

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

To be successful in commercial rabbit raising, one must be knowledgeable in rabbit husbandry, be a progressive business person, be energetic, and have marketing skills. Lack of access to, or changes in markets for fryers or rabbit products are regular problems, so growers should consider diversified production or sources of income.

One person working full time can care for a 200 to 400 working doe meat herd. Angora raisers, working alone, can handle far fewer. Rabbit raising is labor intensive with few aids available to decrease the demands of the enterprise.

The investment in facilities and equipment, not including breeding stock or real estate, may vary from \$30 to \$75 per cage/hole. All factors involved in production, including overhead expenses such as electricity, water and taxes, must be considered.

The Domestic Rabbits magazine, the bi-monthly publication of the ARBA, contains a Market Report in each issue detailing the price, supply, and demand for those processors advertising with us.

For more information, please contact the ARBA office or visit the ARBA website.

American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc.



PO Box 400 •
Knox, PA 16232 •
Phone: 814-797-4129 •
info@arba.net •
www.arba.net •

Commercial Rabbit Production

MEAT PRODUCTION



FUR/FIBER PRODUCTION



LABORATORY PRODUCTION



The American Rabbit Breeders Association receives many inquiries each year about the possibilities of making a commercial venture of raising rabbits.

Some commercial possibilities:

MEAT
LABORATORY ANIMALS
PETS
BREEDING STOCK
FUR
FIBER

COMMERCIAL MEAT PRODUCTION

The most popular meat breeds are the New Zealand White and the Californian because they have the white fur preferred by processors and have good growth characteristics. Some colored breeds used for meat are the Red and Black varieties of the New Zealand, Palomino, Champagne d'Argent, and Satin. Some crossbreeds are also desirable.

Rabbit meat is in high demand because it is all white, low in fat, high in protein, highly palatable, low in cholesterol, easily digested, and can be substituted for poultry in most recipes.

The ARBA has a commercial committee which provides quarterly market reports in the Domestic Rabbits publication. In the reports, you will find current information including the names and locations of processor/buyers, prices and other comments.

Besides meat, you may find a market for by products, such as feet, hides, and various glands and organs.

LABORATORY ANIMAL PRODUCTION

Most laboratories want a ruby-eyed white or small colored rabbit. Breeds commonly used are New Zealand White, Dutch, and Florida White. Excess rabbits not sold for lab stock may be sold for meat.

PET PRODUCTION

The ARBA recognizes over 40 breeds in a variety of sizes, colors, markings, and forms of ear carriage. All breeds can be used for pets, but the most popular are Dutch, Holland Lop, Mini Lop, Netherland Dwarf, Mini Rex, and Polish. There are significant competition among fanciers and hobbyists for pet markets.

BREEDING STOCK PRODUCTION

Some breeders have reputations for their excellent stock and make good profits selling breeding stock to other producers. To be a successful breeding stock grower, one has to develop and maintain a reputation for high quality, healthy stock. Record keeping and registering of stock is very important for this sort of producer.

FUR PRODUCTION

Fur from the Rex breed has been popular for garments and trims. Normal and Satin fur can be used for some items but these furs are not as popular as the Rex. Fur markets

tend to be unstable, so make sure that you have a ready buyer and that the prices received will allow a reasonable profit.

FIBER PRODUCTION

Angora wool is an excellent thermal insulator and is used in the manufacture of high quality garments. The English, French, Satin, and Giant breeds of Angoras have varying and distinct wool characteristics and expected yields. Because the wool is harvested by shearing or plucking, the animals do not need to be slaughtered to harvest the product. Wool markets are spotty and the producer will have to be creative in marketing. There are currently no large, domestic buyers of Angora wool.

LICENSING

A USDA license is required of any person engaged in the sale of more than \$500 per year of rabbits for purposes other than food or fiber, unless specifically exempted. More information concerning this can be obtained from:

USDA/APHIS/AC
4700 River Road
Riverdale, MD 20737-1232

The USDA/APHIS also has a website where you can view information including current regulations at:

www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/sitemap.html

