How To Start Grass-cutter Farming Business In Nigeria
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How to Start Grasscutter Farming in Nigeria

by Steve Olorun-Ni (Edit)

ABC loves you.

Ever thought of grasscutter farming and the possibilities of making money from it?

This article entails every detail on how to start grasscutter farming business in Nigeria and make good income from it.

So if you do not know about grasscutter business, you are welcome to learn and enlighten yourself.
Some of the people who are reading this article right now will be wondering what the heck I am talking about? Grasscutter!?

Those creatures that looks more like a big rat?

Well, yes! At least you have a slightest idea of what I am talking about, the only thing is that, I won’t want to call it a “big rat” like you might be thinking or calling it, instead it will be better and learned if you call it “Grasscutters (Thryonomys swinderianus)”.

At least these will erase the idea that you are selling a “big rat” to your customers.

And moreover, if you know how much you will be making from rearing grasscutter, then you look at every grasscutter you see with a precious eye.

A Little Introduction on Grasscutter Farming

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Grasscutters (Thryonomys swinderianus) are rodents widely found in grasslands, small or big farmland, clearings, wet or marshy areas in Africa.

They are more commonly known as “hedgehogs” in Central Africa, “agouti” in French-speaking West Africa, and “cane rats” in English-speaking West Africa.

In Nigeria it is sometimes been referred to as “Bush meat”.
And the noticeable difference between true grasscutters and a rat is the spiny fur on the back and rounded nose which can easily distinguish it from other domestic rats.

**How profit is grasscutter farming business in Nigeria?**

The village hunters and farmers who usually put traps in their farmland to catch one or two grasscutter know their very worth which is why they continued doing it.

A healthy matured grasscutter which weight about 4-4.5kg for male body weight and a body weight of 3-3.5kg for female can be sold for #2,500-$3,000 or more (2017 estimate)

Multiply this to the number of grasscutter you have and see how much you will be earning in a year.

Even, depending on your locality, you can sell higher than my estimated price if the market price of your area is high.

I hope now you understand my point when I said that; Grasscutter farming business in Nigeria is a good source of income.

**Who can start a grasscutter farming business in Nigeria?**

Some people do think that whoever is seen rearing or selling grasscutter is a local hunter or farming.

Well, that is in no way true.

Rearing grasscutter or grasscutter farming business in Nigeria is same thing as rearing chicken, rearing goat or cattle.

So you don’t have to be a hunter or a farmer or even have a degree in Agriculture to enter into this business.

Anyone that is determined to make it in agriculture in Nigeria can start it up, provided that he/she follows the right managements and steps which I will be writing down in this article.

**Nutritional values of grasscutter**
Before we jump into how to set up a grasscutter farming in Nigeria, let’s slow down and discuss about its nutritional values.

At least it will be wise to know what to tell your customers when selling grasscutter to them.

- Grasscutter which is a source of meat has high protein which is really good for the body.
- Unlike red meats which have high cholesterol, grasscutter meat has white meats so if you are looking for a good meat which is not a red meat here is an alternative for you.
- Overall, nutrient obtained from animal products has high percentage of vitamin A, Vitamin B, riboflavin, magnesium, Iron, Niacin etc unlike in plants products.

Having discussed that, lets quickly jump to our main topic; how to start a grasscutter business in Nigeria

### How to start a grasscutter business in Nigeria

1) Make a **business plan** for your grasscutter farming business in Nigeria

As every business has a plan, so should your grasscutter farming business. You should set up a business plan which will include and document all your numbers of purchased grasscutter, amount to be spent on housing facilities, feeding and other management care.
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2) Set up your grasscutter housing facilities

The location of your grasscutter business should be critically taken care of for successful grasscutter rearing.

This area should be easily accessible, in a flood-free zone, it should also be noise-free, well aired and ventilated, with feed and a water source, as well as being secure.

Also know that the size of the building will depend on the number of grasscutters that are been kept in it.

You should also know that grasscutters do not sleep where they use to feed. So make provision for that, if possible always clean the pen daily.

Grasscutters can be perfectly reared in pens.

You can use same pen for the same purpose like rearing of adults, mating, and also a pen for giving birth and feeding the young ones but it is highly recommended to use a different pens for different purpose.

There are two different types of pens, the open pen and closed pen.

The pen or cage can be in the dimension of about 180cm-190cm in length, 60cm-70cm in width and 45cm-50cm in height.

If you are really not sure of how to construct the pen or cage, you can get in touch with a builder who knows exactly how to do it.

For feeding and drinking trough; this is exactly where the grasscutter will be eating and drinking.

Like I previously wrote; that grasscutter don’t like to sleep in where they eat and that you should always clean the pen or cage.
When you have a feeding and drinking trough; you won’t have to necessarily clean the whole pen every day, instead, your grasscutter will have to enter into the trough to eat and feed, then come out to the pen to sleep.

This is the exact usefulness of the feeding and drinking trough.

3) Select the right grasscutter for breeding;

After your pen or cage is ready, the next step to take is to select the breed for your grasscutter.

If you want your grasscutter farming business in Nigeria to be successful, then you must not select the grasscutters randomly.

Instead, select your grasscutter by weight. The females should all have around the same size of weight and you should also avoid weight differences of greater than 500g. And the male grasscutter should be 0.5 to 1 kg heavier than the females.

The male can be identified by his wrinkled, brown genitals, while the female can be identified by the closeness of the anus to the genital area and also for young grasscutter, the male can also be identified by the distance between the genitals and the anus, which is twice as larger than that of the young female.

4) Feeding the grasscutters;

If you want a healthy grasscutter which will bring you much profit in your grasscutter farming business in Nigeria, then you should feed the grasscutter well.

The grasscutter food supplement should meet all the animal’s daily requirements, though their diets usually consists mainly of green forage; and can be supplemented by feed with high energy value, or added protein and minerals.

Know that, insufficient forage can lead to digestive problems.

Grasscutters can eat fresh or dried bread, corn or sorghum bran, groundnut, palm kernel cakes, wheat bran, brewers dried grain, broken rice at wheat grains Cassava, potato, yam or taro pellets, peels and scraps from cassava or other tubers Corn, sorghum, millet, rice.
And can eat shells like powdered oyster, snail or egg shells, bone meal and cooking salt.

Grasscutters can also eat vegetables like ripe or unripe fruit, cores from the crowns of palm, coconut or pineapple trees or banana plants, the bark of certain trees, green papaya, the trunk of the papaya, bamboo shoots, leaves and tops from pineapples.

**For water provision;** there should be a constant provision of water always for the grasscutter.

Sometimes you might want to give them water before feeding them to normalize their health.

5) **Grasscutter Growth;**

Like I wrote before, a healthy matured grasscutter which weight about 4-4.5kg for male body weight and a body weight of 3-3.5kg for female can be ready for sale but you won’t want to sell them off like that without having them reproduce for you; it will be a wasting of money if you will have to go back and purchase another young ones.

So let them breed for additional offspring.

6) **Grasscutter Breeding and Reproduction;**

For a successful breed, you can get 1-2 male grasscutter for 10-15 female grasscutters and the male’s presence can trigger the female grasscutter ovulation.

**Grasscutter Sexual maturity:** This is when the grasscutter is ready for reproduction and breeding. **For the male** it can be from 8 months (32 weeks) at a lowest body weight of 2.5 kg. **And For the female:** 6.5 months (26 weeks) at a lowest body weight of 1.8 kg.

**Grasscutter Gestation Period:** this is the period of time the animals develops inside the mother’s body till it is born. After mating, be sure that the female grasscutter is pregnant. You can check this by using a little cotton buds or white cloth to clean the female grasscutter genitals; if it is reddish brown, then it’s pregnant , if it’s not, then it’s not pregnant. Normally, the gestation period takes up to 5 month approximately.
**The possible number of litters per year;** Litters are the sets offspring at one birth of an animal. Grasscutter in a year can give birth to two set of litters and each litters will consist of 3-4 young grasscutters.

You should know that young grasscutters, even when very small, already resemble fully grown adult grasscutter. They can move around easily within a few hours after delivery. Make sure you provide their mother with enough supplementary food and also enough water that will aid in breast milking.

**Grasscutter Weaning or suckling period;** this is the act of breast feeding the young grasscutter. The normal period for weaning the young grasscutter should not be more than 40 days after birth; if extended, the mother grasscutter will begin to feel weak. During or after the weaning, the baby grasscutters should then be put in a separate pen or cage according to weights and sex.

Know that grasscutter’s pen should not be over crowded. A pen of young grasscutter should contain at least 10-15 grasscutters; *remember according to weights and sex.*

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7) **Selling your grasscutter;**

After your grasscutter has matured to a normal weight, then you can sell them according to your market price. Always remember to keep some for breeding which will aid in continuous reproduction. That is how will be successful in your grasscutter farming business in Nigeria.

**Other health managements care and issues that could occur in your grasscutter farming business in Nigeria.**

Let’s quickly look at the other possible care and some issues which might occur when rearing grasscutter.

**Pest and diseases that could affect your grasscutters**

- You should always inspect your grasscutter always for any symptoms of sickness like social withdrawal, refusing to eat, coughing, soft or watery feces, any inflammation of the body part, dull looking etc.
Always give them nutrients that will improve them and boost their immune system. A mixture of sugar and lemon can be mixed in their water if you noticed any signs of weakness or when they undergo stress. The mixture of sugar and lemon should be about 50 sugar lumps and two large glasses of pure lemon juice added to 20-25 liters of water.

Always clean the pen or cage with bleach, detergent to disinfect it and make it clean.

Always wash the feeding and drinking trough at least once a week to avoid the spreading of germs.

Any dead grasscutter should be disposed off immediately.

Separate the sick grasscutters from the healthy ones for close monitoring.

Sometimes, you might want to administer some antibiotics to the grasscutter.

If possible, require the help of a veterinarian for assistant.

Prevent the entrance of snake, rats or hawks which can be a predator to the growth of your grasscutters farming business in Nigeria.

On handling the grasscutter: For young or light animal; it is lifted by the tail by holding at the base of the tail, then gently grab its back with the other hand. For a medium-sized animal; though it can be grabbed by the tail but it is best to grab it on the back with the other hand so that there is not too much weight on the tail. For heavy animal; it should be handled by means of the squeeze cage.

Enough ventilation and normal temperature should be available in the room.

Always ensure to keep a record of every number of grasscutter either dead or alive, the amount of food consumed, the amount of medication consumed. This will aid in recording your gain or profit.

After going through this article, you will see that grasscutter farming business in Nigeria is the type of agricultural business that one may consider for maximum profit.

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