

LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF IMPROVED RABBIT PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY IN AKURE SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ONDO STATE

Ogunyinka, A. I.^{*1}. and Omoniyi, L. O.¹,

^{*1}Department of Agricultural Extension and Management, Federal College of Agriculture Akure.

*Email: idowuolaitan@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This research work was carried out to assess the level of awareness of improved rabbit production management technology in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the socio-economic characteristics of the rabbit farmers, determine the level of awareness of improved rabbit production technology by small scale farmers. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select ninety six rabbit producers. Primary data was collected through the aid of a well-structured questionnaire. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as, frequency, percentage. The findings revealed that 52.1% of the respondents were female, 56.2% of the respondents were between the age range of 20-29 years, 59.4% of the respondents are single, 82.3% of the respondents were aware of improved rabbit production management technologies. High cost of material was a major constraint affecting rabbit production. It was therefore recommended that Government should help the rabbit producers by providing materials at subsidized rate.

Keywords: Awareness, Improved Technology, Akure South and Rabbit.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mini-livestock production like grasscutter, guinea pig, porcupine, snail and rabbit production is placed on the spotlight as the best option for food security in the country today (Wilson, 2012). Rabbit farming is a rewarding business with high probability of recouping original investment (Onebunne, 2013). It also has a high protein level of about 20.8% and its consumption is beneath of cultural and religious bias (Biobaku and Oguntona, 2017). The presence of caecal microbes enables the rabbit to digest large amounts of fibrous feed as most non-ruminant species cannot (Taiwo *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, expansion in rabbit farming will not only generate jobs and income for farmers but will also create small-scale business for market mammals and restaurants (Onebunne, 2013).

Rabbit production can be a significant subsystem where land is limited and parts of the community, mostly women and children, lack adequate income and nutrition. Rabbits are appropriate for rearing by women, old people and children, and even landless farmers (Wilson, 2012).

They also provide a steady source of food, income, generate employment, and are likely to be successful because they are produce rapidly and are efficient converters of waste vegetables to protein (Wilson, 2012). Other benefits include the use of crop residues as feeds, efficient use of space; easy management. Rabbit enterprise is gaining lots of popularity among the rural farmers in Nigeria and this arises from a growing market demand for rabbits and its products due to population growth, urbanization and tourism in Nigeria (Onebunne, 2013). With declining land size holdings, rabbit keeping has the advantage of low demand on land and feed resources. In addition, rabbits require limited supplementation: weeds, vegetables and kitchen left-over's are enough for their feeding. This means rabbits pose little competition for food with humans yet they are highly prolific, early maturing, fast growth rate, and efficient in feed conversion and hence more productive compared to other farm animals. For these reasons the rabbit enterprise is attractive to both rural and peri-urban farmers. The potential benefits of rabbit keeping and its convenience as a cheap source of money and food to the resource poor households in Nigeria are immense and not fully exploited. Over the last decade Nigeria government has supported rabbit research and development activities, efforts aimed at raising the productivity of the small holder's rabbit production as a cheap and easy source of animal protein in the rural areas of Nigeria despite presence of pulses (Moyo and Swanepoel, 2010). Efforts towards development of the subsector in Nigeria have focused on rabbit technology transfer and extension services. Despite the efforts directed at improving small holder rabbit production over the years low productivity remains a major challenge in the subsector. The productivity in rabbit

production gap is wide and indicative of poor and low performance of the enterprise in rural areas of Nigeria. One of the reasons attributed to this trend could lie in the way smallholder rabbit farmers use their resources and lack of improved technology (Sejian, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

Area of Study

This study was carried out in Akure South Local Government Area (LGA) of Ondo State, Nigeria. Akure South Local Government has a geographical area of 331 km square and a population estimation of 486, 300 inhabitants. The area has annual rainfall of between 1,250mm and 1,500mm, relative humidity between 70%-98% with bimodal distribution between March– August and August– November. The temperature of the area is between 27°C - 32°C which is appropriate for farming activities. Over the years, the population of Akure has been increasing tremendously since it started to enjoy the status of both state capital and local government headquarters. The main profession of the people in the Local Government Area are farming and trading. The key food crops cultivated in the area are maize, yam, cassava, vegetables, cowpea, plantain among others and livestock production such as; poultry, piggery, rabbit, sheep and goat rearing.

Sampling Technique and Procedure

A two-stage sampling procedure was used for the study. The first stage involves random sampling technique used to select four communities (Oba Ile, FECA, Aule, Oke Aro) where rabbit production is pronounced. The second stage involves the purposive selection (because of the concentration of rabbit farmers) of twenty-five rabbit farmers in each of the areas selected. This gives a total of one hundred respondents selected from the population of rabbit farmers. However, 96 responses were found suitable for analysis (others were not properly filled). Primary data were used for this study and was collected with the aid of a well-structured questionnaire administered to the selected farmers.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical tools such as mean, frequency distribution and percentages were used to analyze the socio-economic characteristics of rabbit farmers and level of awareness of improved rabbit production management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 present socio-economic characteristic of the respondents. The table reveals that, 52.1% of the respondents were female and the remaining 47.9% were male. This implies that rabbit production is more practiced by female folks in the study area. This result is in support of the findings of Ozor and Madukwe, (2007) where they observed that female engaged most in rabbit production due to less physical strength involved in rabbit production activities. 56.2% of the respondents were between the age range of 20-29 years, 14.6% were between age ranges of 30-39 years and 40-49 years respectively. This implies that respondents in age class 20-29 years are still economically active, adaptive and energetic which help them to carry out the husbandry activities involved in rabbit production. The study further revealed that 59.4% of the respondents are single, 39.6% were married. The result implies that majority of the respondents are single. It can be inferred that marital status is not a barrier to involvement in rabbit business. Furthermore 53.1% of the rabbit farmers had tertiary education, 28.1% had secondary education. This implies that the majority (99%) of the respondents are literate. The role of education in increasing the adoption of improved agricultural technologies as was observed by Madukwe (2004). 69.8% of the respondents had years of experience of 1-5 years, 27.1 % of them had years of experience of 6-10 years. This is an indication that rabbit farmers are gradually gaining experience in the rabbit production enterprise.

The result in Table 2 shows the various improved rabbit technologies the farmers are aware of, the improved technologies were ranked according to the mean values. Housing system was ranked first with mean value of 1.96, clean of housing was ranked second with mean value of 1.93, routine management practices was ranked third with mean value of 1.92, reproduction technology and diseases control were ranked fourth with mean value of 1.91, feed supplementation, and medication and vaccination was ranked sixth with mean value of 1.89, pathology and hygiene technology was ranked seventh with mean value of 1.83, automated water system was ranked eighth with mean value of 1.80, and flushing and steaming up was ranked ninth with mean value of 1.75.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	46	47.9
Female	50	52.1
Age (Years)		
Less than 20	7	7.3
20-29	54	56.2
30-39	14	14.6
40-49	14	14.6
50 and Above	7	7.3
Marital Status		
Single	57	59.4
Married	38	36.6
Widow	1	1.0
Educational Level		
No Formal Education	1	1.0
Primary Education	12	12.5
Secondary Education	27	28.1
Tertiary Education	51	53.1
Adult Literacy	5	5.2
Farming Experience		
1-5	67	69.8
6-10	26	27.1
Above 10	13	13.5
Total	96	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022.**Table 2: Awareness of improved rabbit technologies**

SN	Improved Technologies	Aware F (%)	Not Aware F (%)	Mean	Rank
1	Housing system	92 (95.8)	4 (4.2)	1.96	1 st
2	Feed supplementation	85 (88.5)	11 (11.5)	1.89	6 th
3	Automated system of water	77 (80.2)	19 (19.8)	1.80	8 th
4	Pathology and hygiene technology	80 (83.3)	16 (16.7)	1.83	7 th
5	Disease control	88 (91.7)	8 (8.3)	1.91	4 th
6	Reproduction technology	88 (91.7)	8 (8.3)	1.91	4 th
7	Routine management practices	89 (92.7)	7 (7.3)	1.92	3 rd
8	Flushing and steaming up	72 (75.0)	24 (25.0)	1.75	9 th
9	Cleaning of housing	90 (93.8)	6 (6.2)	1.93	2 nd
10	Medication and Vaccination	86 (89.6)	10 (10.4)	1.89	6 th

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The results show the level of awareness of improved rabbit production technologies is very high among farmers in the study area. The level of awareness was taken to be the possibility of the farmer hearing about the technology. The overall level of awareness of the selected improved rabbit production technologies was very high. The high level of awareness of the improved technologies can influence adoption of these technologies

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall level of awareness of improved rabbit production management technologies is very high. There is high level of awareness on housing system, clean of housing, and routine management practices. Government should employ more extension workers to intensify efforts on improved rabbit production technologies in the study area by offering services. Moreover, information sources are very

important in creating awareness of agricultural technologies in general and improved rabbit production technologies in particular.

REFERENCES

- Biobaku, W.O. and Oguntona, E.B. (1997): "The Effects of Feeding Multi Nutrient Mini Blocks and Pelleted Diet on the Growth of Rabbits. *Nig. J. Anim. Prod.*, 24(2): 147.
- Moyo .S. and Swanepoel, F.J (2010); The Role of Livestock in Developing communities Enhancing Multi- functionality. Published by the technical centre for Agriculture and Rural cooperative South Africa, pp114-117.
- Onebunne A. (2013): Rabbit Farming for Health and Wealth. The Punch, 14th March, 2014.
- Ozor, N. and Madukwe, A. (2007). A framework for agricultural adaptation to climate in Southern Nigeria. A Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DelpHE) 326 Project Executive Summary Supported by DFID and the British Council, Enugu: African Institute of Applied Economics.
- Sejian, V. (2012): "Environmental Stress and Amelioration in Livestock Production". Retrieved from DOI: 10.1007/978-3-642-292057_2 on 26th April, 2014.
- Taiwo, B.B.A., Ogundipe. I.I. and Ogunsiji O. (2009): Reproductive and Growth Performance of rabbits raised on forage crops. In: Proc. Of the 4th Annual Conference of the Animal Association of Nigeria held in Ibadan, Nigeria, pp 108-109.
- Wilson, R. T. (2012): *Small Animals for Small Farms*: Diversification Booklet N0.14, (2nd Ed.) ISBN 978-92-5-107067-3 Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division FAO. Retrieved on 21st June, 2012 from http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2469e/i2469_e00.pdf