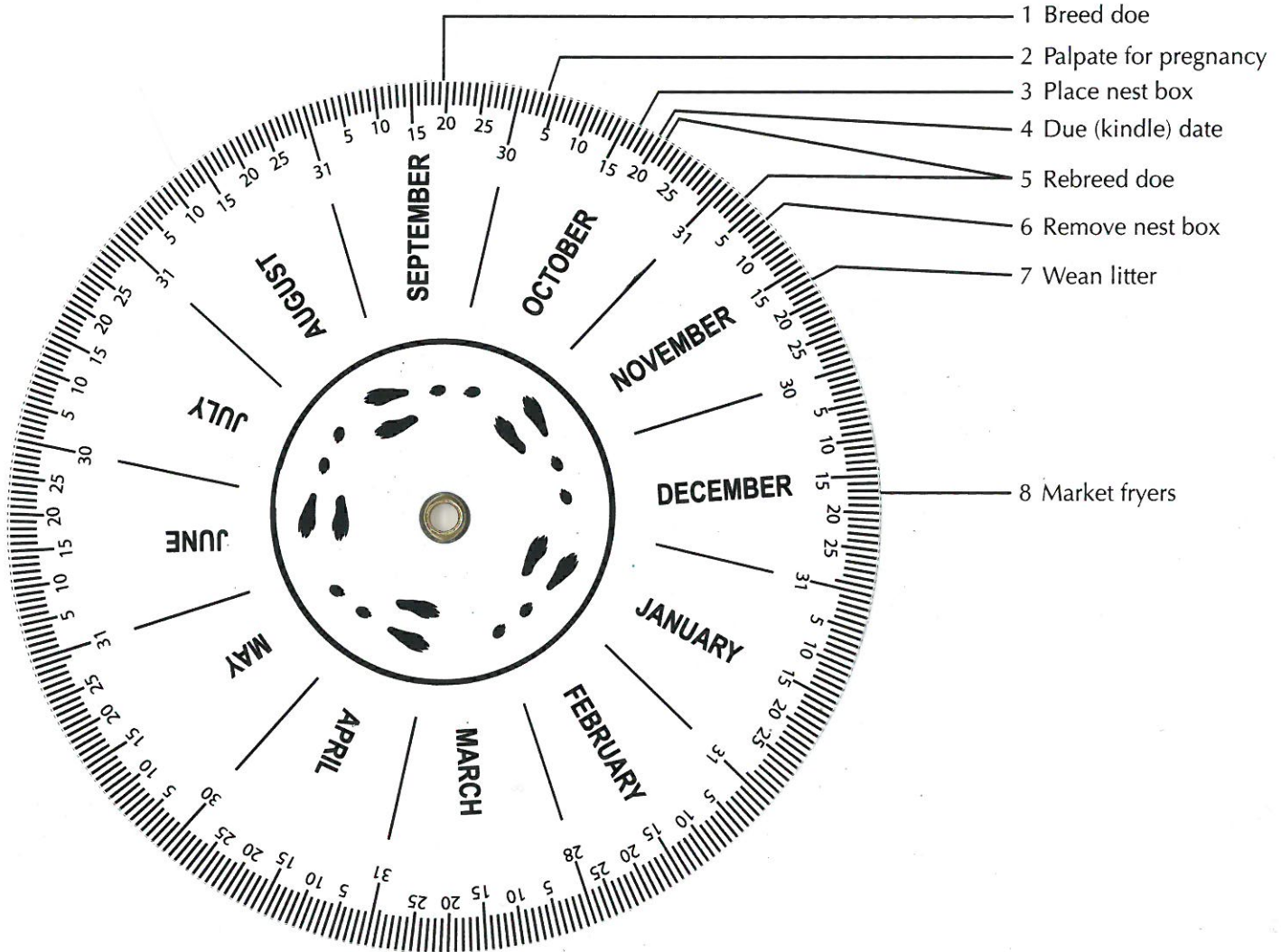


Commercial Rabbit Production Management Wheel

Instructions: Set date of kindling (step 4) first to determine approximate dates of other management steps.



1. **Breed doe.** Breed doe at sexual maturity, which is generally 5 to 7 months of age, depending on breed. When breeding, always carry the doe to the buck's cage and breed twice to enhance chances of pregnancy. Bucks are generally used for breeding the first time at 6 to 8 months of age. One buck per 25 to 30 does is needed.
2. **Palpate for pregnancy.** Externally palpating the uterus with a thumb and forefinger is an accurate and quick method for determining pregnancy. The doe should be properly restrained and relaxed. If not pregnant, the doe can be rebred.
3. **Place nest box.** A nest box provides protection and warmth for the litter and should be put in place 2 to 3 days before the doe delivers. Do not place nest box where water can drip into it or where the doe normally defecates and urinates. Provide some straw for nest development. Doe may eat less just prior to kindling; fresh green feed may stimulate appetite.
4. **Due (kindle) date.** The normal gestation period for a doe is 27 to 36 days, averaging 31 days. After the doe has nursed the kits and left the box, check kits for full stomachs and check the nest for enough fur to cover the litter. Remove dead or deformed kits. To allow for enough milk for all kits or to even out litter sizes, kits can be fostered within a day or two after kindling to other litters of similar age (born within 1 to 3 days of each other).
5. **Rebreed doe.** Rebreeding can occur at any time after kindling; however, maximal performance is reached by rebreeding at day 1 or day 14 after giving birth. If the doe is in poor body condition (thin), delay rebreeding. If the doe has had litter problems, such as low number born, high death loss or poor growth, two or more times, she should be culled.
6. **Remove nest box.** Remove nest box about 18 days after kindling, depending on the weather. If the litter appears weak or cold, the nest box may remain a few extra days. Clean and disinfect the box thoroughly after use, and store box so that rodents cannot access it.
7. **Wean litter.** Wean offspring at 28 days if the litter is healthy and eating solid food well. By this time, the doe's milk production has peaked.
8. **Market fryers.** Check fryers' weight. Market weight is 4.5 to 5.5 pounds and is usually reached around 8 to 10 weeks of age. Separate remaining offspring by sex at 12 weeks of age to avoid inbreeding.



Additional information can be obtained through your veterinarian, University Extension office, appropriate faculty at agriculture colleges, or other commercial rabbit experts to assure the best management program for your operation.

Developed by



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Based on a model developed at Winrock International/Heifer Project International

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