

Rural Poultry e-Newsletter

GRM / AusAID

Fourth Edition – October 2004

World Rural Women's Day - 15 October

Origin and Celebrations

The idea of a World Rural Women's Day to be devoted each year to honour rural women began at a UN Conference for Women in Beijing in September 1995. The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), Network of African Rural Women's Associations (NARWA), and the Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) were the main proponents of the day.

The World Rural Women's Day was considered a practical way of obtaining recognition and support for the multiple roles of rural women who are mostly farmers and small entrepreneurs. Rural women make up more than a quarter of the world's population. They contribute to the wellbeing of their families and the development of rural economies. Because of their key role in food production and food security, it was decided that the World Rural Women's Day should fall on the 15 October - the day before the World Food Day.

The purpose of the day

To provide rural women and their organizations with an opportunity to:

raise the profile of rural women,

sensitise both governments and the public to their crucial, yet largely unrecognised roles, and

promote action in their support. Initiatives to celebrate this day are left to individual organizations and communities, according to their own traditions and requirements. Stress is placed on the importance of activities or events being concrete and visible. This action - undertaken by rural and farming women in all parts of the world on the very same day - strengthens the impact of the day.

Involvement of the Southern Africa Newcastle Disease Control Project (SANDCP)

Village chicken production is largely in the hands of rural women, hence, SANDCP's interest in promoting Rural Women's Day. In Mozambique, a national ceremony is to be held in Mogovolas District, Nampula Province, with the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development as the guest speaker. During the ceremony women community vaccinators against Newcastle disease (ND) will be presented with community vaccinator t-shirts provided by SANDCP. A village chicken fair will also be held at the same location to promote ND control and the contribution of women and their chickens to rural livelihoods. Information on the day has been included in the current edition of the Project Newsletter in Mozambique. In Tanzania, SANDCP will be working with the Tanzanian Association for Women Leaders in Agriculture and Environment (TAWLAE) to promote rural women and the contribution that they make to the Tanzanian agricultural economy.

LOGO:

HAPPY RURAL WOMEN'S DAY TO ALL!

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The International Rural Poultry Centre Dedicated to working with rural families and their poultry

Robyn Alders and Mohamed Harun

Aims of the International Rural Poultry Centre

The International Rural Poultry Centre (IRPC) aims to improve the livelihood and standard of living of rural families by:

- ◆ Promoting cost-efficient, sustainable improvements to village poultry production by working with government staff, community livestock workers and farmers and their families.
- ◆ Ensuring a sustainable supply of the thermotolerant I-2 Newcastle Disease (ND) vaccine master seed; and providing monitoring and training in its effective production, quality control and field use.
- ◆ Providing appropriate training for all groups involved with village poultry production from farmers to researchers, both internationally and in Australia.

Why village poultry?

- ◆ Rural poultry production is recognised as an important activity in all developing countries.
- ◆ Chickens in traditional village poultry systems provide scarce animal protein in the form of meat and eggs and are available for sale or barter in societies where cash is not abundant.
- ◆ They are generally owned and managed by women and children.
- ◆ Village chickens fulfil a range of other functions for which it is difficult to assign a monetary value, e.g. active in pest control, provision of manure, use in special festivals and traditional ceremonies and meeting social obligations.
- ◆ Although the output of traditional village chickens in terms of weight gain and number of eggs per hen per year is low, it is obtained with minimal input in terms of housing, disease control, management and supplementary feeding.
- ◆ Any cost-effective strategy that increases the productivity of these birds will assist in poverty alleviation and the improvement of food security.
- ◆ The increased availability of village chickens and eggs results in an improved intake of protein by farmers and their families and an increased access to cash and other resources.
- ◆ Chickens are often essential elements of female-headed, poor and HIV/AIDS-affected households. This is a particularly important contribution in areas where child malnutrition is common.
- ◆ People living with HIV/AIDS have a higher requirement for dietary energy and protein. Village chickens can be raised by households affected by HIV/AIDS as, unlike ruminants, chickens require few labour or financial inputs and provide high quality nutrition to their owners.

Origins of the International Rural Poultry Centre

The IRPC groups the specialists involved in village poultry production and I-2 thermotolerant ND vaccine development and its field-testing under village conditions, who offer their services for rural poultry development activities internationally. The IRPC works closely with the University of Queensland (UQ) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the two organisations responsible for the development of the I-2 vaccine.

The IRPC is a subsidiary entity within the Kyeema Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation based in Brisbane, Australia.

Five photos not included.

Southern Africa Newcastle Disease Control Project Update April – September 2004

As usual, project staff and partners have been working hard to ensure that ND control activities in rural areas of Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania are well established by the end of the project in June 2005. We are grateful for the interest and good humour of all who have assisted with:

- The Third Project Coordinating Committee Meeting held in Lilongwe, Malawi, which brought together representatives from Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, AusAID and GRM International;
- The mid-term review of the project by external consultants in April;
- The I-2 ND vaccine laboratory trial that was successfully completed in Malawi in June and the vaccine field trial that commenced in July;
- The training of extension workers and community vaccinators in Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania;
- Two more ND vaccination campaigns that were conducted in project areas in Mozambique and Tanzania;
- The 2004 – 2005 Annual Plan that was approved by AusAID in June;
- The monitoring and evaluation of ND control activities;
- The annual national planning workshop that was held in Malawi;
- The change over of Country Coordinators in Tanzania in July;
- Coordination meetings with partners in Gaza, Inhambane, Nampula and Tete Provinces in Mozambique and Dodoma and Mtwara Regions in Tanzania;
- The visit to project offices in Malawi and Tanzania by Ms Olga Reina, the SANDCP Regional Office Manager;
- Short-term advisor inputs - by Mr Eduardo Carvalho (SAL Consultoria, reviewing cost-recovery activities) and Dr Christine Ahlers (poultry expert) in Mozambique and Tanzania, and by Dr Ian Morgan (veterinary epidemiologist) in all three countries;
- Visits to the project by Dr George Mukiibi-Muka and Ms Rita Mwase from Uganda and Mr Pride Magwali of the Catholic Relief Services in Zimbabwe;
- Dr Harun's (Deputy Team Leader) participation in the 5th Asia Pacific Poultry Health Conference held at the Gold Coast, Australia, in April and the FAO/IAEA Forth Co-ordination Meeting of the FAO/IAEA Co-ordinated Research Programme on the 'Assessment of the effectiveness of vaccination strategies against Newcastle Disease and Gumboro Disease using immunoassay-based technologies for increasing backyard poultry production in Africa' held in Vienna, Austria, in May; and
- My participation in the World's Poultry Congress in Turkey during June that was kindly funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

Dr Wambura, our Country Coordinator in Tanzania, has accepted a lecturing position at the Sokoine University of Agriculture and as we wish him well in his new job, we also welcome Dr Msami as our new Tanzanian coordinator. Project staff continue to enjoy receiving e-mails from colleagues working with village poultry in many parts of the world and we hope that this exchange of ideas will continue.

*Robyn Alders, Team Leader, SANDCP
Maputo, Mozambique, E-mail: robyn@tropical.co.mz*

PHOTOS

1. Mrs Variety Chakana, a community vaccinator at work in Malawi
2. Mr Precious Dzimbiri, collecting a blood sample during the I-2 vaccine field trial in Malawi

PHOTO: Now women can speak like the men at our village meetings!”

“A rural poultry project in Southern Senegal “

Everyone involved knows it, but few speak about it. **The rural poultry project in Southern Senegal** financially supported by Danida (The Danish International Development Agency) and IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), *is NOT about poultry, it is about rural development and women's empowerment.*

So, when a woman recently turned up at a meeting in her village dressed like a man, after participating for one year in the smallholder poultry development project, this was just one more sign of success.

As an immediate output of the project, after one and a half years the number of chickens has increased significantly, and, more important, the women have experienced more self-confidence and a higher social standing in their community. Now more than 200 women are involved in smallholder poultry activities, and chicken numbers and women involved are growing by the day.

“The most important thing about this project is that we have started to think for ourselves”. (Mariama Coulibaly, Faoune)

“Family members from other villages come to learn from me and the other women, and it is important to own animals. Besides, the project has contributed to uniting the women in the village, our solidarity has been strengthened.” (Amy Kombo, Diourour)

A unique collaboration between the [Danish Network for Smallholder Poultry Development](#), the Danish NGO, Bicycles for Senegal, and the Senegalese farmers' association, COLUFIFA (*Comité de Lutte pour la Fin de la Faim*) has resulted in this highly successful smallholder poultry project in seven villages in Casamance in Southern Senegal.

The beneficiaries are among the poorest of the poor, and they have been selected through a participative process in each target village. Besides increasing the income of the families, the project also aims at empowering the women and strengthening the capacity of their organisation.

Women have received technical training (housing, feeding, health, and general management of the poultry) in order to be able to generate a small income from semi-scavenging poultry. After an introduction to savings, credit and marketing, they get access to a small credit of up to about USD 55 each. A very important part of the project is the organisation of the women. The 30 beneficiaries per village are divided into small groups of 5 with social collateral for the credit, and they meet once a week to discuss the problems encountered in the management of the chickens. A Farmer Field School approach is being used.

The project is implemented by COLUFIFA, which has contracted local partners to undertake the training, the credit and the veterinary assistance. COLUFIFA has also engaged in collaboration with the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research (ISRA) in Dakar. As an immediate result of this collaboration, a PhD student is writing his thesis on the project, and the i2 vaccine against ND has been tested in two of the villages.

Important lessons learnt are that:

- One and a half years is too short a time to assure the impact and the sustainability of the activities.
- An interdisciplinary approach supported by the Danish Network for Smallholder Poultry Development with their solid experience in project implementation and tropical poultry, a Danish NGO and a local farmers' association has been very fruitful.
- It is essential that the implementing organisation has a well-established local basis.
- Literacy courses should be included in the activities.
- Activities must be implemented with a highly participative approach.
- Separation between providers of technical input and credit is an essential.
- Marketing must be well organised.
- Micro-credit loans should be kept small, and the interest rate as low as possible.

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Avian Influenza: An Introduction

Causative agent

Genus: Influenzavirus A
Family: Orthomyxoviridae.

Several subtypes of the virus exist, which are divided on the basis of the glycoproteins haemagglutinin (H) and neuraminidase (N). At present 15 H subtypes have been recognized (H1 – H15) and 9 N subtypes (N1 – N9).

Influenza A viruses infecting poultry can also be divided on the basis of their pathogenicity:

OIE criteria for classifying an avian influenza virus as highly pathogenic:

- a) Any influenza virus that is lethal for six, seven or eight of eight 4-8-week-old susceptible chickens within 10 days following intravenous inoculation with 0.2mL of a 1/10 dilution of a bacteria-free, infective allantoic fluid.
- b) The following additional test is required if the isolate kills from one to five chickens but is not of the H5 and H7 subtype: growth of the virus in cell culture (for example primary cells such as chick embryo cells or cell lines such as MDCK cells, although most cell cultures support the growths of HPAI influenza viruses or those of low pathogenicity in the presence of trypsin) with cytopathic effect or plaque formation in the absence of trypsin. If no growth is observed, the isolate is not considered to be a HPAI isolate.
- c) For all H5 and H7 isolates of low pathogenicity and for other influenza viruses, if growth is observed in cell culture without trypsin, the amino acid sequence of the connecting peptide of the haemagglutinin must be determined. If the sequence is similar to that observed for other HPAI isolates, the isolate being tested will be considered to be highly pathogenic.

The very virulent viruses cause highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), also known as Fowl Plague. Less virulent virus strains cause a much milder disease (low pathogenic avian influenza, LPAI).

To date only viruses of H5 and H7 subtype have been shown to cause HPAI in susceptible species, but not all H5 and H7 influenza A viruses are highly pathogenic.

Influenza A viruses have a broad spectrum of antigenic diversity and virulence as well as a high capability for mutation. They are known to increase in pathogenicity after mutation (antigenic shift / reassortment, antigenic drift).

*Compiled by Dr Christine Ahlers, Veterinary Advisor, SANDCP.
Full article available for download from: www.kyeemafoundation.org*

The 5th Asia-Pacific Poultry Health Conference

The 5th Asia-Pacific Poultry Health Conference was held at the Ana Hotel at the Gold Coast, Surfers Paradise, Queensland, Australia on the 21st and 22nd of April, 2004. The theme of the meeting was "Harnessing Science for Poultry Production". The conference was hosted by the Australian Veterinary Poultry Association.

The meeting addressed key issues impacting on poultry health and poultry production in the Asia-Pacific region and other continents. The Conference brought together poultry scientists not only from the Asia Pacific Region, but also scientists from Europe, Africa and America. It was a unique opportunity for the poultry veterinarians to have formal and informal discussions about the future of the poultry industry and the challenges arising from the old diseases and the new emerging diseases and issues concerning public health and poultry production systems.

The major focus of the conference was the significant diseases namely Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease (ND); other key diseases caused by virus, bacteria and parasites with impact to poultry and public health were also discussed. New approaches based on molecular biology (e.g. DNA probing and micro array analyses) were also discussed as future diagnostic tools to enhance disease control, epidemiology and poultry production.

A plenary session called "Poultry Diseases – a global perspective from village upwards", was one distinctive feature of the conference which included discussion on control strategies used in developing countries to control economically important diseases. A paper dealing with the community-based ND control program, implemented by the Southern Africa Newcastle Disease Control Project (SANDCP; an AusAID funded project that aims to improve the livelihoods of poor livestock keepers in Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania through the effective and sustainable control of Newcastle disease) was presented by M. Harun (SANDCP Deputy Team Leader). The most striking information for some participants (primarily those working with commercial poultry production) were the low input / low output production system of village chickens, the different socio-economic roles played by village chickens in the life of farmers living in developing countries and the innovative ND control strategy using the thermotolerant I-2 ND vaccine developed by Prof Spradbrow of the University of Queensland (UQ) and ACIAR. Dr Henning of UQ also presented a paper on village chicken production in Myanmar. A poster entitled "Community empowerment through improved village chicken production" by Dr Ana Bela Cambaza of Mozambique was also presented.

Article written by: Mohamed Harun, SANDCP

A Technology Review: Newcastle Disease

This paper has recently been published by the FAO Animal Production and Health division. Significantly, it is subtitled "with special emphasis on its effect on village chickens." The first chapter reviews the virology and epidemiology of the disease, including its history, and the molecular basis of virulence. Then the methods for the diagnosis of the disease are given, followed by a thorough discussion of the different types of vaccine and vaccination strategies. The next and most detailed chapter is devoted to Newcastle disease in village chickens. It treats epidemiology in the villages, the control of the disease in village situations, including the social aspects and the organisation of extension, and gives a further discussion of vaccines. It then goes on to discuss the planning of vaccination campaigns.

This reference work differs from previous publications on Newcastle disease through the attention it gives to village chickens. This is most appropriate because in fact the disease is now largely controlled in industrial poultry units, and it is in the village sector where the most attention is now required.

Since the control of Newcastle disease is an indispensable element of any intervention in family poultry, this publication will be most useful for anyone working in the family poultry sector, whether as a veterinarian, or in development projects.

*Copies of this publication may be obtained from:
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PHOTO: COVER

FAO Special Program for Food Security in Chad: Monitoring Report

21 –26 January 2004

INTRODUCTION:

The Technical Cooperation Project named «"Support to the implementation of the diversification of the Special Program for Food Security (SPFS) component"» in Chad was implemented between November 2000 and November 2002. The objectives of the assistance were:

- To achieve small demonstration units on small livestock breeding, including small ruminants, poultry (chickens, turkey, ducks) and pigs that could serve as models with the aim of finding new, simple technologies and methodologies for organised agro-pastoral production; and
- To create and strengthen the necessary synergies between women and young groups in the rural and semi-urban sectors and the Private service sector (veterinarians and community animal health workers) with the aim of assuring the economic sustainability and viability of the demonstration units. (Some small livestock breeding units were created to ensure that basic animal health services are provided to the beneficiaries via villages veterinary pharmacies.)

An associated mission involving the FAO's Animal Production and Health Division (AGA) and Regional Office for Africa (RAF) was organised to see how things were going 3 years after the project started and some 14 months after the end of the project. Eight visits to villages were organised involving 18 families in different villages. Some informal discussions were held with the beneficiaries, the private veterinarians, and the SPFS coordinators.

FIELD VISIT TO THE SOUTH ZONE

1. Turkey breeding enterprise: Christine and her husband had 48 turkeys, 126 young turkeys and 30 chickens used for hatching the eggs. They are building a new poultry house for their birds.
2. Pauline Galanta, and 3. Catherine Djéné: They have 22 goats and 31 sheep. Had vaccinated in the past against the Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), but currently have difficulty obtaining the vaccine.
4. Gendarme Golbassia has 100 ducks. The animals are free all day and scavenge for their feed. The ducks receive local beer mixed with maize in the evening before locking them in a fenced yard. He eats ducks regularly and has a mortality of 5% in the adults.

PHOTO

Christine Zoula and her husband with their 48 turkeys and 126 young guinea fowl in N'Djamena, Chad. (Photo: FAO)

FIELD VISIT TO THE NORTH ZONE

1. Amssakine Fadge (village 70 Km North of N'Djamena) has 62 turkeys. He has started to pay back the turkeys he received by passing turkeys from his second hatching on to two beneficiaries. He sells the eggs and if not able to sell, he sets them to hatch under local chickens.
2. Hisseine Djibrine has 36 sheep including 10 lambs. He sells his animals for the Tabaski Festival. He sells his animals easily because he lives in an area with a lot of traffic.
3. Gamar Khalit (Village of Andourmane) has 22 guinea fowls and gained 15,000 FCFA (approximately USD 31) in 2003 from the sale of eggs. He mentioned a very high mortality in guinea fowls in the rain season (80%).
4. Mahamat Abakar (Village Mara, edge of Chari) has a unit of 48 chickens.
5. Balla Alifa has 20 chickens. They recorded heavy chicken mortalities shortly after purchase of the birds but they started again with other birds bought thereafter and now carry out vaccination with Itanew (inactivated vaccine against Newcastle disease) twice a year.
6. Djibrila Abderamane has 50 ducks.

REPORT and RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation methodology is simple and is based on an economic concept of profitability. It aims to offer a minimum income to the farmer equivalent to 17,000 FCFA/month which is approximately USD 35. The demonstration production units using a range of small livestock species are installed. The concept is based on the following pre-existing elements:

- A potential to market the products resulting from improved production (milk, meat, eggs). The market for these products in the capital city is large and so demand still outweighs supply by a considerable margin.
- Privatisation of veterinary services. Private veterinary surgeons are responsible for defined zones. Those installed in N'Djamena play the part of supplier/wholesalers in veterinary products and other agricultural products.
- Production of local livestock breeds using improved traditional methods. The system is semi-extensive and the animals are held in semi-confinement. Small ruminants are nourished with crop waste products which are stored under shelter.

- Locally available options to decrease losses (mortality). Mortalities are especially high in the young (poultry 0-8 weeks, small ruminants 0-4 months), and these broad losses can be decreased with some simple husbandry that includes supplementary feeding and the provision of shelters.
- Village revolving credit fund. A credit is granted to recipients of the first generation of small livestock in cash (a share of the credit is given in the form of material) once the shelters are built by the farmers, the second part is made in the form of liquidity which will make it possible for the farmer (identified and named by his community) to buy animals according to his/her own selection criteria.

Some other observations:

- The selected small livestock species perform differently.
- The units of small ruminants, ducks and guinea fowls offer a worthy potential.
- The follow-up-evaluation system of the project needs to be intensified.
- The community animal healthcare worker received training based on past experiences.
- The major diseases of small ruminants and poultry are not completely controlled.

CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Implementation of the of Support to the Diversification of the SPFS Project, finished 14 months ago (November 2002), and today more than 60 % of the units implemented in the zone of rural Djamena (for 3 years) are still functioning. The cost-recovery activities started in a number of villages continue with 39.6% of sites having identified new recipients and 5% of previous beneficiaries passing young stock on to new recipients. The community animal healthcare workers continue their functions and still assume certain basic care which proceeds in a satisfactory way even if certain workers have only a little to do. Twenty eight percent of the units that do not function any more or function very badly are units involving local chickens. The units of goats, sheep, guinea fowls and ducks showed the best results.

I would like to sincerely thank the local authorities, the SPFS Project Team including all the people at the Representation of FAO and the UNDP in Chad for their support and their reception at the time of my mission in Chad. Thanks particularly go to Dr. Z. Rhissa, who was the prime mover behind this very interesting initiative.

Emmanuelle Guerne Bleich, Animal Production Officer, FAO/AGAP, Rome, Italy

After our 3rd edition, some readers requested the recipe for:
YASSA AU POULET

Preparation : One chicken of: 1.5 kg - Onions: 0.750 g - Lemons: 1.25 kg
chillis: 10 g - Oil: 4 tbsp

Duration: 2h plus time to marinate

- Flame chicken (plucked and cleaned), cut it into pieces, put in a pot.
- Cut onions finely and sprinkle over chicken. Pour on the lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Marinate: marinating time can vary between 20 minutes and an hour.

- Take the chicken out of the pot, roast it over charcoal.
- In a casserole, heat some oil, add the onions and chicken, Leave until golden.
- Add water according to taste and let steam.
- Pour in the remainder of the seasoning (marinate) - Serve hot with rice.

Foot-note: Best enjoyed with good friends!

XXII World's Poultry Congress in Istanbul, Turkey

The XXII World's Poultry Congress (WPC) was held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 8 to 13 June 2004. More than 1,500 participants from over 95 countries attended the congress. It was very encouraging to see that family poultry was given a prominent position, with the first plenary session being devoted to "Global challenges and benefits related to poultry research and development in the Third World." One symposia session also dealt with family poultry and was divided into three sub-sessions:

- Strategies and objectives for improving family poultry production in developing countries;
- Development projects of international, governmental and non-governmental organisations; and
- Approaches and results from international and national agricultural research systems.

Key papers from the family poultry plenary and symposia will be published in the World's Poultry Science Journal (www.wpsa.com).

Members of the International Network for Family Poultry Development (INFPD) met during the WPC and assisted with running the INFPD exhibition stall (see photo). During a meeting of the Asian Pacific Federation of the World's Poultry Science Association (WPSA), a Working Group on small-scale family poultry farming was formed. The President of the working group is Dr Huque from Bangladesh. The Asian Pacific Federation of the WPSA may be contacted via their Secretary, Dr Alan Gibbins (E-mail: avianag@infoegenet.net.nz).

The XXIII World's Poultry Congress is to be held from 10 to 15 August 2008 in Brisbane, Australia. We hope to see many of you there! Further information on WPC 2008 can be obtained via e-mail: wpc2008@im.com.au

PHOTO

Professor Sonaiya (Coordinator, INFPD) and Dr Emmanuelle Guerne Bleich (FAO) working at the INFPD exhibition stall in Istanbul.

Australian Veterinary Volunteers

Australian Volunteers International (AVI) currently has three Veterinary Practitioners requesting volunteer placements. AVI has a fifty-year history of placing a range of volunteers in developing countries. The involvement of AVI in Africa spans South Africa, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique. Volunteers are recruited to provide skills complementary to the developmental requirements of organisations in the host country. Voluntary veterinarians would normally contribute to the agricultural capacity of a developing nation through the prevention and eradication of diseases, improvements in animal care, agricultural management or marketing. Veterinary specialists available at the present time have experience in anaesthetics, livestock management and general veterinary science.

AVI and the local partner organisation make joint contributions to the cost of a volunteer. AVI covers all recruitment, airfare and insurance costs. All placements are assessed, and assignment plans designed in cooperation between AVI and the local partner organisation. The central focus is the need of the host country. Regular contact between both organisations allows regular evaluation of the volunteers contribution. Any organisations seeking the expertise of a veterinary volunteer are requested to contact Australian Volunteer's International on the following e-mail address daryloehm@australianvolunteers.com.au, or, telephone +61-3-9279 1788.

Junior Farmer Field Schools Pilot Project, Zimbabwe

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) have identified the Junior Farmer Field School (JFFS) concept as a potentially useful way to assist rural youth in HIV/AIDS programs. It can provide technical, business and life skills, while at the same time providing some constructive activities (and avoiding risky ones) to help them to get started in income generating enterprises to help support their families (and themselves) into the future.

ICRISAT has proposed using poultry as a model to develop farming/entrepreneurial skills that will have several benefits: the high turnover rate of poultry will allow for the rapid exposure of JFFS members to the production to market process and will be valuable in the financial management planning and learning process as well. Members could learn about extensive and semi-intensive production systems to enable them to choose the production system(s) best suited to their individual situations.

Small-scale poultry production combines easily with other on-farm activities, e.g., chicken manure can be used to fertilize the family garden and to supply nitrogen required in dairy cow diets. As young farmers develop their skills they may graduate to other forms of agriculture; these may include bee keeping, pig production and milk production.

The International Rural Poultry Centre (IRPC; a not-for-profit organisation) was invited to assist ICRISAT and partners to develop and test curriculum and training modules on extensive and/or semi-intensive poultry production, for use in both Farmer Field Schools and Junior Farmer Field Schools (the latter targeting youth involved in HIV/AIDS mitigation and prevention programs) in Zimbabwe.

Participatory curriculum development activities revealed that JFFS members are generally interested in poultry production. A range of PRA tools were used to gain information on poultry production and poultry farmers' aspirations. Members of the JFFS were also invited to write down topics they would like included in the JFFS poultry curriculum. The process indicated that the JFFS members wished to know more about general poultry husbandry (e.g. housing, feeding, watering and disease control) and basic avian physiology (e.g. reproductive cycles).

The IRPC has facilitated sessions on improving village chicken production and also assisted workshop participants to prepare three comparative trials to be conducted by the JFFS poultry groups. Due to the lack of reference material dealing with the improved production of village poultry, the IRPC placed considerable emphasis on the preparation of a manual for JFFS facilitators.

The JFFS program can have a significant impact on how rural communities adapt to living with the consequences of HIV/AIDS. With the lessons learnt through this pilot program focussing on poultry production, it is expected that the JFFS program can be improved and expanded to enable young farmers to not only survive but also actively contribute to their communities.

PHOTOS:

“We raise chickens for their eggs and so that they increase in number so that we can sell and get money. This money will help me to buy what I want. If I have a visitor I can slaughter them and get relish. If a child fails to get school fees, the chicken can be sold to get money. Money to buy sadza comes from chickens. Chickens give manure that we use in our gardens for green vegetables and tomatoes. The other thing I can do is to buy clothes using chickens. When celebrating a birth I can also use a chicken as a gift. When I want someone to work in my fields, I can slaughter a chicken. I can also eat the eggs with sadza.”

Ms Nomsa Nkomo, JFFS member, Vukuso village

Logo: UniQuest Pty Limited - <http://www.uniquet.com.au/>

We are on the web: www.vsap.uq.edu.au/ruralpoultry/

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