

RABBIT PRODUCTION AS AGRO- ENTREPRENEUR FOR STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION: A STUDY OF FEDERAL COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AKURE

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to gather relevant information on the state of rabbit production among students within the campus with the aid of understanding their challenges, reasons for undertaking such ventures on campus, how they are able to combine rearing of rabbits with their studies. Students involved in rabbit farming were organized into groups. Using well-structured questionnaires and resource interview section information on effect of rabbit farming on students' academic performance, number of stock kept, reason they involved in the venture and challenges faced were collected. The result obtained in this study, it is observed that 90% of the students involved in rabbit farming on campus are male while only 10% are female. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents reported that rearing rabbits on campus has no effect on their academic performances while 30% reported that it does. From the report on the production, 75% of the respondents went into the rabbit farming to make some extra money for themselves while only 2% are involved in it as a result of their student project. It can be concluded that the increase in number of rabbit farmers on the campus is mainly because the students want extra source of income.

Key words: *rabbit production, campus, students, venture.*

1.0 Introduction

The numerous attempts aimed at solving low protein intake and poverty alleviation by Nigerian government still remains a mirage (Nworgu and Hammed, 2009). To meet the increasing demand for animal protein, emphasis needs to be given to non-conventional sources such as easily managed rabbits as against the conventional sources such as cattle, sheep, goat, pig and poultry that would require more capital, space and time (Yusuf *et. al.*, 2009). Domestic rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) are everywhere providing protein for food, research models and companionship among others. These qualities confer on rabbits a potential to bridge the shortage

of animal protein in developing countries, where grain can only be justified for human use (Iribeck, 2001).

Over the years the number of students rearing rabbit within the College of Agriculture Akure has kept on increasing but not much is known about the cause of such increase or why more students go into rabbit rearing within the college but encouraging such students in the venture may help the college address one of her mission which is to encourage and empower her students with the right skills through entrepreneurial and vocational studies.

This study was designed to gather relevant information on the state of rabbit production among students within the campus with the aid of understanding their challenges, reasons for undertaking such ventures on campus, how they are able to combine rearing of rabbits with their studies and if they wish to continue with the venture after their studies.

2.0 Materials and Methods

This study was carried out at the Federal College of Agriculture, Akure, west campus where student rearing rabbits are concentrated. Students involved in rabbit farming were organized into a group and several meetings were held with them to create awareness for the need of the study. All the students involved in rabbit production within the college showed interest to participate in the study. Using well-structured fifty (50) questionnaires were given out and resource interview section information on effect of rabbit farming on students' academic performance, number of stock kept, reason they involved in the venture and challenges faced were collected. All data generated from the questionnaires was analyzed descriptively using SPSS version 16

3.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: EFFECT OF RABBIT REARING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FEDERAL COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE (FCA) STUDENTS, AKURE.

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SEX		
Male	18	90
Female	2	10
LEVEL		
ND 1	5	25
ND 2	2	10
HND 1	3	15
HND 2	10	50
NUMBER OF SEMESTER USED IN REARING RABBIT		
One semester	1	5
Two semester	10	50
Three semester	7	35
Four semester	2	10
DOES RABBIT REARING HAVE EFFECT ON YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE		
YES	6	30
NO	14	70
EFFECTS MENTIONED		
No response	14	70
It takes my time of reading	5	25
The money to feed myself sometimes I use it in feeding rabbit	1	5
DO YOU HAVE MENTOR IN RABBIT REARING		
YES	17	85
NO	3	15
WHO ARE THE MENTORS		
No response	4	20
Other students	2	10
Past students	12	60
Others	2	10
WILL YOU CONTINUE WITH THE VENTURE AFTER GRADUATION		
No response	1	5
Yes	19	95
No	0	0
DO YOU HAVE ANY COMPLAIN BY OTHER STUDENTS ABOUT YOU REARING RABBIT IN THE SURROUNDING		
No response	1	5
Yes	2	10
No	17	85

From the result obtained in this study, it is observed that 90% of the students involved in rabbit farming on campus are male while only 10% are female. These could be likened to the fact that most male students want extra source of income to support what they get from home. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents reported that rearing rabbits on campus has no effect on their academic performances while 30% reported that it does. Oseni, *et.al.*, (2008) had reported that rabbit farming is a venture which is not time consuming but 25% of the students reported that the venture takes up some of their study time, these could be as a result of poor time management on the part of the students.

Most of the students (85%) involved in rabbit farming in Federal College of Agriculture (FCA), Akure had mentors who are mostly past students (60%). These past students most have done their project using rabbits and later decided to keep the animals and make money from it.

From the report on the production focus, 75% of the respondents went into the rabbit farming to make some extra money for themselves while only 2% are involved in it as a result of their student project. This buttress the fact that rabbit farming could be a source of extra income (Shaeffer and Harper, 2008) even for students. The stock size reported in this study is between 0 – 10, majority of the respondent (70%) have a stock 1-4 animals while only 10% has about 10 animals. This is an indication that the enterprise is a small scale venture and this could make it being easy for them to manage. Rabbit farming is often established as a small scale venture which makes management easy (Cheeke, 2005).

The respondents in this study reported various forms of challenges they face while having the rabbit farms on campus and some of the challenge reported includes. Ant invasion which often kills their animal, lack of market to sell off their stock, theft of animal by other students, outbreak of diseases and sudden death of animal among others. This challenges reported in this work are similar to these report by (Ozor and Madukwe, 2005) in his study on challenges of rabbit farming. Ninety five percent (95%) of the respondents reported that they will continue with the venture even after graduation, these could be an indicator that while on campus the venture has paid them off and so continuity is an option. 75% of the respondents in this report uses wooden cage and 10% uses other houses while 15% of them uses bamboo cage. Most of the cages used were constructed by the students themselves, hence there is reduction in cost of production. The type of pen used and the management of the animals could bring about outbreak

of diseases on the farm as we observed during administration of the questionnaire since most of the surrounding of the rabbit farm were looking unkept. Only 10% of the respondents report that their colleagues in the hostel complained about them keeping rabbit in the hostel.

CONCLUSION

From the result obtained in this study, it can be concluded that the increase in number of rabbit farmers on the campus of Federal College of Agriculture (FECA), Akure is mainly because the students want extra source of income other than what they get from home and since rabbit rearing could fetch them such income without affecting their studies, they get involved in it other than cyber theft. Also the students involved in the venture can be self-employed after their graduation until they get a better job since (Oseni *et.al.*, 2008) reported that rabbit farming is a venture that will allow one take up other job without affecting it.

RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore recommend that, the students involved in the venture should try and

- i. use better housing facility and keep the surrounding of the pen clean to help reduce or avoid death of animal.
- ii. approach the management of the college point of sales to help in sales of their product and also awareness should be done among other students on the importance of rabbit meat to the health of human hence promoting its consumption.

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