

Meat Rabbits

Oryctolagus cuniculus · Meat breed (e.g. New Zealand White)

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Small livestock, kept for meat

PRODUCTIVE LIFE Processed at 8–12 weeks



SPACE

0.5–0.7m² hutch per rabbit, larger for breeding does



DIET

Rabbit pellets + hay + fresh greens



WATER

Fresh daily via bottle or bowl



TEMPERAMENT

Generally calm, individual housing preferred

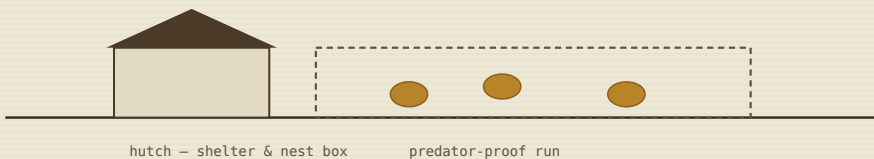


LIFESPAN

8–12 years if kept beyond meat age

01 Small space, fast turnaround

Rabbits need comparatively little space and reproduce quickly, making them one of the most space-efficient meat animals for a small homestead.



02 Housing & setup

SHELTER	Predator-proof hutch, raised off the ground with a solid nest box for breeding does.
FENCING	Fully enclosed hutch/run rather than open range — rabbits dig and are vulnerable to predators.
BEDDING	Straw or hay in nest boxes, changed regularly, especially around kindling.

04 Health & problems

- **Respiratory infection (snuffles)** — from damp, poorly ventilated housing; keep hutches dry and airy.
- **Sore hocks** — from wire floors; provide a solid resting area.
- **Predator loss** — even hutch-raised rabbits are vulnerable; ensure housing is fully secure.
- **Overheating** — rabbits are heat-sensitive; ensure shade and ventilation in summer.

06 Compatibility & considerations

GOOD WITH

Small-space or urban-fringe homestead setups

AVOID KEEPING WITH

Open range without predator-proof housing

NOTE

One of the most efficient meat animals for feed input versus space required — worth considering even on a smaller block.

03 Daily care

- Feed a consistent ration of pellets, hay, and fresh greens.
- Keep hutches clean and dry to prevent respiratory and foot problems.
- House breeding bucks and does separately except for planned mating.
- Handle regularly to keep animals calm and manageable.

05 Production & harvest

PROCESSING AGE	8–12 weeks for standard meat breeds.
YIELD	Roughly 1–1.5kg dressed weight per rabbit.
BREEDING	Does can produce several litters a year, making this a fast-cycling meat source.
STORAGE	Fresh in the fridge a few days; freezes well.