

**EFFECT OF TROPICAL FORAGES ON  
GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND CARCASS  
QUALITY OF RABBITS**

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by

**FATHIMA SHIFARA MOHAMED**

**Animal Science Degree Programme  
Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture  
Uva Wellassa University**

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## Abstract

Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) is a small mono-gastric, herbivorous animal. Rabbit production represents the fastest way to overcome the shortage of animal protein consumption by human populations. Rabbit has a fast efficiency of nutrient transformation and high reproduction efficiency. High feeding cost is the major constraint in rabbit farming. A feeding trial was conducted to investigate the effect of tropical forages on growth performance and carcass quality of rabbits. Sixteen weaner rabbits were involved in the experiment. Diet 1 = Only layer pellet 100% (control), Diet 2 = Layer pellet 70%, *Erythrina indica* 20%, *Panicum maximum* 10%, Diet 3 = Layer pellet 65%, *Manihot esculenta* Crantz 20%, *Panicum maximum* 15% and Diet 4 = Layer pellet 92%, *Leucaena leucocephala* 7%, *Panicum maximum* 1%. The feeding trial lasted for forty-five days during which data on body weight and weight gains, feed intake and Feed Conversion Ratio (FCR) were collected. Two rabbits (one male and one female) from each group were slaughtered for carcass quality evaluation. Dietary treatments produced significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) effects on feed consumption, body weights and weight gains, FCR. Rabbits fed concentrate diets with *Leucaena leucocephala* had the best feed conversion ratio, highest body weight gain than the other treatments. It had the best dressing percentage too. Sensory results showed that *Erythrina indica* incorporated diet fed rabbits meat was much preferred than others. There was a less variation between proximate compositions of rabbit meat regarding four diets.

Key words: rabbit, feeding trial, diet, carcass quality