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ELECT/ELECT ENGINEERING

AFE 202 ASSIGNMENT

**RABBIT FARMING BUSINESS PLAN.**

Raising rabbits for meat is a lucrative business, providing income for millions of people, but there are some essential things you need to do before you venture into the rabbit farming business. You have to decide on the size of your rabbit farming business project i.e. the number of rabbits you want to keep; location of the rabbit farming business e.g. a rabbit farm, and your target market. These choices will be affected by the amount of capital you have, and the size of your target market.  If you do not have a lot of capital, you can always start small and grow your rabbit farming business overtime, remember, Rome was not built in a day. You also need to carry out market research (Who are you going to sell the rabbits to? At what price?) and write a rabbit farming business plan before you venture into the rabbit production business.

**What you need**

Before you start raising rabbits for meat, you need to have a large enough area to erect the rabbit hutches. If possible locate your rabbit farm nearer to good roads. This will give you easy access to and from your rabbit farming business. There should be a reliable source of clean water that can be used for both human and animal consumption, such as boreholes and rivers. If you don’t have enough water supply, you can construct a water reservoir. Your rabbit farming business plan should take into account the cost of the land required to start raising rabbits for meat.

**HOUSING AND EQUIPMENT**

You need good housing for your commercial rabbit farming business. Rabbits are very flexible when it comes to housing, as compared to other livestock. Thus for your rabbit farming project, you do not need to have elaborate and expensive housing. You can house your rabbits in outside hutches, wire cages, or rabbit buildings. Your rabbit housing should provide enough space for the rabbits, as the rabbits need sufficient space to be able to eat, play, jump etc. You should ensure that your housing has adequate ventilation, is easy to maintain and clean, and is safe for the rabbits to live, breed and raise their kits. The rabbit farming business plan should take into account the costs of housing required for raising rabbits for meat.

There are various equipment needed when raising rabbits for meat. The equipment which you need will depend on the rabbit housing system which you choose. The rabbit housing systems which are commonly used in commercial rabbit farming are the cage system and the deep litter system.  For the cage system, you will be keeping the rabbits in cages. You can either keep the cages indoors or outdoors. On the other hand, the deep litter system is whereby you keep the rabbits on floors e.g. concrete floors with bedding spread on the floor.

Equipment needed for commercial rabbit farming business includes drinkers, nest boxes and feeders. When using the cages rabbit housing system, you may not these equipment as some type of cages have inbuilt drinking system, feeding system and nest boxes. Nest boxes will be used by the female rabbits when they give birth to the kits.

**BREEDING STOCK FOR RABBIT FARMING BUSINESS**

To start raising rabbits for meat, you require breeding stock. The breeding stock consists of male rabbits which are known as bucks, and female rabbits which are known as does. When choosing breeding stock for the rabbit farming business, you should be very careful of the health history of the rabbits. It’s advisable to purchase the breeding stock from rabbit farmers who have a good reputation in the rabbit production business. The rabbits which you select should be strong with an overall appearance of good health. Request to see the records of the breeding stock which you want to purchase. The growth potential of your kits will depend on the nature and quality of the parent stock. Bucks pass on good meat qualities to their offspring. Thus it is of great importance to buy a good rabbit breeding stock from reliable rabbit farmers. The rabbit farming project proposal should take into consideration the cost of buying the breeding stock.

**RABBITS BREEDS TO USE WHEN RAISING RABBITS FOR MEAT**

There are various breeds of rabbits which are used for commercial rabbit farming in different parts of the world. The popular ones include the Californian White, Chinchilla Grey, New Zealand Red, New Zealand White, Flemish Giant and Cinnamon. The breed you choose will depend on availability, cost and your target market.

**FEED FOR THE RABBITS**

To be profitable in the rabbit farming business, you have to minimize the costs and the mortality rate, as well as optimize the target weight of the rabbits. You can give your rabbits commercial rabbit pellets feed and supplement with other food. Rabbit stock feeds are formulated to provide the protein, energy, vitamins and other nutrients essential for health and efficient growth of the rabbits. The supplementary food you can give your rabbits include grasses, grains(maize, rapoko, wheat, sunflowers), weeds (black jack), hay, fruits (melons, uapaca kirkiana),weeds (black jack), hay, tree leaves (bananas tree leaves, mangos tree leaves, etc), vegetables (spinach, carrots, beans, rape, cabbage leaves, lettuce,  etc.), ground nuts leaves, bambara nuts, rapoko stalks etc. Giving the rabbits enough feed ensures that the rabbits get all the essential nutrients needed for growth (carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals, fibres and fat). Rabbits also need plenty of water. The water also makes it easier for rabbits to digest their food. All the feed costs should be included in your rabbit farming business proposal.

**CAPITAL FOR RABBIT FARMING BUSINESS**

The amount of capital required when raising rabbits for meat depends on the scale of the project. You will need money for constructing the rabbit hutches, buying the breeding stock, buying the feeds etc. You can get a loan from the bank, or funding from investors, to use as capital to start your rabbit farming business. If you plan to raise capital from investors and a loan from the bank, you need a good rabbit farming business plan. If you don’t have access to investors and bank loan, you can use your personal savings and start small, and grow your business overtime. Raising rabbits for meat is very profitable, so if you reinvest the profits you get, you can quickly grow. Even if you are not planning to get a loan, you should still have a rabbit farming business plan to guide you in starting and operating the business. Your rabbit farming business plan should clearly outline all the costs required to start and operate the commercial rabbit farming business.

**MARKET FOR RABBITS**

When raising rabbits for meat, you will usually sell or slaughter the rabbits at about 10-12 weeks of age. The demand for rabbit meat is huge. This is because rabbit meat is considered a healthy, delicacy meat. Rabbit meat is known for its high protein content and low fat, thus it’s very healthy. Rabbit meat is a delicious, fine grained, and nutritious white meat and many people love it. The market for your rabbit meat include individuals, restaurants, hotels, supermarkets and butcheries. You can also supply your rabbits to universities and hospitals for research use in the laboratories.

There is also a huge export market for rabbits. As you grow your rabbit farming business, you will be able to export the rabbit meat to other countries.  The largest importers of rabbit meat include Italy, Belgium, France, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Rabbits breed and reproduce fast. The pregnancy lasts for only 1 month, and each doe give birth to an average of 8 kits at a time, and can give birth 9 times a year. This means that every year 1 doe can give birth to 72 rabbits! This means that you can easily grow your rabbit farming project over time. Raising rabbits for meat is very profitable and you can easily recoup your initial cost of investment.

**USES OF THE RABBIT FARMING BUSINESS PLAN**

The rabbit farming business plan can be used for many purposes including:

Raising capital from investors/friends/relatives

Applying for a bank loan

Start-up guide to launch your rabbit meat production business

As a rabbit farming project proposal

Assessing profitability of raising rabbits for meat

Finding a business partner

Assessing the initial start-up costs so that you know how much to save

Manual for current business owners to help in business and strategy formulation

**CONTENTS OF THE RABBIT MEAT PRODUCTION BUSINESS PLAN**

The rabbit farming business plan include, but not limited to:

Operational Requirements (Including technical aspects of how to keep and rear the rabbits, feed requirements etc)

Operational Strategy

Industry Analysis

Marketing Strategy

Market Analysis

Financial Statements (monthly cash flow projections, income statements, cash flow statements, balance sheets, break even analysis, payback period analysis, start-up costs, financial graphs, revenue and expenses, Bank Loan Amortization)

Risk Analysis

SWOT & PEST Analysis

Why some people in rabbit farming business fail, so that you can avoid their mistakes

Ways to raise capital to start raising rabbits for meat.

The business plan can be used in any country and can be easily edited. The financial statements are automated. This implies that you can change eg the number of rabbits, selling price of the rabbits etc, and all the other financial statements will automatically adjust to reflect the change.