

Think rabbit and buy some say owners of process plant

The Acton Free Press, Wed., April 23, 1975 11

Imagine for a minute. You're tired of the humdrum meals you've been planning for the family menu. Week in, week out, it's been a repetition of the same old thing—roast beef on Sundays with a change to ham, round steak minced, made up every which way, or maybe hamburgers for casual preparation.

"Think rabbit," says proprietors of the newest rabbit processing plant in Erin township. Owners of Robert Kens Enterprises Ltd., located at R.R. 3, Acton, suggest that, when appetites are low and waiting for some succulent dish which will restore the 2-4-mg in eating, the cook in the house should consider the delicious taste of roast rabbit, rabbit fricasse or rabbit cooked until juicy and tender, smothered in a sauce of fried mushrooms and onions.

Not new
Rabbit as a food is not something new in Canada.

For years, customers in small city meat stores have seen quantities of the unskinned creatures hanging high in rows, waiting for customer purchase. Mostly though, they were in ethnic quarters of the city where Italians and Portuguese were the buyers. "It's the Europeans who enjoy rabbit as a food," says Joe Robert, vice-president and manager of the plant. He explains the big aim of the company is to widen the market and get it on the Canadian plate so that people who never thought of rabbit as another meat will try it and see how good it really is. Many English people also enjoy the taste of roast rabbit as a hangover from war-time days when other meats were scarce and they'd go rabbit hunting. "They developed a taste for rabbit meat," he said. "They are on our customer list too."

As well as being tasty and different, rabbit meat is, according to Mr. Robert,

recommended by doctors as a high-quality health meat, low in cholesterol. It is suggested as a good "winter food."

Having sold domestic rabbits himself for a number of years, the plant manager is knowledgeable in the problems the breeder has to face. He found that, while raising animals for sale, the market would drop considerably during summer months when one very important rabbit outlet was cut down. "We'd sell our rabbits to processors and laboratories such as university research labs," he explained, "but when holidays would come along, the market was flooded because university and lab people were away and didn't need the rabbits. Processors would take advantage of the rabbit grower and pay less money for the animals per pound." He explained that rabbits could not be sold that during summer months they shouldn't reproduce. "Cost of

food to keep them alive and well certainly didn't go down in price," he said.

Rabbit-raising experiences Robert Kens Enterprises has tried to base rabbit-purchase ethics on such rabbit-raising experience. These have been incorporated into the rules of the company which works on the premise that all breeders selling to them, can be sure of a fair deal. Cost of food per rabbit is measured according to weight, based on year-round sales. In this way there is no fluctuation of purchase price and it makes it better for the producer who knows what his stable income will be. Company owners feel this is one of the reasons why they are seeing more people in the business of rabbit production than ever before. They have regular sales people visiting large stores and supermarkets, promoting and introducing the meat into places where it was previously never considered.

"What we see is Kentucky-fried rabbit," said the enthusiastic Mr. Robert who envisions replacing chicken with rabbitburgers as part of the restaurant food fare. From rabbit purchase to final product, at the local plant, animals are handled under only the most hygienic conditions. Government regulations specify that an inspector be on hand during all processing. There is constant supervision as every rabbit is tagged individually to ensure good quality meat. Each one is electrically killed, skinned, eviscerated and washed before put into a cooler ready for immediate transport delivery.

According to authorities, rabbits require very little drying time. They are shipped to stores and packed in crushed ice, immediately after processing. Downtown Toronto is the plant's biggest outlet, although more and more, other stores are buying and selling rabbit meat. At the present time fresh rabbits are the big seller but eventually, company officials hope to see them packaged and frozen like choice fowl.

"Once people catch on to the taste, they should be very popular," said Mr. Robert. He pointed out that rabbits shrink very little in cooking and don't dry out.

Rabbit for wearing Besides using the animals for meat, Robert Kens Enterprises Ltd. has ambitions for even greater scope for the domestic rabbit. Officials are investigating the possibility of using entrails as commercial fertilizer. With the present attitudes against using raw animal hides for coats and accessories, they hope to sometime in the future, set up a garment plant where rabbit fur can be used for muffs and various other types of wearing apparel.

Robert Kens Enterprises Ltd. is one of the largest private plants of its kind in Ontario. As well as processing, it is also building up special marketing services which are extensive and covers an area of sales including Hamilton, Kitchener and Guelph districts. This is good not only for people who would enjoy the new food but also for those raising rabbits. Mr. Robert points out that to buy the meat is to save because there is virtually no waste as rabbit has no bone and it's all white meat.

There are some favorite recipes which, according to company chefs, would whet the appetite of any first-time user.

Rabbits should be eaten fresh while hare, like game should be hung for a week or longer, to improve texture of the flesh and the flavour.

BOILED RABBIT
1 rabbit
1/2 tsp. salt
About 1 pint warm water
1/2 pint white sauce.
Wash rabbit thoroughly in tepid water, dry and cut into neat joints. Put in saucepan with cold water to cover; bring to boil then throw water away. Rinse joints of rabbit in cold water, to remove any scum that may have settled on them. This takes away any unpleasant strong flavor from it.
Put pieces of rabbit back in saucepan, with the salt and the pint of warm water (or enough to cover the rabbit). Bring to a boil and simmer slowly for 1-1 1/2 hours, or until tender. Lift joints of rabbit out on to hot dish, and pour the sauce over them.

RABBIT PIE
1 small rabbit
2 potatoes
1 onion
1 piece of bacon
salt
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1/4 tsp. mixed herbs
1 bay leaf
Stock or water
8 oz. pastry (or enough to cover pie)
Wash rabbit and cut into joints, putting aside head and thin pieces of ribs for stock. Prepare and slice potatoes and onion. Fill a pie dish with alternate layers of rabbit, bacon and vegetables, sprinkling each with seasonings and herbs. Put in kidneys and heart of rabbit, the bay leaf and sufficient liquid to come half way up dish. Cover with pastry, making a hole to let out the steam. Bake in a hot oven (450 degrees F.) until pastry is set and lightly browned, then reduce heat for about 1/2 hour. Fill up with stock and serve hot.

Points of interest: for 1/4 lb. serving of beef with a 1/4 fat content the calories are 250, for the same amount of rabbit calories are 200. The protein amounts are the same.

ROAST RABBIT
1 large rabbit
2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. pepper
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup dry red wine
1 cup beef stock
6 whole allspice
1 bay leaf
Dash nutmeg, ginger
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. currant jelly
1 cup sour cream.
Fry 5 or 6 slices chopped side bacon in vegetable oil to add 1 medium onion chopped. Cook until onion is transparent. Remove bacon and onion. Brown rabbit pieces in bacon fat. Place in casserole. Sprinkle with salt and onion.
Combine in order given 2 tsp. salt, all purpose flour (1/2 lb. or 1 can tomato juice 1 tsp. gravy colouring 1/2 tsp. salt pinch of thyme 1 bay leaf.
Pour sauce over rabbit. Cover. Bake 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hrs. About 3 servings.

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RABBITS ARE the specialty and processing, the game of Robert-Kens Enterprises Ltd., the new company with plant located at R.R. 3, Acton. With a forward view to Kentucky fried rabbit Joe Robert, plant manager and vice-president, sees rabbit meat as a high protein food to be used in dishes whetting every appetite.

Ottawa Report
By Dr. Frank Philbrook
HALTON MP

It won't be long before students will be looking for summer jobs. The federal government's Opportunities for Youth program is aimed at providing students with job opportunities through a selective grant system.

I am pleased to announce that 11 Opportunities for Youth projects have been approved in Halton riding and there is a possibility of four more getting approval in the near future. Each group has been phoned and advised of their project's approval and a covering letter will be sent to them in the near future.

Here are the 11 projects and the amounts which have been approved:

1. Erin - Village in Motion, \$5,815;
2. Erin - Community Kids, \$6,245;
3. Hillsburgh - Busy Burghs, \$4,990;
4. Acton - Bands for Action, \$3,550;
5. Georgetown - Divertissement Four Enfants, \$7,530;
6. Georgetown - CAP, \$75;
7. Glen Williams - Glen Williams Renovations, \$4,830;
8. Oakville - Discovering Old Oakville, \$6,570;
9. Oakville - Opportunity for Play, \$6,210;
10. Oakville - Camp Tornah, \$7,650;
11. Oakville - Project 16B, \$7,960.

He has stated that he is not prepared to permit illegal practices to interfere with the movement of mail.

Furthermore, Jean Chretien, president of the Treasury Board, is taking a very tough line in terms of wage settlements. Mr. Chretien has recently filed suit against a number of workers in the Maritimes for having gone on illegal strikes over the past few months. Apparently this is a first in postal negotiations. I personally support the tough stand which the government is taking in an effort to get the postal service working properly. Labour and management must work together to settle their differences without illegal methods being used by either side.

Our inflation rates are down for the first three months of 1975. Retail prices are down from 14 per cent in the last quarter of 1974 to 6.8 per cent in the first quarter of 1975. We are below the United States rate for the first

quarter and only West Germany has a lower inflation figure than Canada. This is also the month when both food and commodity prices come down. In addition, wholesale and industry price averages are also down. Furthermore, our production rate has risen for the first time in a year. Retail sales are higher than a year ago and Alastair Gillespie, Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, has now made a special effort to boost export markets for Canadian made auto parts outside of the United States to complement our traditional American market.

Just a reminder that the Halton constituency office is located at 321 Lakeshore Road East in Oakville. The telephone number is 844-4146 in Oakville and Zenith 89110 outside the Oakville exchange. Office hours are 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturdays.

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