Effect of replacing maize with cassava root-forage composite meal in diet on growth performance and production economics of rabbit

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Target Audience: Animal Scientists, Students and Livestock producers

Abstract
The study investigated the effect of replacing maize with cassava root-forage composite meal (CR-FCM) in diets on growth performance and production economics of rabbits. The CR-FCM was prepared to be isonitrogenous with maize using unpeel cassava root mixed with either cassava leaf meal, Moringa oleifera leaf meal, sweet potato vine meal, or Tridax procumbens leaf meal in the following proportions 1:1.5, 2.95:1, 2.65:1 and 1:1 respectively to separately replace maize in the control diet (T1). Each of the leaf meal in a mixture in diet constitutes experimental treatments T2, T3, T4, and T5 respectively. Thirty weaned mixed breed rabbits were allocated to the experimental diets in a completely randomized design. Rabbits fed T1, T2, T3 and T5 showed no significant (P<0.05) differences in feed intake and weight gain. Body weight gains of rabbit fed T1, T2 and T3 diets were significantly (P<0.05) higher than those fed T4. Feed/gain ratio (3.22) by rabbit fed T3 diets was only significantly (P<0.05) better than those on T4 (3.75) and T5 (3.79). Cost/kg diet, total feed cost, total cost of production and feed cost as percent of total cost of production were reduced, due to the replacement. Gross margin was maximized with T3 and minimal with T4. T4 is therefore recommended for maximum returns. 

Keywords: Rabbit; Cassava-root; Unconventional-feedstuff; Forage; Maize