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Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

RAISE RABBITS TO INCREASE THE MEAT SUPPLY.

Production of Belgian Hares or Other Rabbits Easily Possible in City Back Yards as Well as on Farms Says the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Washington, D. C. Rabbits, which have proved a valuable source of food in Europe during the present war, may well be raised more extensively in America by way of reducing the drain on the ordinary meat supply, according to biologists of the United States Department of Agriculture. The business of growing rabbits, the specialists point out, can be carried on by youths and adults not engaged in military or other national service, or in regular industrial employment. The animals may be raised in back yards of cities and towns as well as on farms.

The Belgian hare, says a statement by the United States Department of Agriculture, breeds rapidly, matures quickly, and produces a palatable and highly nutritious meat. The cost of production is less than that of any other meat, not excepting poultry. The supply can be greatly increased within a few months, without requiring space that may be needed for the production of crops. Practical experience has demonstrated that rabbit meat can be produced in unlimited quantities at a cost of about 6 cents a pound; and by utilizing lawn cuttings and other vegetation that would otherwise be wasted, the cost can be made even lower.

The Belgian and Flemish giant rabbits are recommended for meat production, as the ordinary tame rabbit is smaller and develops more slowly. Stock of Belgian hares may be bought from breeders in nearly all the States at \$1 to \$3 each. They may occasionally be had from pet stock dealers. Fancy pedigreed stock is not required for meat production.

Rabbits are easily kept. They eat hay, grass, lawn cuttings and green vegetation of many kinds. Females should be allowed to breed when 8 or 10 months old, and during the year should raise four litters of about six young each. Well fed, the young reach marketable size when 3 to 4 months old and average from 5 to 6 pounds live weight.

The Department of Agriculture has published a bulletin on raising rabbits which will be helpful to those who wish to engage in this pursuit.

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