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The Bauscat

The Bauscat Rabbits (Egypt)

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SUMMARY – A description of the Egyptian adapted breed of rabbit, Bauscat, is carried out. Items that have been dealt with are: (i) a general description; (ii) climate and main features of its farming; (iii) performance; and (iv) stress resistance.

Key words: Bauscat, description, performance.

RESUME – "Les lapins Bauscat (Egypte)". Cet article présente une description de la race Bauscat de lapins adaptés à l'Egypte. Les éléments suivants ont fait l'objet d'études : (i) une description générale ; (ii) le climat et les principales caractéristiques d'élevage ; (iii) les performances ; et (iv) la résistance au stress.

Mots-clés : Bauscat, description, performances.

1. Breed name

- (i) *Breed name synonyms*: Bouscat, El-Bauscat or the French rabbit.
- (ii) *Strains within breed*: none.

2. General description

2.1. Population data

2.1.1. Herd sizes (Table 1)

Table 1. Herd sizes of Bauscat rabbits in Governmental and Small-scale farms

	Governmental farms	Small-scale farms
Mean		
Adult animals	25	3
Young Animals	100	10
Range		
Adult animals	15-30	1-5
Young Animals	50-150	10-30

2.1.2. Situation with regard to danger of extinction

Endangered, since the total number of breeding rabbits is less than 500.

2.2. Use of the breed in a descending order of product importance

This breed is a medium-sized breed and is used mainly for meat production.

2.3. Colour

Albino with a soft silky fur.

2.4. General-type

2.4.1. Body parts

Body parts of this breed are well-rounded hips with well-filled loin. The ribs are carried forward to combine with shoulders that balance with the rest of the body. The shoulders blend smoothly into midsection, and the midsection smoothly extends into the hindquarters. The body is of medium length with good depth as shown in Table 2. The top body line rises in a gradual curve from the base of ears to the centre of the hips and then falls in a smooth curve downward to the base of the tail. The sides taper slightly from hindquarters towards shoulders. Back is markedly convex ventrally without being pot-bellied. The skin is smooth.

Table 2. Body measurements (cm) in Bauscat rabbits at 12 weeks of age

Trait	Mean	Range
Body length	21.7	18.5-23.0
Chest circumference	15.6	14.4-16.5
Ear length	9.6	9.2-10.4
Fore limb girth	4.1	3.9-4.4
Loin length	14.2	12.8-15.2
Width at hocks	5.7	5.3-6.1

2.4.2. Head: convex

2.4.3. Eyes: pink

2.4.4. Ears: erect

2.4.5. Feet and legs: medium in length

2.4.6. Tail: straight

2.5. Basic temperament (for males or females): docile

2.6. Special characteristics of the breed: moderately adapted to hot climate

2.7. Nest quality: pooled

3. Pattern

3.1. Climate

3.1.1. Elevation and topography: valley and well drained.

3.1.2. Favourable climate: temperature from 15°C to 30°C and relative humidity from 40% up to 75%.

3.2. Main features of farming

3.2.1. *Socio-management system*: extensive system in batteries (production starts in September and ends in May), on the floor or underground cells

3.2.2. *Mating method*: natural mating

3.2.3 *Nutrition*

- (i) *Concentrates*: pellet or mash.
- (ii) *Water*: available free all year-round.
- (iii) *Seasonality of nutrition*: Berseem (*Trifolium alexandrinum*) available from November to following May while Darawa (Fodder maize) is used in summer.

3.2.4. *Housing*

- (i) *Cages*: wired cages, indoor rabbitries.
- (ii) *Photoperiod*: variable periods.

3.3. Common diseases and parasites

Pasteurellosis, coccidiosis, enteritis, feet and ear mites.

4. Performance

4.1. Reproduction (Tables 3 and 4)

Table 3. Semen characteristics of 8-month bucks in Bauscat rabbits

Trait	Mean	Range
Reaction time (seconds)	20	
Ejaculate volume (ml)	0.89	0.55-1.23
Sperm concentration per ml (10^6)	323.06	287.96-358.15

Table 4. Fertility and fecundity traits in Bauscat rabbits

Trait	Mean	Range
Conception rate (%)	53.3	52.4-54.3
Number of services per conception	2.7	
Insemination period (days)	41	37-42
Kindling interval (days)	50	42-63
Gestation length (days)	31.4	30.4-31.7
Litter size		
Total at birth	6.5	5.2-8.6
At 21 days	5.4	4.8-6.2
At weaning (4 weeks)	5.2	4.6-5.9
At weaning (5 weeks)	4.7	4.4-4.9
Litter weight (g)		
Total at birth	324	289-362
At 21 days	1094	1030-1158
At weaning (4 weeks)	1540	1382-1690
At weaning (5 weeks)	2058	1841-2454

4.2. Mortality rate per litter (Table 5)

Table 5. Mortality rate in Bauscat rabbits

Trait	Mean	Range
Stillbirths (%)	5.0	
Pre-weaning (4 weeks) (%)	26.4	18.1-36.2
Pre-weaning (5 weeks) (%)	33.7	29.0-38.3

4.3. Life time production per doe

Bauscat strain raised in Egypt could be used for breeding for about three years. Therefore, Bauscat rabbits have a long lifetime production period. Although this period is relatively long, the productivity of doe per year is low, since the number of litters obtained per doe per year is ranged between 2.2 and 3.4 with mean of 2.8.

4.4. Post weaning body weight, gain and food utilisation (Tables 6 and 7)

Table 6. Post weaning growth traits of Bauscat rabbits

Trait	Mean	Range
Body weight (g)		
Weaning (28 days)	400	362-442
Weaning (35 days)	457	372-524
Post weaning		
6-weeks	540	491-623
8-weeks	734	640-858
10-weeks	917	759-1051
12-weeks	1074	986-1192
16-weeks	1420	1302-1524
Daily gain (g/day)		
5-6 weeks	20.4	20.2-20.6
6-8 weeks	15.2	14.0-16.2
8-12 weeks	13.2	12.2-13.9
12-16 weeks	12.0	11.8-12.4

Table 7. Post weaning food utilisation in Bauscat rabbits

Trait	Mean	Range
Daily feed intake (g)		
5-6 weeks	49	
6-7 weeks	57	
7-8 weeks	65	
8-9 weeks	76	
9-10 weeks	85	
10-11 weeks	94	
11-12 weeks	103	
Feed conversion (g intake per g gain)		
30-60 days	3.9	2.9-4.2
30-90 days	4.5	3.0-5.4
30-105 days	4.8	2.8-6.6

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