

RABBIT PRODUCTION IN ITALY

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The meat rabbit breeding had, in Italy, periods of great development and periods of standstill.

During the war and after (1940-1950) it was only an activity to produce meat for family consumption using byproducts, hay, grass and remnant of food.

Afterwards and up to 1965 rabbit has been bred in small rural breedings (5-20 does) in order to obtain meat for self consumption and a few surplus for sale (rabbit=money box for house keeper).

In the 1965 the first intensive zootechnical breedings started with specific equipments, apparatuses and houses; in 1970 a lot of part-time intensive breedings developed together with the farms.

From 1972 to 1982 the meat production in this kind of breeding had a good development.

From 1980 full-time and big professional breedings started to grow, where the only activity was the rabbit production.

This kind of breeding can be not integrated in the farm.

At present we have 3 kinds of breeding in Italy:

1- Rural: 5-20 does (now decreasing)

2- Part-time: generally integrated with the farm; size 50-

500 does, much more diffused.

3- Full-time: can be not integrated in a farm; size very large 600-3,000 does (now increasing).

More than 60%-65% production is obtained in part-time and full-time breedings that have mean size increasing from 200 does to 400.

Veneto is the Region where the intensive rabbit production is very high and the mean size of the breedings is more than 250 does.

Production of rabbit meat has reached at present 200,000 tons /year.

The rate of self-provision is about 85%-90% and the consumption is about 4 kg/head/year (see tab. 1-2).

The production is obtained with selected meat breeds (NZW, California above all) or inbred among meat breeds or commercial hybrids.

The commercial hybrids had a large diffusion in 1978-82 period; but now they show a decrease due to severe sanitary problems (Staphylococcosis) in some strains.

Feeding is generally based on pellets without hay or straw.

Production and distribution of industrial pellet had a great increase in last years (see tab.3) and now reaches 600,000 tons/year.

Up to some years ago only manual feeding has been reached, using different formulae for different phases (lactation, weaning, fattening).

The large-size breedings use at least two different types of feeding.

There are some examples of mechanical or automatic feeding.

The productive system is the weekly-cycled technique, consisting on intensive exploitation of mother-cage, continuously occupied by parturient or lactating does.

During the other productive phases does are moved in different cages with weekly rhythm.

The traditional breeding technique is still in practice in selection breedings and in small breedings, with less economic requirements.

The Angora rabbit breeding, very important before 1940 disappeared up to few years ago.

Only now the interest for Angora rabbit is increasing because Italy is the main consumer of angora wool.

The development of Angora breeding meets obstacles because of difficulties in breeding techniques and high costs in manpower.

Concerning rabbit production, Associations in Italy are:

- 1- A.S.I.C.: scientific association, italian branch of W.R.S.A.
the Secretary address is: Prof.C.Ruffini Castrovilli-
Istituto di Zootecnica- via Celoria 2- 20133 Milano.
- 2- An Association of Scientists that study rabbit as model
animal, which address is: Dr. V.Monaco(President) E.N.E.A.
-C.R.E. Prov. Anguillarese km 1300- Casazza- 00060 Roma.
- 3- A.N.C.I.: National Association of Breeders- via Torlonia
19- Roma.

A.N.C.I. organize also exhibitions, shows etc.; the most important of which are:

1- Piacenza	20 February	National
2- Verona	12-19 March	International
3- Foggia	30 April	Interprovincial
4- Bagnaia (VT)	19 June	Interregional
5- Varcaturò (NA)	June	National
6- Forlì	23 September	International
7- Reggio Emilia	23 October	National
8- Erba (CO)	12 November	International
9- Torino	20 November	Regional
10- Padova	8 December	Regional

Many newspaper and magazines publish scientific or technical works on rabbit but the most specialized in this field are:

- Coniglicoltura -Edagricole- via Emilia Levante 31-
40139 Bologna.
- Professione Allevatore- Piazza S.Camillo de Lellis 1
20124 Milano.

The research work has brought a valid contribution to the evolution of the sector.

Research is nationally superintended by the National Council of Research through a coordination group which includes a representative for each Center carrying out researches on small species.

On the rabbit production we have:

Zootechnical area

- 1- Istituto Sperimentale per la Zootechnia S.O.P.
via Pianezza 115- 10151 Torino.
Scientists: M.T.Auxilia- G.Masoero.
They are responsible for rabbit researches on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest.
- 2- Istituto di Zootechnia Agraria
via Genova 6- 10100 Torino.
Scientists: G.Pagano-Toscano- G.Benatti- M.T.Barge-
I.Zoccarato.
- 3- Istituto Zootechnia Generale Agraria
via Celoria 10- 20133 Milano.
Scientists: C.Nordio- C.Ruffini Castrovilli- F.Greppi-
F.Rosi.
- 4- Istituto Zootechnia Veterinaria
via Celoria 10- 20133 Milano.
Scientists: C.Crimella- C.Carenzi- M.Verga- E.Canali-
F.Lizzi.
- 5- Istituto di Zootechnia Agraria
via Gradenigo 6- 35131 Padova.

Scientists: R.Parigi Bini- G.M.Chiericato- G.Xiccato-
M.Cinetto.

6- Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie
via S.Giacomo 5- 37100 Verona.

Scientists: E.Facchin.

7- Istituto Zootechnia Generale Agraria
Borgo XX Giugno 74- 06100 Perugia.

Scientists: M.Battaglini- F.Costantini- A.Grandi-
F.Pannella- C.Castellini.

8- Istituto Zootechnia Agraria
Università della Tuscia- Strada Riello- 00100 Viterbo.

Scientists: A.Finzi- L.Gualterio- A.Valentini.

9- Istituto di Produzione Animale- Facoltà di Agraria
viale Università 100- 80055 Portici (Napoli).

Scientists: V.Proto- G.Gioffré.

10- Istituto di Zootechnia Generale Agraria
viale delle Scienze 13- 90128 Palermo.

Scientists: M.L.Alicata- G.Leto- P.Giaccone- A.Bonanno.

11- Istituto di Allevamenti Zootecnici- Facoltà di Agraria
Villa Levi- Coviolo- 42100 Reggio Emilia.

Scientists: G.Samoggia- P.Bosi- C.Scalabrini.

Pathology area

1- Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie
via G.Orus 2- 35100 Padova.

Scientists: F.M.Cancellotti- E.Facchin.

2- Istituto Anatomia Patologica e Patologia Aviare
via Celoria 10- 20133 Milano.

Scientists: G.Mandelli- D.Gallazzi.

3- Dipartimento Patologia Animale- Facoltà di Veterinaria
via Nizza 52- 10126 Torino.

Scientists: F.Guarda- F.Valenza- M.Julini- G.di Gennaro

4- Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Piemonte e V.A.

via Bologna 148- 10154 Torino.

Scientists: G.Cantini Cortellazzi.

5- Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Lombardia-Emilia
via A.Bianchi 7- 25125 Brescia.

6- Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Abruzzo-Molise
Campo Boario- 64100 Teramo.

Scientists: D.Galassi.

7- Dipartimento Pat. Sez. Patologia Aviare
via Delpino 1- 80137 Napoli.

Scientists: V.Papparella- G.Cringoli- L.F.Menna.

Tab. N° 1: Meat rabbit production in different Italian Regions (Q.)

Regione (Region)	Anno (Year)										
	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
Piemonte	135.700	144.500	166.400	172.400	182.200	208.500	235.600	268.300	293.600	294.800	304.300
Valle d'Aosta	5.300	5.600	6.700	6.800	7.000	7.400	7.900	8.600	9.200	9.500	9.600
Lombardia	175.400	186.800	198.700	203.000	196.200	190.800	189.700	197.300	200.000	201.200	202.900
Trentino	176.000	18.800	21.500	22.500	23.800	25.000	26.900	28.500	31.200	30.000	28.700
Veneto	155.400	165.800	174.500	175.500	168.300	165.700	167.800	174.800	179.700	200.200	195.300
Friuli V. G.	38.400	40.900	47.000	48.300	50.500	53.200	56.900	62.300	66.100	66.500	65.100
Liguria	19.700	21.000	26.800	27.400	33.700	42.900	52.200	62.200	69.700	67.000	68.900
Emilia R.	163.600	174.200	185.200	198.100	194.800	195.300	200.700	216.400	225.700	235.900	239.300
Toscana	78.500	83.600	96.600	99.400	106.500	124.300	142.300	164.500	179.800	194.700	193.300
Umbria	36.900	39.300	42.900	46.000	46.300	48.800	52.200	57.100	60.500	58.600	61.300
Marche	68.900	73.400	84.500	87.500	93.900	105.000	117.000	131.600	141.300	136.100	141.700
Lazio	46.800	49.400	57.700	61.000	64.500	69.500	75.900	83.100	88.100	88.900	90.000
Abruzzo	28.200	30.000	36.200	39.000	42.000	50.300	58.500	67.500	75.200	79.100	82.300
Molise	10.900	46.000	23.400	14.700	15.400	16.300	17.400	19.000	20.200	19.400	18.700
Campania	40.000	42.600	51.000	55.700	58.900	65.000	72.700	81.400	88.100	96.400	101.500
Puglia	23.300	24.800	25.500	26.500	25.300	25.100	25.300	26.000	27.500	30.400	30.600
Basilicata	8.800	9.400	12.100	12.700	12.600	14.800	17.300	19.100	20.200	19.500	19.200
Calabria	31.900	34.000	34.900	35.000	29.500	26.600	25.300	24.200	23.900	26.500	24.900
Sicilia	36.700	39.000	40.200	40.300	33.700	29.600	26.900	26.000	23.900	23.200	23.000
Sardegna	18.100	19.300	20.200	20.200	16.900	14.800	12.700	12.100	10.900	12.100	13.400
Totale	1.140.000	1.214.000	1.352.000	1.392.000	1.407.000	1.479.000	1.581.000	1.731.000	1.834.800	1.890.000	1.914.000

Tab. N° 2 : Meat rabbit consumption in Italy

Year	Kg./head
1972	2.4
1973	2.6
1974	3.0
1975	3.0
1976	3.0
1977	3.1
1978	3.3
1979	3.5
1980	3.7
1981	3.7
1982	3.8
1983	3.8

Tab. N° 3 : Feeding distribution in different Italian Regions. (Q.)
(Industrial pellet)

Regione (Region)	Anno (Year)										
	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
Piemonte	301.000	394.314	346.204	480.506	525.532	565.069	574.349	625.728	929.477	604.628	652.723
Valle d'Aosta	29.421	6.817	5.716	5.081	3.209	14.884	7.850	7.313	7.186	6.231	3.396
Lombardia	226.254	367.694	385.207	406.327	460.275	546.304	567.211	653.262	699.170	770.210	693.702
Trentino A. A.	21.881	25.441	34.910	71.642	46.317	51.905	33.469	42.902	46.239	53.434	65.525
Veneto	308.889	259.592	346.282	375.387	499.455	490.205	652.798	722.186	850.466	898.021	1.009.241
Friuli V. G.	26.059	57.314	63.111	102.213	86.626	59.502	73.118	88.768	105.308	126.967	132.567
Liguria	18.478	29.168	32.675	38.523	27.872	75.512	82.071	66.877	76.062	75.384	73.932
E. Romagna	319.297	416.831	424.152	431.459	551.182	515.055	652.141	694.515	765.653	845.065	837.263
Toscana	92.266	175.980	152.051	188.518	234.111	212.996	283.528	320.690	307.453	316.974	315.934
Umbria	34.304	47.202	53.288	50.769	57.302	67.698	64.071	93.590	177.490	150.923	159.790
Marche	44.445	60.935	61.245	70.730	88.522	71.776	89.619	128.743	131.269	130.249	138.010
Lazio	55.538	82.097	77.872	79.256	108.099	84.863	123.749	201.332	242.728	216.066	240.808
Abruzzi	13.626	19.813	24.396	47.755	74.000	41.411	74.546	91.024	125.505	86.423	86.277
Molise	3.214	3.969	6.428	19.744	38.364	26.263	19.921	32.670	56.533	86.959	40.608
Campania	103.013	160.103	174.511	173.499	211.181	230.855	266.042	282.516	369.308	304.496	318.434
Puglia	28.407	37.025	44.865	75.763	87.501	53.837	188.257	148.226	145.155	140.965	129.672
Basilicata	1.123	6.716	7.637	5.071	15.117	1.341	12.688	19.596	29.972	21.652	16.960
Calabria	15.924	31.198	29.144	36.697	44.385	27.101	61.025	75.642	88.094	87.677	82.298
Sicilia	29.508	51.617	62.370	75.795	73.531	31.334	85.614	98.583	96.615	112.252	108.411
Sardegna	19.640	36.475	32.036	38.811	44.038	23.800	55.150	69.306	75.935	94.157	104.266
Totale	1.692.287	2.270.301	2.364.100	2.773.437	3.276.619	3.193.711	3.899.217	4.463.439	5.265.618	5.128.733	5.209.367

