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Annotation. *This article discusses rabbit farming, an important branch of animal husbandry, focusing on its significance in the national economy, the benefits of rabbit meat for the human body, and the productivity of rabbits.*

Keywords. *Rabbit farming, meat, skin, fiber, diseases, productivity, animal husbandry, food, industry, protein, breeding.*

Rabbit farming holds a significant position in the livestock sector. It contributes to food security by providing high-quality meat and fur, while also serving as an additional source of income for many families.

Rabbits are known for their rapid reproduction rates and efficient feed conversion, making them a valuable protein source. Additionally, rabbit farming requires less space and investment compared to other livestock, making it accessible to small-scale farmers.

Moreover, rabbits provide manure that serves as a rich fertilizer for crops, enhancing the sustainability of agricultural practices and improving soil fertility.

Overall, rabbit farming is an integral part of the livestock industry, offering numerous benefits that contribute to both the economy and food supply.

Cattle breeding holds a significant place in the national economy and is considered one of the main sectors of agricultural production. It provides essential food products such as meat, milk, and eggs for the population, and supplies raw materials for industrial enterprises.

Cattle breeding develops in close connection with crop farming. Only about one-fourth of the total organic matter produced from agricultural crops is directly consumed by humans. The remaining three-fourths is consumed by livestock as organic feed, which is then transformed into high-quality food products. The importance of animal protein in the human diet is immense. Therefore, developing all branches of cattle breeding is a primary demand of the times.

Among these branches, rabbit breeding also has its place. Rabbit breeding is one of the rapidly maturing, prolific, and high-yielding sectors of livestock farming. This sector allows for the production of large quantities of dietary meat, high-quality fur, soft down, and other products with minimal labor and feed costs.

Rabbit meat is considered dietary meat; it is easier to digest compared to beef, mutton, and pork, and is rich in complete proteins while having low cholesterol content. The human body assimilates 62% of proteins from beef, whereas this figure reaches 90% for rabbit meat.

Rabbit meat is recommended for children, the elderly, and patients suffering from stomach, liver, and cardiovascular diseases due to its beneficial properties. A year can yield over 400 kg of dietary meat from five female rabbits and one male rabbit ($5 \text{ females} \times 40 \text{ offspring} = 200 \text{ offspring} \times 2 \text{ kg} = 400 \text{ kg}$).

Rabbit fur holds significant importance in the economy. It is used in the fur industry to produce lightweight coats, jackets, children's outerwear, shawls, earmuffs, and hats. Additionally, it is used in the production of leather accessories, including lightweight footwear, gloves, and bags.

The finest threads are made from rabbit down, which is used to create shawls, scarves, and other items. Each adult rabbit can yield more than 1 kg of down per year.

Domestic rabbits differ from wild rabbits in their rapid growth, prolific breeding, lack of seasonal breeding cycles, and early maturity of their offspring. The gestation period for domestic rabbits is about 30 days (28-32 days). They can produce offspring 5-6 times a year. Each litter typically consists of 6-12 blind, hairless kits. After three days, fur begins to appear, and by 6-7 days, they are

covered in down. Their eyes open at 10-14 days, and they leave the nest around 17-20 days.

At birth, rabbit kits weigh between 30 and 120 grams. They grow quickly, doubling their weight by 6 days, tripling it by 10 days, and increasing it 5-6 times by 20 days. By 30 days, they can weigh 9-10 times their birth weight. Kits grow rapidly until about 4-4.5 months of age, often approaching the weight of their parents, after which growth rates slow. At this stage, their weight reaches 81-87% of that of adult rabbits, with the remaining 13-19% achieved by 8-10 months of age.

With proper care and nutrition, rabbits reach sexual maturity at 2-2.5 months. From this point on, they should be separated into different groups. They can be bred at around 4 months of age, which is when they reach physiological maturity, to produce offspring.

It is advisable to separate rabbit kits from their mother during the 45-60 day period. The mother rabbit's milk can be consumed by the kits for 2-3 days. Mother rabbits produce 100-180 grams of milk per day, sometimes up to 200-270 grams. Milk production increases until the 22-24th day, then it starts to decline. Rabbits feel comfortable when the temperature is between 15-25°C. When the temperature decreases, they use part of the energy from their feed to maintain body heat. On cool days, their breathing rate is about 50-60 breaths per minute, but as the temperature rises above 35°C, their breathing rate increases to 280-282 breaths per minute.

Rabbits are highly responsive to various external environmental factors (noise, heat, cold, wind, feed) due to their biological characteristics.

References.

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