

## Abstract

Rabbit production is becoming important in Kenya not by young boys but as an economic undertaking. This may be due to decreasing per capita landholdings due to increasing human population density. However, there is little published information on requirements for successful rabbit production. A study was designed done to characterize the rabbit production systems to allow identification of constraints and opportunities along this particular value chain.

Respondents in a survey were purposively selected from four regions of the country where there is significant rabbit farming activity according to the Ministry of Livestock Development. These included Rift Valley, Central, Eastern and Coastal region. Structured questions were asked, several rabbit breeds and their crosses were identified and the study sought to couple farmer stated objectives with these breeds. The coupling of breeds to the stated farmer assessment of their traits and benefits was also attempted. This was implemented through the application of correspondence analysis on these frequency data. Results indicated that there was considerable rhyme between farmer stated objectives and the rabbit breeds while this correspondence also stretched to breed and the farmers' stated qualities of the breeds. These results therefore showed that stated inherent qualities of the breed also might direct farmer choices. Whereas slightly over half (52.3%) of the farmers kept rabbits with a commercial intention, the findings from the analysis indicate that some heavy breeds such as French Ear Lop and the Flemish Giant score highly for their carcass weight. That these breeds have a poor bone-meat ratio unlike the more popular New Zealand White and Californian White indicate that farmers do not consider the true value of the product such as bone:meat ratios. In a commercial enterprise, these results are perplexing and serve to show that farmers may require more capacity to appreciate the inherent breed characteristics rather than just the overtly recognizable breed characters..