



A TEST TO MEASURE THE KNOWLEDGE OF FARMERS ON RABBIT REARING

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Abstract

Rabbit keeping requires specialized training and technical skill and it is important for farmers to have correct knowledge about the various practices involved. Knowledge assessment requires appropriate measurement tools such a knowledge test. It was in this context that the present study on developing a knowledge test for rabbit farmers was undertaken. An arbitrary knowledge test to assess the knowledge of farmers about rabbit rearing was prepared by judges rating. The test consisted of 26 practices related to rabbit rearing. While administering the tests a score of 1 for each correct answer and a score of 0 for each incorrect answer may be assigned. The total of all the scores of each item will give the total score of an individual.

Key words: Knowledge, test, rabbit farmers, rabbit rearing

Rabbit rearing has already attained commercial status in many parts of the world including India and it has the potential to become a major source of subsidiary income for farming households, self employment to educated youth in particular and to others in general either as a whole time profession or as a backyard enterprise. However, rabbit keeping requires specialized training and technical skill since there is a complex but important relationship between the rate of knowledge about an innovation in a system and its rate of adoption.

A periodic appraisal of knowledge

level of farmers is a prerequisite to any training programme. Eventually this knowledge assessment requires appropriate measurement tools such a knowledge test. It was in this context that the present study on developing a knowledge test for rabbit farmers was undertaken.

Materials and Methods

Knowledge as defined in this study included those behaviors and test situations that emphasized remembering either by recognition or recall of ideas, material or phenomena (Bloom *et al.*, 1956).

The variable indicated the extent of knowledge possessed at the time of interview as evident from his or her responses to a set of questions scientifically prepared for the purpose. An arbitrary knowledge test to assess the knowledge of farmers about rabbit rearing was prepared by the procedure of Sharma and Sohal (1987) with slight modification. The test that was developed consisted of 26 practices related to rabbit rearing.

Preliminary selection of practices was done after consulting subject matter specialists, key farmers who were experienced in rearing of rabbits, field veterinarians and the package of practice recommendations of Kerala Agricultural University. Each of these practices was written down as a statement. The statements were then grouped under six major domains *viz.*, breeds of rabbits, breeding of rabbits, feeding of rabbits, housing, management and diseases of rabbits. Thus there were 3, 19, 10, 10, 12, and

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Table: Final format of the knowledge test with mean scores

Sl. No	Item	Mean Score
1.	Name any two varieties of rabbits reared for meat	2.21
2.	At what age should female rabbits be bred for the first time?	2.36
3.	When should the nest box be placed in the cages of the pregnant rabbit?	2.29
4.	In small scale rabbit rearing units how many male rabbits should be reared with 10 female rabbits?	3.0
5.	The gestation period of rabbits	2.21
6.	At what age can male rabbits be used for breeding purposes?	2.21
7.	After mating, the male rabbit falling backwards or to a side with a cry indicates a successful mating. Yes/No	2.21
8.	Male rabbits should always be taken to the doe's cage for mating. Yes/No	2.38
9.	How much concentrates has to be fed to an adult female rabbit?	2.25
10.	How much concentrates has to be fed to a breeding male rabbit?	2.25
11.	How much green grass has to be fed to adult rabbits?	2.42
12.	Green grass is not required for rabbit diet. Yes/No	2.25
13.	Rabbits produce two kinds of faeces. Yes/No	2.33
14.	Coprophagy is essential for proper functioning of the digestive system of rabbits. Yes/No	2.41
15.	The size of a cage for adult male rabbits	2.41
16.	Dimensions of a nest box	2.41
17.	Rabbit cages should be placed at a height above the ground. Yes/No	2.5
18.	Adult rabbits meant for breeding can be reared together in one cage. Yes/No	2.33
19.	Thatched roofs are very good for rabbit sheds. Yes/No	2.41
20.	High humidity and temperature in the rabbit shed is good for rabbits. Yes/No	2.5
21.	Cold condition within the rabbit shed is good for kits. Yes/No	2.33
22.	At the time of weaning, young rabbits can be sexed by examining the genitals. Yes/No	2.5
23.	Age at which kits can be weaned from their mothers	2.5
24.	Rabbits can be lifted by holding them by the ears. Yes/No	2.67
25.	Lack of enough drinking water can cause cannibalism. Yes/No	2.33
26.	Rabbits are highly susceptible to heat strokes. Yes/No	2.25
27.	Rabbit meat is low in cholesterol. Yes/No	2.33
28.	Name an important disease of rabbits	2.33
29.	Diseases can be controlled in rabbit farms by restricting the entry of visitors to the farm. Yes/No	2.58

4 statements under each domain. After thorough editing on the criteria laid down by Edwards and Kilpatrick (1946) these were referred to 14 selected judges who were specialists/veterinarians to judge the relevancy of these statements- in measuring knowledge of rabbit rearing- against a Likert's three point continuum viz. highly relevant, relevant, irrelevant with corresponding weightages of 3, 2 and 1.

The scores obtained on the basis of the responses of 14 judges about a practice were added to obtain the total score of that particular practice. The total score for a practice thus obtained was divided by 14, the number

of judges, to arrive at its mean score. Similarly, mean scores of all 58 practices related to rabbit rearing were arrived at. Later, overall mean score of the means of all the 58 statements related to rabbit rearing was calculated by dividing the total of their means by the number of statements. Thus the overall mean score arrived at was 2.19. This was taken as the cutoff point and those statements with individual mean scores above this cut off point were included in the final scale.

Thus ultimately 30 statements related to rabbit rearing were selected for the final knowledge test.

Results and Discussion

The knowledge tests can be used in farmer groups to assess their knowledge about recommended practices. While administering the tests a score of one for each correct answer and a score of zero for each incorrect answer may be assigned. The total of all the scores of each item will give the total score of an individual.

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