



WRSA News

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Dear WRSA officers and members,

Six months have passed since our nineteenth newsletter. In the current issue, we will try to summarize the main news of these last six months and future events.

Letter from the WRSA President

WORLD RABBIT SCIENCE ASSOCIATION: 50 YEARS OF RABBIT SCIENCE (1976–2026)

Dear WRSA members and followers,

The World Rabbit Science Association (WRSA) was founded 50 years ago with the aim of promoting rabbit science and strengthening collaboration among researchers and producers around the world. WRSA was founded by Professor François Lebas, who served as its first President and is now its Honorary President.

For five decades, WRSA has promoted the exchange of knowledge through its World Rabbit Congresses, held every four years, and through its scientific journal the World Rabbit Science. Today, WRSA is represented by 23 national branches around the world.

Please remember that all news related to rabbit farming that you would like to see featured in our newsletters is welcome. Do not forget to use our discussion forum for every question to our community:
<https://groups.google.com/forum/world-rabbit-science-asso>

Publish in the WRSA journal, World Rabbit Science <http://polipapers.upv.es/index.php/wrs>

Visit our WRSA website <http://world-rabbit-science.com/>
and our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/wrsaface/>

or our new page in LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/world-rabbit-science-association/posts/>

Best wishes,

Mariam PASCUAL  

WRSA President

Institut de Recerca i Tecnologia Agroalimentàries, IRTA (Spain)

WRSA: 50 years of Rabbit Science



Voices of Former WRSA Presidents

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of WRSA, we asked some former WRSA presidents: *What has WRSA meant to you during your career?*

“

In the late 1970's, Peter Cheeke and I initiated the Rabbit Research Center at Oregon State University. And in 1980, we attended our first World Rabbit Congress in Barcelona, Spain. Over the years, our center was visited by many rabbit scientists who were WRSA members. The WRSA played an instrumental role in the exchange of the latest rabbit research findings, and in promoting rabbit production around the world.”

On behalf of **Nephi M. Patton**, written by Steven Lukefahr (1992-1996).

“

My main interactions with the WRSA occurred, firstly, when I prepared together with Jacques Ouhayoun the official WRSA official norms for the dissection of rabbit carcasses; secondly, when I became editor-in-chief of the journal World Rabbit Science and I got it included in the Journal of Citation Research (Web of Science); and thirdly, when I organized the 7th World Rabbit Congress in Valencia, going on to become president of the WRSA during the period 2000-2004 and a member of its scientific committee for the 8th World Rabbit Congress.”

Agustín Blasco (2000-2004).

“

The WRSA has broadened my perspective, expanded my opportunities for collaboration, and helped me build a network for the development of sustainable livestock farming”

Luc Maertens (1996 - 2000).

“

Throughout my career, the WRSA provided strong justification to my administrators, colleagues, and students regarding the significance of my research and international travels in demonstrating the profound impact that meat rabbit projects can have, particularly on impoverished families in less developed countries.”

Steven Lukefarh (2004-2008).

“

From the start of my academic career, WRSA has been much more than a scientific association. It has been a place to share ideas, build international collaborations, and stay connected with rabbit research around the world. Every World Rabbit Congress, including that organized in Verona in 2008, has inspired me to explore new research topics and learn from different production systems and experiences. Over the years, I have also had the privilege of serving WRSA in different roles, from representing the Italian branch to becoming Treasurer and later President. Looking back, it has been incredibly rewarding to see the association grow and to contribute, in my own way, to a community that has been such an important part of my professional life.”

Gerolamo Xiccato (2008-2016).

“

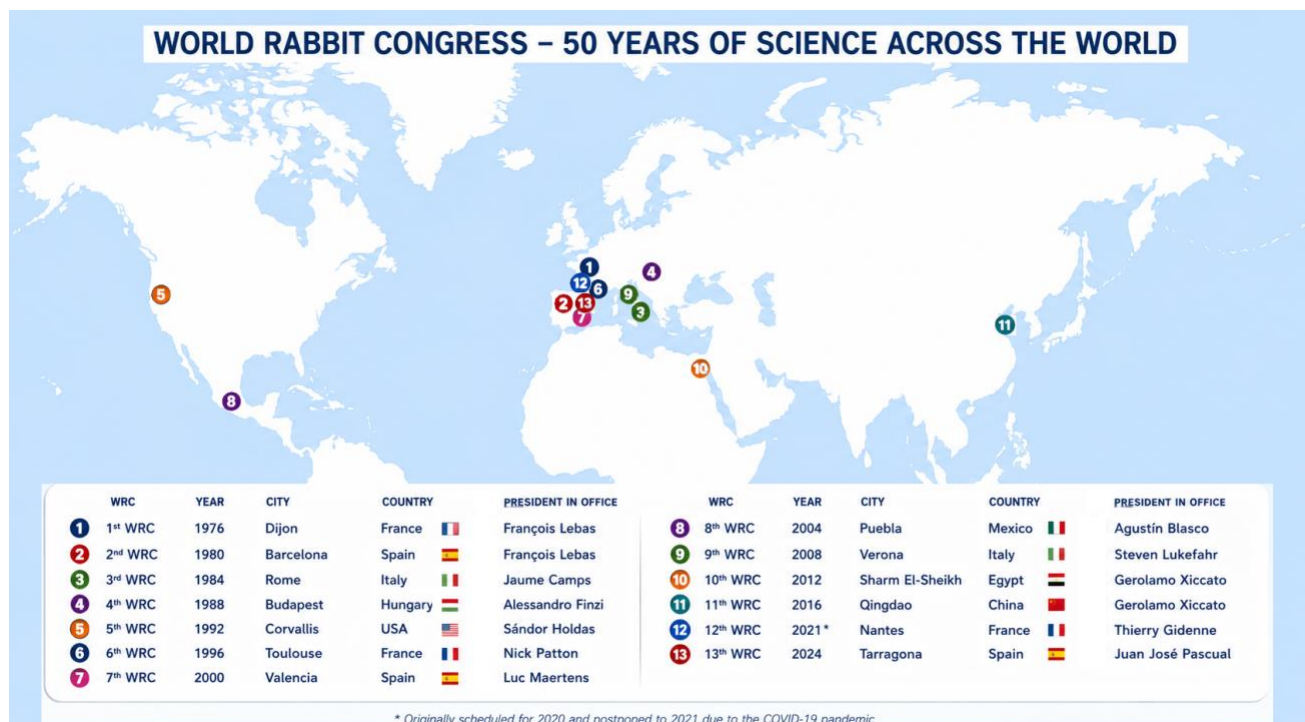
WRSA meant a lot in terms of meeting other researchers and collaboration, and it will be the basis of European research project, as well of strong friendship with several researchers.”

Thierry Gidenne (2016-2021).

“

For me WRSA is a fundamental pillar for the promotion of high-level research in the complex field of rabbit farming, as well as a cradle for the advancement of rabbit science in countries where the farming of rabbits is growing in popularity.”

Juan José Pascual (2021-2024).



Selected Publications

As you well know, **World Rabbit Science** (WRS) is one of the few indexed journals (JIF2025: 1.2; Q3) that remains in the hands of academia (Universitat Politècnica de Valencia) and our scientific association. Thanks to this, WRS is a **free access** journal for readers **with no publication fees** for authors.

Currently, our institutions and PhD students ask us to publish in Q1 open access journals to increase our indexes. Consequently, publishers, that are aware of this situation, make us must **spend a significant amount of money** to publish our knowledge yearly. However, **we have the solution in our hands**, a journal that publishes in open access and without fees. We are completely sure that, if WRSA members send high quality papers to WRS for 2-3 years we would place it in Q1, solving all these problems forever.

Here you can find the most Popular Articles in World Rabbit Science (views in the last 180 days):

1. Rabbit production in Nigeria: some aspects of current status and promotional strategies (11138 views; 6294 downloads) <https://doi.org/10.4995/wrs.1999.380>
2. Rabbit milk: A review of quantity, quality and non-dietary affecting factors (11537 views; 14447 downloads) <https://doi.org/10.4995/wrs.2006.565>
3. Vitamins in rabbit nutrition: literature review and recommendations (13140 views; 5356 downloads) <https://doi.org/10.4995/wrs.2000.438>

Recent publications (last 5 months) in World Rabbit Science with high interest:

1. Genotype-environment interactions in rabbit and pig breeding for new production systems (27 downloads/month) <https://doi.org/10.4995/wrs.2026.24245>
2. Acute induced colitis in rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) by indomethacin and *Escherichia coli* O78, and protective effect of dill and fennel extracts (30 downloads/month) <https://doi.org/10.4995/wrs.2026.25207>

3. Effect of nanomoringa and nanocurcumin supplementation on reproductive performance and antioxidant status of rabbit bucks (48 downloads/month) <https://doi.org/10.4995/wrs.2026.24508>
4. Adoption of rabbit farming as a sustainable livelihood strategy in the southern Philippines (36 downloads/month) <https://doi.org/10.4995/wrs.2026.24062>
5. Characterization of Saudi native rabbit breeds: utilization, development and productive performance – a review (26 downloads/month) <https://doi.org/10.4995/wrs.2026.24124>

Other publications of interest in the last 6 months:

1. Variations in conventional and non-conventional semen characteristics of selected rabbit breeds. Animal Biotechnology <https://doi.org/10.1080/10495398.2025.2548300>
2. Temporal action localisation in video data containing rabbit behavioural patterns. Scientific Reports <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-89687-6>
3. Epitope mapping of a neutralizing antibody against rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus GI.2. Veterinary Research <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13567-025-01505-z>
4. In Vitro Effects of Lipopolysaccharide on Rabbit Sperm: Toll-like Receptor 4 Expression, Motility, and Oxidative Status. Antioxidants <https://doi.org/10.3390/antiox14040431>
5. Use of mulberry leaf meal in fattening diets for rabbits: a comprehensive approach from animals to consumers. Animal <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.animal.2025.101546>
6. Maternal microbiota in relation to mortality, culling, and offspring survival in rabbits. Journal of Animal Science <https://doi.org/10.1093/jas/skaf432>

International and National Congresses

In the last months, WRSA has news about two events held around the world.

ASIC Annual Conference 2026, Pisa (Italy)

On May 15, 2026, the ASIC Annual Conference 2026 took place at the Centro Congressi Le Benedettine in Pisa. Organized by the Italian Scientific Rabbit Science Association (ASIC) in collaboration with the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia Romagna "Bruno Ubertini" (IZSLER), the event, entitled THE RABBIT INDUSTRY TODAY: CHALLENGES AND INNOVATION BETWEEN EUROPE AND ITALY" proved to be a highly successful hub for networking and updating.



The conference opened with an introduction by Angela Trocino (University of Padova) and Simone Mancini (University of Pisa), who set the stage for a day dedicated to bridging academic research and practical application. The first session was opened by Antonio Velarde (IRTA, Spain), the speaker delivered an insightful keynote on rabbit welfare during transport and at slaughter. He presented the latest research results that are currently actively contributing to shaping future European Union regulations. Dr. Velarde also detailed the framework of the *European Partnership Animal Health and Welfare* platform. Sara Rota Nodari (IZSLER) and Tania Dal Lago (Italian Ministry of Health) addressed the crucial topic of on-farm culling and slaughtering, providing updates on national guidelines and animal health management.



The second session focused on Italian Research Programs, it has been showcased a series of short, targeted presentations highlighting Italy's leadership in rabbit sector innovation, mainly focused on three topics: **Sustainability & Alternative Breeding** - Clara Tolini (IZSLER) shared the latest activities concerning the *European Partnership Animal Health and Welfare* specifically focused on rabbits. Cesare Castellini (University of Perugia) introduced the *RABBINOUT* project, evaluating indoor and outdoor cage-free scenarios, alongside the *SOAMBA* international development program in Burkina Faso. Bianca Palumbo presented the *3Rs-Rethink Rural Rabbits* project, showcasing an innovative free-range model designed to protect biodiversity, enhance sustainability, and promote animal welfare. **Product Enhancement**: Vincenzo Tufarelli (University of Bari) intrigued the audience with research on using olive oil by-products (i.e. Dehydrated olive pomace) as a valuable functional food to produce healthier rabbit meat. **Diagnostics & Animal Health**: Manuel Garbuio (IZSve) provided critical updates on the study and role of lentiviruses in rabbits. Vittoria Di Giovanni (IZSLER) presented technical advancements in molecular diagnostics, specifically the development of a differential lateral flow test for RHDV2/EBHSV and the characterization of RHDVa strains. Elisa Rossini (IZSLER) closed the session by discussing a new diagnostic test to measure the rabbit's cell-mediated immune response against the Myxoma virus, as well as the vector role played by biting insects.



The event concluded with a lively open discussion, allowing participants to interact directly with the speakers and debate the future of sustainable rabbit farming.

ASESCU marks its 50th Anniversary at the 50th Symposium of Cuniculture in Valencia (Spain)

The Spanish Branch of WRSa, ASESCU (Asociación Española de Cunicultura), celebrated its 50th anniversary during the 50th Symposium of Cuniculture, held at the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV) on 3–4 June 2026.

Organized by ASESCU and the School of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering (ETSIAMN) of the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV), the event brought together researchers, veterinarians, technicians, industry representatives and rabbit producers from across Spain. As one of the main scientific and technical forums dedicated to rabbit production in the country, the symposium provided an opportunity to review recent advances and discuss future challenges facing the sector.



The choice of Valencia as the venue was particularly meaningful. Researchers from the Institute of Animal Science and Technology (ICTA-UPV) have made outstanding contributions to rabbit science in areas including nutrition, genetics, reproduction, welfare and production systems, while maintaining a strong commitment to knowledge transfer and education.

The scientific programme included presentations by five internationally recognised experts:

- Francesco Bordignon, Gerolamo Xiccato and Angela Trocino (University of Padua, Italy), who addressed the development of precision rabbit farming technologies.
- Luca Bano (Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie, Italy), who discussed sustainability challenges from an animal health perspective.
- François-Xavier Menini (MiXscience, France), who presented experiences on environmental management, alternative housing systems and welfare improvement in commercial rabbit farms.

In addition, 35 oral communications were presented, covering a wide range of topics related to rabbit production, health, welfare, nutrition, genetics and sustainability.

The 50th edition of the symposium represented an important achievement for ASESU and highlighted the long contribution of the Spanish rabbit science community to the development of the sector.

You can find more information about the event at <https://asescu.com/symposiumvlc2026/>



Czech Branch Conference Focuses on the Future of Rabbit Farming

The 18th conference with international participation regarding "New Trends in Commercial and Pet Rabbit Breeding" took place on November 26, 2025, at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU). Leading institutions collaborated to organize this significant professional event, namely the Faculty of Agrobiological Sciences, Food, and Natural Resources of CZU, the Institute of Animal Science, the Czech Rabbit Science Association – Czech Branch of WRSA, and the Czech Breeders Association.

The seminar served as a platform for sharing the latest scientific knowledge and practical experience among experts from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, attracting around 130 participants.



The seminar program reflected the current and rather complex situation in the sector, where a decline in both rabbit populations and rabbit meat consumption has been recorded in the Czech Republic in recent years. Discussions therefore focused on strategies to increase the sustainability and competitiveness of rabbit farming. Considerable attention was devoted to legislation and animal welfare, particularly in relation to the upcoming revision of European regulations and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

In the field of nutrition, emphasis was placed on the principles of the circular economy and on the utilization of agri-food by-products as valuable feed ingredients. Animal health and meat quality were also major topics, with the application of postbiotics emerging as a promising approach and a natural alternative for reducing antibiotic resistance.

The seminar also highlighted the importance of genetic resources and the conservation of national breeds. Regarding the modernization of farm management, the transition to mandatory online rabbit registration was introduced. Starting in January 2026, it will replace the current paper-based system and significantly streamline animal record-keeping. The event also provided an opportunity to commemorate important milestones in the history of rabbit breeding, namely the 100th anniversary of the organized body of rabbit judges and the 45th anniversary of the Meat Rabbit Breeders Club, underscoring the long-standing tradition of rabbit breeding in our region.

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague



Institute of Animal Science Prague



Czech Rabbit Science Association – Czech Branch of WRSA



Czech Association of Breeders



Agriculture Association - CZU

18th CONFERENCE WITH AN INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

NEW TRENDS IN COMMERCIAL AND PET RABBIT BREEDING



UPCOMING 2026 CONGRESSES:

VIII American Rabbit Congress - Argentina 2026

The congress will take place in Esquel, Chubut (Argentina), from 11 to 13 November 2026, bringing together researchers, students, professionals and producers from across the Americas. This edition will be held jointly with the 49th Argentine Congress of Animal Production, providing an excellent opportunity to exchange scientific knowledge and strengthen international collaboration in rabbit science.

More information is available at: <https://redargentinadecunicultura.vercel.app>



In memoriam: President Jaume Camps

The World Rabbit Science Association mourns the loss of Dr. Jaume Camps i Rabadà, who served as President of WRSA from 1980 to 1984.

A veterinarian, researcher and renowned expert in animal production, Dr. Camps played a major role in the development of rabbit science and rabbit production, particularly in Spain. Throughout his career, he contributed to the advancement of animal production and supported the dissemination of scientific knowledge within the rabbit sector.



As the second President of WRSA, he helped consolidate the association during its early years and contributed to strengthening the international rabbit science community.

His dedication, leadership and commitment to our field will be remembered by colleagues and friends around the world.

On behalf of the WRSA Executive Committee and all its members, we extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends and former colleagues.

Best regards, and wishing you a great summer holiday

Mariam Pascual
President of WRSA

Caldes de Montbui (Spain), January 31, 2026