

Evaluation of Small Scale Poultry Industry in Sri Lanka

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Poultry industry in Sri Lanka has undergone tremendous changes over the recent years and at present the industry has become self-sufficient with the existing demand. As common to South Asian Region Sri Lankan poultry industry consists of two main production systems: Commercial poultry production system and small scale poultry production system

The small scale poultry industry mainly focused on egg production and has higher potentials in meat production too. The Department of Animal Production and Health (DAPH) identified the importance of the small scale family poultry production systems as backyard poultry helps reduce rural malnutrition, empowers the rural low income families specially women and children and provides opportunities to conserve the genetic resources of indigenous chicken varieties. Therefore, DAPH has initiated rural level small scale projects to develop the backyard poultry industry. In recent years under the '*Divinaguma*' Programme the government facilitated to develop the small scale family poultry industry through provincial DAPHs. The government spent a considerable amount to promote the industry by providing inputs to initiate new projects and upgrading the prevailing backyard poultry industry. Therefore, identification of impact of small scale poultry systems is important in future decision making in expanding of the sector. Even though the overall poultry production increases in the country small scale poultry sector is showing an uneven development due to several reasons such as feed problems, marketing and environment issues. Therefore, it is important and timely to study the present situation of the small scale or backyard poultry and how it contributes to the rural economy and identify the problems and constraints in the sector to develop the small scale poultry industry as a tool of rural development.

The main objective of this study is to find out the present situation of small scale poultry farming in Sri Lanka and the specific objectives are: to identify the characteristics of small scale poultry industry, to study the socio economic condition of the small scale poultry farmers, to identify the problems and constraints in small scale poultry production and marketing and to estimate the contribution of the small scale family poultry to the nutrition of the farm families.

In line with the objectives of the study, the methods of data collection consisted of three major components including a comprehensive literature review, focus group and key informant discussions and a questionnaire survey. According to the secondary data available at the Department of Animal Production and Health seven districts that received government support to initiate small scale poultry programmes were selected. All three districts in the coconut belt were selected (Gampaha, Puttalam and Kurunegala) for the study. Other than that to represent the mid country and up country Kandy and Nuwara Eliya districts were selected. Anuradhapura and Hambanthota

districts were also selected to represent the dry zone. Fifty farmers from each district were selected to the total sample which comprised 363 farmers. Stratified random sampling method was utilized to select poultry farmers to the questionnaire survey.

The findings of the research reveal that the majority of the small scale poultry farmers are female (61%) and most of the sample farmers were educated up to GCE O/L. Further, for above 60 percent of them poultry farming is their main occupation. Even though majority of the farmers have farms in their own lands, half of the farmers owned less than $\frac{1}{4}$ ac. The income distribution varies according to the scale of operation. The research reveals that 20 percent of the farmers received more than Rs. 50,000 per month. Majority of the farmers practice semi intensive management and 13 percent are engaged in extensive poultry farming. More than half of the farmers are engaged in poultry farming to obtain higher incomes while 11 percent aim at family nutrition. Ninety percent of the farmers are engaged in egg production whereas the rest in equal percentages aim at meat production and both productions. Majority (77%) of the farmers owned a poultry house as it was a requirement to be eligible. Most of the farmers (77%) use paddy husk as a bedding material for poultry houses and 65 percent utilized the used litter as a fertilizer in their home gardens while two percent sold it for fertilizer. The most prevalent breed types are white leghorns (29%) brown leghorn (24%) and broiler species. Day-old chicks for poultry farming were mainly obtained through natural breeding within the farm (44%). However, 33% of the farmers purchased chicks from village level breeding centres in Kurunegala and Puttalam districts. Maintaining breeding farms has become a profitable industry. Cage feeding is a popular method of feeding. Commercial layer feed become the most famous feed for small scale poultry rearing. Majority of the farmers (59%) sell the excess eggs to the neighbours and above 30 percent to the nearby markets. The average egg consumption has increased compared to national averages. The per capita total monthly consumption is 14.96 eggs and the per capita annual consumption has increased to 180 eggs.

Finally, small scale poultry farming is carried out as a successful income generating activity. However, the majority of the farmers are engaged in the small scale poultry farming as a secondary income means. Small scale poultry farmers face problems such as increased input prices, market price fluctuations of the eggs and meat, extension and environmental problems. As whole to increase the profitability of the small sale poultry production there should be a special subsidize feeding system and organized marketing system.