

My Thoughts on Raising Commercial Rabbits

By Carla Carter

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Many people are talking about wanting to make money raising rabbits for profit. In my opinion, there are some important issues that you need to consider with regard to your rabbitry in order to begin this journey.

First and foremost, this isn't a get rich quick situation. You aren't going to jump in today and be making money tomorrow. It will take you time to build this business into a revenue producing stream for you. BUT I do believe it is possible AND I believe that HOW MUCH is possible is up to YOU.

1) Do you know how to raise rabbits?

If not, start small and learn HOW to first. Don't go out as a beginner and learn on twenty does. Sure, it's how I started, BUT I wouldn't recommend it unless you are a real go getter and you have a good mentor close by.

I don't mean to gloss over this, this step is HUGE. Determine how you will raise, keeping your rabbits healthy, etc. is paramount to your success. Understanding how to react when there is illness is vital to stopping a pandemic from wiping out your herd.

Most of you know me know that I am passionate about HOW to raise rabbits. There's a reason. Because it is black and white in my book. There's no cutting corners in a commercial rabbitry. No taking risks. You can't afford to. I don't jump on the band wagon of every new thing that comes down the trail. It's because I want to be successful. I follow a proven pattern that works. It's that simple. Truly it is.

Yes, there are thousands of ways to raise your rabbits, BUT, do they make you money? Do they keep your herd healthy? Do they save you TIME which is money? All of those things are considerations here.

2) Do you have a plan?

a) You know how to raise rabbits, you have that solid groundwork under your belt and you are ready to expand. You now have twenty does and they are ALL bred. But what happens next. Let's look at that scenario. You were smart, bought great stock. They all had ten kits and all are thriving (good for you). At four weeks they are weaned and moved into the appropriate grow out cages and you start feeding them, and feeding them. Using our feeding ratios you now have, how many rabbits to

feed? Do the math and do the numbers. It is going to cost you \$1,000 over the next four weeks to get them raised. DID YOU COUNT ON THAT?

- b) You now have, how many rabbits? 200 rabbits that weigh five pounds each. Yippee skippy. NOW WHAT? You've been SO busy getting to this place that here you are and you have no where to go with them yet you are continuing to feed them and their voracious appetites at that same exorbitant rate for how long? Oh, and no matter what you do, you don't even have enough freezer space to hold them.
- c) AND they are too big now to keep in the same cages and they are fighting (which starts to happen at ten weeks) TO THE DEATH. Now you are experiencing losses, BECAUSE you didn't think it all through.
- d) So, it's just like mayhem. Have a plan

3) Make a plan

What is realistic? What are the markets for your area? What can you do? Develop your plan, do your research and let's talk this through. Look at the list I've provided for you and determine what is feasible in your area. Create and develop a marketing plan for your rabbits. How much can you sell? What are the markets available? How many will you need? ONLY THEN WILL YOU KNOW HOW MANY you need to be able to grow for your rabbitry.

FIRST DO THIS AND THEN BACK UP FROM THERE. You've got to have a handle on HOW many rabbit you need and then work your way back from that.

Here is what you need: Time Money Materials PLANS

- 1) A physical plan of your facility
- 2) A numbers plan of your rabbits
- 3) A facilities plan of your cages, watering system, feeders, etc.
- 4) Budgets-See Excel spread sheet in files section
- 5) Work plan for labor, time involved, chores allocation, your time and others

4) Operations

You have to develop a plan for your actual operating of your rabbitry once it is in place. It cannot just be something that is there. The BIGGEST MISTAKE I have seen in commercial rabbitries that cost them money is does not bred (mine included).

In order to do this, figure out what works for you to remind you and stick to it. Keep them bred, keep that production line moving.

First question is how many litters a year do you want to have? Do you want/need to breed all summer long? Are any of your markets seasonal? How do you adjust? Can you overlap?

- a) Breeding schedule and plan – how many rabbits do you need?
- b) Weaning Schedules
- c) Dispatching schedules
- d) DO NOT HAVE IDLE RABBITS FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME; IT COSTS YOU MONEY

5) Marketing and continuing to grow

Once you have started and get things running smoothly, THEN you can expand. As you see it is working and see things can do for you, THEN expand. Build your markets. Expand into new markets. Don't stop looking for NEW markets.

Are you utilizing EVERYTHING in your area? Every product that you are producing? Are you throwing anything away?

6) Marketing 101 and Niche Marketing

- a) 80/20 rule 20% of customers buy 80% of busines
- b) Cross selling and upselling
- c) Finding new customers by duplicating the ones that you have