

# CHAPTER 10

## GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND CARCASS CHARACTERISTICS OF RABBITS FED MULBERRY LEAF PELLETS

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### INTRODUCTION

Rabbit farming is a thriving industry in Malaysia. It can be divided into several sectors, such as supplier of rabbit meat, and the supplier of live rabbits for breeding and pets. In 1988, the Minister of Agriculture of Malaysia encouraged Malaysian to start a rabbit business. Even though the size of the farm is small and the expansion of the business is slow, it progresses slowly and gradually for the pet and meat industries. The smallholder farmers who are keeping rabbits can be worthwhile and gainful as it offers extra profits to the farmer. Alimon et al. (2013) cited the data from the Ministry Agriculture Malaysia presented that there are total number of 430,617 heads and 216 registered rabbit farms. Usually, small farms like backyard farming consist of up to 500 rabbits. The smallholder farmers are keeping the rabbits for their personal activities or hobbies for meat or additional profits. New Zealand White and Californian White are normally reared for meat production. The rabbits were imported from Europe and the United States of America (USA) for pet purpose as they are delightful and adorable.

In Malaysia, most farmers provide commercial pellets to their animals, containing 18-20% crude protein. These pellets, along with supplementary diets of leafy vegetables or grass hay, are fed to pet rabbits as well. Some formulations that include agricultural by-