

REMARKS BY THE HON. INDAR WEIR, MBA, M.P.
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY
AT RABBIT PRODUCTION WORKSHOP ON THE MINISTRY'S
COMPOUND, GRAEME HALL CHRIST CHURCH
ON WEDNESDAY AUGUST 29, 2018

This morning's training workshop is the second in a series of monthly presentations organized by the Extension Services Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. The first dealt with the important topic of record keeping. Today's training however will focus on Rabbit Rearing with the objective of building an industry.

Rabbit production is not new to Barbados but it has not reached the level where large commercial operations have developed. This training will hopefully renew interest in this activity, leading to increase production and productivity over the next three years.

Two years ago, with the assistance of the McGill University of Canada, a new breed was introduced to Barbados, the New Zealand Red, which is on show in the cages nearby. Research is ongoing at Greenland Livestock Station to evaluate the breed under our local conditions. Some preliminary findings are presented in the leaflet distributed earlier.

Research has already shown the nutritional benefits of rabbit meat namely low cholesterol, low sodium along with high phosphorus and easily digestible proteins. The demand for the meat is high and

presents a great opportunity for increase employment and income generation especially among the youth.

The high turnover rate allows one doe to produce 140 lbs of meat within a year once the technology and best practices are put to use.

The Ministry is currently reviewing the incentive scheme and will address the major problem identified, the high cost of the wire to construct the cages. The extension service also stands ready to help in the formation of farmers groups or cooperatives to further consolidate and build the industry.

Our mandate at the Ministry includes assisting farmers in developing their agricultural enterprises to be profitable and sustainable. This will help reduce hunger and malnutrition, increase livelihoods and generate further employment.

Let us cooperate and begin today.