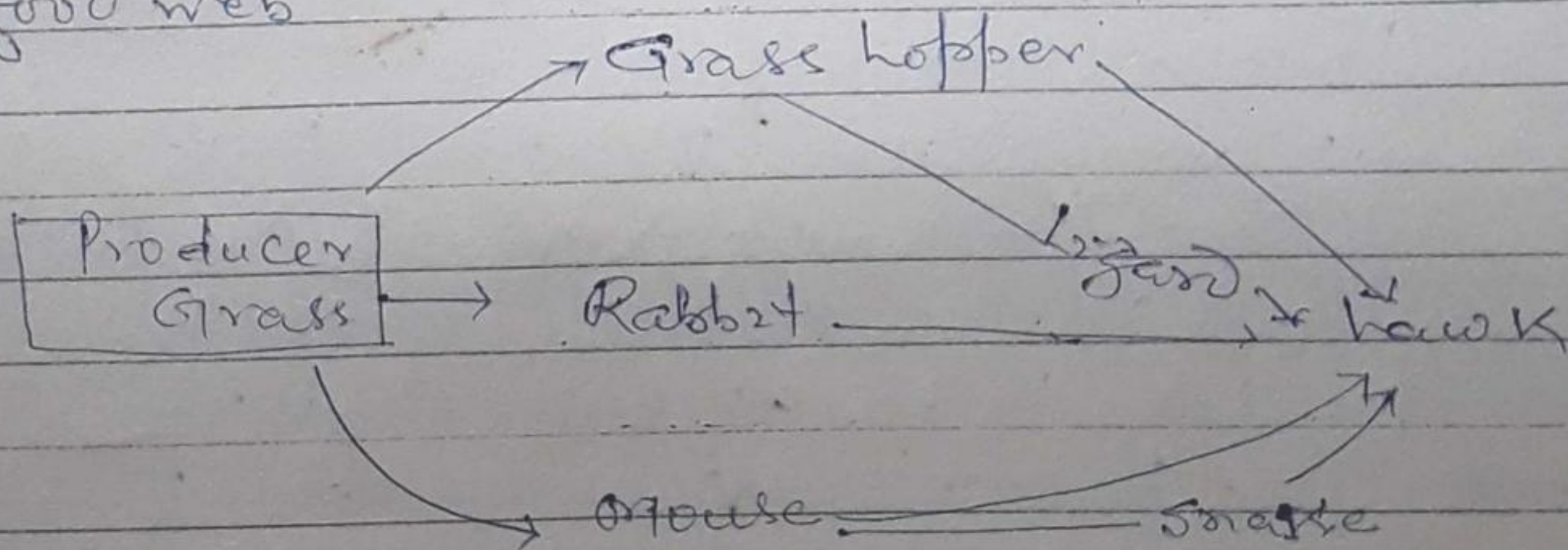


FOOD WEB

The chains in natural conditions never operate as isolated sequence, but are interconnected with each other forming some sort of a interlocking pattern, which is referred to as a food web. Under natural conditions, the linear arrangement of food chains, hardly occurs and these remain indeed interconnected with each other through different types of ~~arrangement~~ organisms at different trophic levels. For example, in grazing food chain of a grassland, in the absence of rabbit grass may also be eaten by mouse. The mouse in turn may be eaten directly by hawk or by snake first which is then eaten by hawk. Thus, in nature there are found alternatives, which all together constitute some sort of interlocking pattern. The food web



Food web in grassland ecosystem

Thus, each species of any ecosystem is indeed kept under some sort of a natural check so that the system may remain balanced.

The complexity of any food web depends upon the diversity of organisms in the ecosystem. It accordingly depends upon:-
1) length of the food chain. Diversity in organisms based upon their food habits would determine the length of food chain.

23) Alternatives at different points of consumers in the chain. More the alternatives more would be the interlocking pattern.

The greater the no. of alternative path ways the more stable is the community of living thing.

FOOD CHAIN

The transfer of food energy from the producers through a series of organisms (herbivores to carnivores to decomposers) with repeated eating and being eaten is known as a food chain. In any food chain energy flows from pr. producers to pr. consumer (herbivores) from pr. consumers to sec. consumers (carnivores) and from secondary consumers to tertiary consumers and so on. Many forms the terrestrial link of many food chains. Green plant occupy 1st in food chain the first trophic level and are called pr. producers. A food chain in grassland ecosystem starts with grasses and frogs and goes through grass hoppers. A food chain in grassland ecosystem starts with grasses and frogs, snakes hawk in an orderly, sequential arrangement based on food habits.

Food chains are of three types:-

- 1) Predator chain:- which starts from plant and goes from smaller to larger animals.
- 2) Parasitic chain:- It goes from large to smaller organisms.
- 3) Saprophytic chain:- It goes from dead matter to microorganisms. It is also known as detritus food chain.

The energy contained in detritus is not lost to the ecosystem as a whole, but it serves

as the source of energy for a group of organisms
which is called detritus food chain.