***Lesson 10: Exploring Rabbit Production- Teacher’s Guide***

**Estimated Time for Completion – approximately 45 minutes**

**Students Learning Objectives:**

* As a result of this lesson the student will…
  + Explore meat rabbit production in the U.S.
  + Examine rabbit production and marketing concerns in the U.S.
  + Understand production-related issues facing rabbit production enterprises.

**Purpose:** Possibly better known for being pests that can destroy a beautiful garden, rabbits are also a delicious, low-fat, high-protein food source. In addition to their nutritional value, rabbits are quick-breeding animals. Interestingly, this food source with great production potential does not have a large foothold in the current market, but is finally starting to see some growth in recent years. Let’s take a deeper look at rabbit production to learn how it could find its way to our dinner plate soon.

**Directions:** Access the commodities and products tab on the AgMRC website (<http://www.agmrc.org>) and find the link to Livestock. Utilize information located here to answer the questions below:

1. Why has interest in localized rabbit production emerged in recent years? What marketing implications could this hold?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Livestock” link.
* Select the “Rabbits” link.
* Click on the blue “Rabbits” link in the “Overview” section to expand the page.
* Look in the “Overview” section to find the desired information.
* Note: It is expected that students may also have to rely upon their critical-thinking skills to address this question’s content.

1. What are some considerations that one must bear in mind in preparation for producing rabbits for meat? (i.e., housing, dietary needs, etc.)

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Livestock” link.
* Select the “Rabbits” link.
* Click on the blue “Rabbits” link in the “Overview” section to expand the page.
* Look in the “Production” section to find the desired information.

1. Why does the “Easter Bunny” image make producing and consuming meat rabbits difficult for some producers and consumers? What do you think could be done to help address this marketing concern?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Livestock” link.
* Select the “Rabbits” link.
* Click on the blue “Rabbits” link in the “Overview” section to expand the page.
* Look in the “Marketing” section to find the desired information.
* Note: It is expected that students may also have to rely upon their critical-thinking skills to address this question’s content.

1. Why are rabbits not subject to USDA regulations regarding slaughter specifications? In what ways could this help producers and consumer?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Livestock” link.
* Select the “Rabbits” link.
* Click on the blue “Rabbits” link in the “Overview” section to expand the page.
* Look in the “Processing” section to find the desired information.
* Note: It is expected that students may also have to rely upon their critical-thinking skills to address this question’s content.

1. Why are meat rabbit processing services available in limited quantities at the moment? Why restricts this availability? What, in terms of marketing, could be done to address this?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Livestock” link.
* Select the “Rabbits” link.
* Click on the blue “Rabbits” link in the “Overview” section to expand the page.
* Look in the “Processing” section to find the desired information.
* Note: It is expected that students may also have to rely upon their critical-thinking skills to address this question’s content.

**Reinforcement activity: Class Production Assembly**

For this activity, each member of the class (or pairs) will be assigned a part of the rabbit production process to research. Once all of the information is gathered, class members or pairs will share their information with the class to make one complete information sheet! The information to look up should include, but is not limited to:

1. At what age/ weight do rabbits go to market?

2. What does a rabbit’s diet mostly consist of?

3. How many “baby rabbits” are typically born to one mother at a time?

4. What breeds are most common for meat production?

5. How are rabbits typically housed during production?

6. What are new born rabbits called?

7. What is the term for a “mother” rabbit?

8. What is the term for a male rabbit?

9. How long can a “mother” rabbit remain in production?

10. At what age are young rabbits weaned from their mothers?