

RABBIT BREEDING IN JAPAN

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In Japan, economic base of farm or fancy rabbit production is so small that we do not know any organizations dealing with these kinds of rabbits. Many rabbits produced in this country are used in medical and paramedical fields, being consumed about 300,000 heads a year. In this letter, therefore, we will give you informations concerning laboratory rabbits in Japan.

The laboratory rabbits are produced by about 30 commercial breeders who have breeding colonies of several hundreds to more than 1,000 breeding animals and about 300,000 heads are used a year in mainly development and safety tests of human medicine, and also in immunological study field. Eighty-two per cent of them are Japanese White breed and 18 per cent are New Zealand White breed, according to the survey made in 1985. A few rabbits of other breeds such as Angora, Dutch and Rex are also used as laboratory rabbits. Although a special care is not paid to 78 per cent of the rabbits(therefore, they are classified into "conventional"), 22 per cent are microbiologically controlled to the specific pathogen free (SPF) level. For your information, details of laboratory rabbits used in this country are listed on a separate paper in this letter.

Regarding research and education of laboratory rabbits, we do not have distinctive activities or systems to be mentioned, although a considerable number of researchers are studying on the biology of rabbits in universities, colleges and research institutes, and a short-term corresponding education is provided for laboratory animal technicians by our society as a part of training course of fundamental techniques.

Number of rabbits commercially supplied to laboratories in 1985

Breed	Conventional	Clean	S P F	Total	No. of dealers
Japanese White	229,764	35,302	17,645	282,711	35
New Zealand White	29,891	19,256	1,500	50,647	28
Angora	75			75	3
Dutch	49			49	3
Others(coloured)	342			342	3
Total	260,121	54,558	19,145	333,824	

