and French Lope: average, breed is English Silver, German Silver, New Zealand White and Soviet Chinchilla and light weight breeds are Himalayan Small Chinchilla and French Havana. The doe reaches puberty when it attains 75% of mature weight. Domesticated rabbits are prone to diseases like intestinal and respiratory. Housing is extremely important and the rabbit should be housed in either hutch or shed system. A wire mesh flooring is recommended for easy removal of faecal matter. Rabbit breeding can have positive effect in increasing employment opportunities as well as generating income. Rabbit farming also utilizes kitchen waste. Rabbit meat is a high protein food and is useful for human consumption having low cholesterol level.

STATUS OF RABBITRY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Rabbit farming in Andhra Pradesh is growing rabbits are mainly using for meat in Kurnool, Hyderabad, Vijayawada and other parts of Andhra Pradesh rabbit farms are nowadays emerging the main region is entrepreneurship, low investments in rabbit farming attracted by educated youth come forward to start rabbit farms in those regions.

Rabbit farm owners are having good contacts with road side national highway dhabas, restaurants and these farmers are directly marked by their own without taking

the help of middle men that is the region they are sustaining themselves and their family.

The main reason of success of rabbitry in Andhra Pradesh is as follows:

1. They are using good breeds
2. There are making cases their own
3. Water and feed giving regularly without contamination
4. Feed are making their own with local available millets and other seeds
5. Removing the diseased animals from the farm
6. Farm is maintained totally hygienically
7. With the help of good supportive daily wage other farmers are rearing rabbit

Some of the rabbit farms also closing with neglected management and poor understanding with out taking guidelines from experts. Some are well advanced they having freezers and transportation facilities to transport very fast to the destination to other states, 5 star hotels big restaurants they are getting more income where as compare with other agribusinesses.

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RABBIT IN INDIA

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- A number of entrepreneurs have established private rabbit farms in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Goa, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Tamil Nadu.



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ANDHRA PRADESH

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In Kurnool district most of the farms are maintained by unemployed youth

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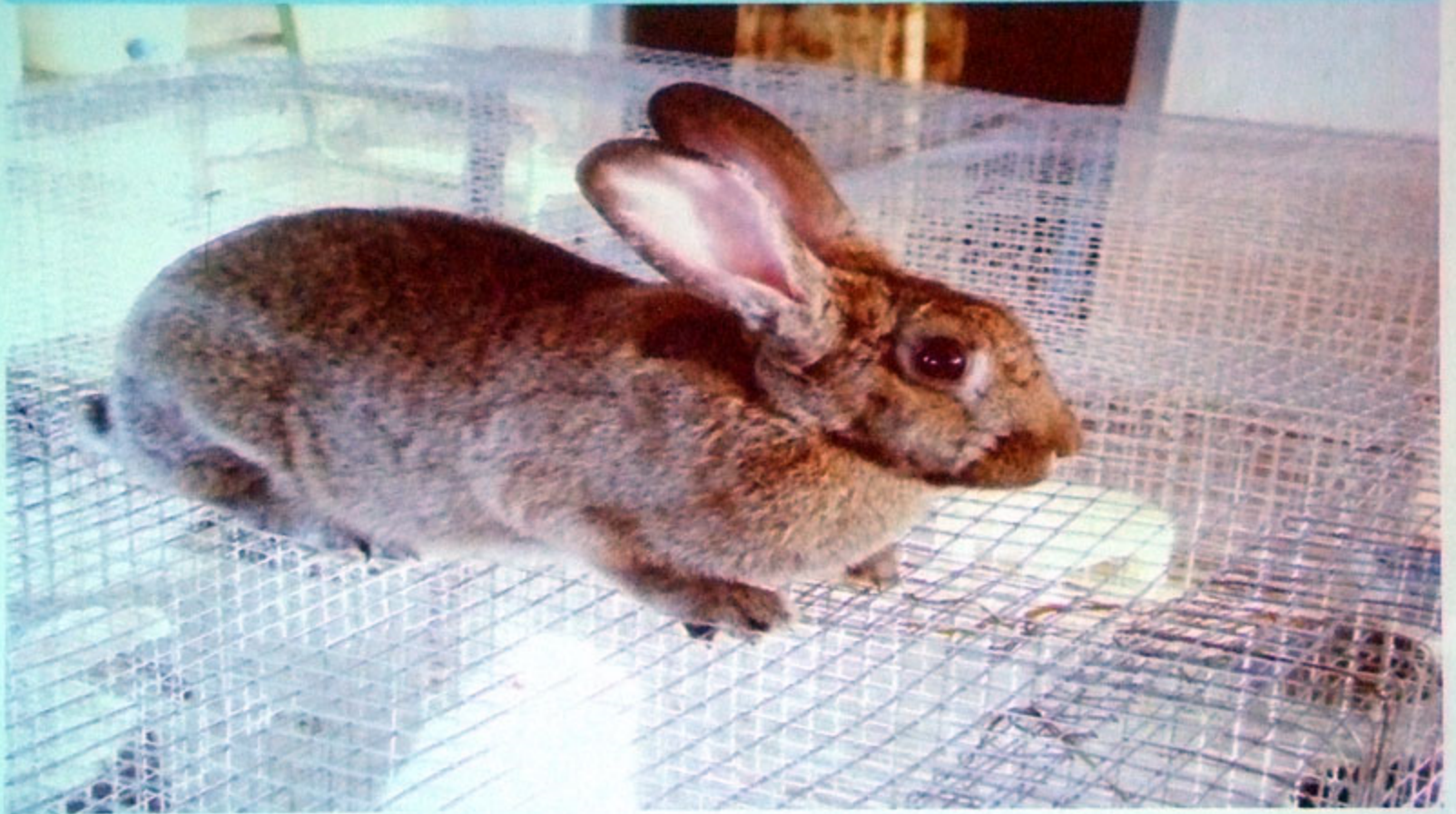
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CROSSBRED IN BOLLAVARAM FARMS



SOVIET CHINCHILLA NEW ZEALAND WHITE IN BONE



CROSSBRED IN HYDERABAD FARMS



RABBITS IN KURNOOL FARMS



CHARVI AND SRIJA



RABBIT IN BOLLAVARAM FARMS



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Thank You