

STARTING A RABBIT ENTERPRISE

Listed below are concerns that persons should take in consideration when considering whether to start a commercial rabbitry enterprise. Due to similarities in the methods of production with those of caged laying hens, the responsibility for assisting new rabbit producers has traditionally resided with the Extension Poultry Department in most states.

I. Advantages

A. Supplemental Income

-- Excellent enterprise to provide extra income in spare time.

B. Small Land Requirement

-- A substantial rabbitry can be operated on less than one acre of land.

C. Labor

-- Less physically demanding than many other agricultural enterprises.

D. Earthworms

-- Additional income is often earned by producing and selling earthworms.

II. Disadvantages

A. High Initial Investment

-- Investment for a new facility and breeding stock usually amounts to about \$70 to \$90 per doe unit (Building, cages, equipment, and breeding stock.)

-- Investment can be reduced somewhat if a presently existing building can be adapted for rabbit housing. (Materials and breeding stock in this situation may only amount to \$30 to \$40 per doe unit.

-- Since the rabbit industry is not as developed as most other agricultural enterprises, it is considered a high-risk investment. The markets are not as secure and may not be available when market time approaches. This can be overcome if the producer develops a clientele group to purchase his rabbit products.

B. Net Income averages only about \$20 to \$22 per doe per year.

-- Annual income for a full-time family enterprise is about \$8,000 to \$13,000 annually.

C. Management problems invariably plague the beginner rabbit producer.

-- Maximum production is seldom achieved during the first few years.

D. Rabbit production is an everyday enterprise with few days off.

-- Low margins do not often allow for the hiring of temporary labor during this time.

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS

1. Raising rabbits is not suited for everyone. To be successful, the producer must be able to give careful attention to small details. Record keeping is a primary requirement and duty.
2. Rabbit production at the present time is not an enterprise that the producer can rely upon initially as a full-time occupation.
3. Prior to investing in facilities, equipment, and breeding stock, determine where the market is and how many rabbits the market can support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommend that anyone interested in raising rabbits for the first time get into the business slowly, perhaps with 10 to 20 breeding does. If, after learning how to manage the business, you see that you want to pursue it further, you can do so at a rate to suit your financial resources. If on the other hand, you find that you are not suited for the rabbit business, you can sell equipment and stock with little or no financial loss.

Remember, keep both good financial and production records or you will not know if you are making progress and a profit or whether you are losing money.

If you desire additional information on the commercial production of rabbits, contact you local [County Extension Office](#) or contact the Extension Poultry Specialist, Poultry Science Department, Box 9665, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

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