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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Small Holder Poultry Management Practices and Constraints among Women Poultry Farmers in Kano, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The poultry population in Nigeria is estimated at 104.3 million comprising of 72.4 million chickens, 11.8 million ducks, 4.7 million guinea fowls, 15.2 million pigeons and 0.2 million turkeys (FDLPCS, 1992; Ajala *et al.*, 2007). The main sources of animal protein in Nigeria include beef, chicken, mutton, eggs, fish and rabbit. Of all these sources, poultry has the highest contribution to animal protein intake of rural dwellers (Ajala *et al.*, 2007). Women in Africa and Asia make up more than one third of the farm work force, accounting for about 70% of the agricultural workers, 80% of the food producers and 100% of those who process basic foodstuff and 60-90% of those involved in marketing agricultural products (Anon, 1993; Maigida, 2000; Herath, 2008). Yet the role of women in these activities, as economically important as they are, has for many years not been appreciated either because women play very little part in the political activities or the decision making process, until recently (Anon, 1993). Women have important roles to play in animal production (Sanni, 2004; Herath, 2008) although these roles may vary according to the types of animals' being kept, type of production and other economic and cultural constraints (Oladele and Adekoya, 1990; Ogbosuka *et al.*, 2003; Herath, 2005). Ample evidence indicates that many women across Nigeria whether in purdah or not, are engaged in various aspects of animal production (Maigida, 2000). However, as poultry farmers, women in many parts of Africa and Asia experienced or faced problems that tend to undermine their determination to raise income through rearing of animals on daily basis (Anon, 1993; Herath, 2005; Sonaiya, 2007). The integration of women as both agents and beneficiaries of development in the main sectors of the agricultural economy must therefore be a priority objective (Sanni, 2004). Kano is renowned as a centre of commerce and increasing number of people are engaged in rearing livestock particularly poultry. This serves to keep the women engaged and also supplement the income of the

family especially among the working class in addition to providing eggs and meat to the family for consumption. Against this background, the objective of the survey was therefore to find out the management practices and associated problems faced by women poultry farmers in Kano.

KEYWORDS: Women, Smallholder, Poultry, Management, Kano.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in five LGAs of Kano city which is located in the semi-arid savannah zone of Nigeria between February- May, 2002. The city comprises of 7 LGAs namely: Dala, Fagge, Gwale, Kumbotso, Municipal, Nassarawa and Tarauni. Five local governments were selected for the survey through simple random sampling by balloting. These were Gwale, Tarauni, Kumbotso, Municipal and Fagge.

Twenty structured questionnaires were distributed to twenty women poultry farmers that volunteered to take part in the survey in each of the 5 selected Local Governments. These women keep poultry either as full time or part time practice. Information solicited from the respondents in the questionnaire includes: source of capital for the business, any previous experience and training in poultry keeping, system of rearing, profitability of business, type of feed used, major disease problem, drug administration and type of birds kept. Data generated was analyzed using simple descriptive analysis and results presented in tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the 100 questionnaires distributed, 86% of the women responded, an indication of the

high enthusiasm of the respondents about the survey. Twenty six (30%) respondents had less than a year's experience of keeping poultry. These were closely followed by another 18 (21%) who had experience spanning between 1-2 years. Thirty six (42%) of the respondents claimed to have between 3-4 years experience of keeping poultry whilst only 6 (7%) indicated they had been keeping poultry for over five years (Table I). However, in spite of the experience of the majority of the respondents, none of them had any previous training in poultry keeping. This therefore explains why all (100%) responded that they needed some training to help them improve in their business.

This finding is in agreement with Ajakaiye (1980), Okorie (2000) and Ogbe (2000) who posited that training is essential to farmers, so as to enable them utilize their credit and manage their farms more profitably. On the sourcing of capital, 79% of respondents claimed they obtained capital for their business from family sources whilst 18% said from personal savings. Only 3% said they got their capital from bank loans and none from cooperative source. This result is consistent with the work of Nwanta and Alli-Balogun, (2000) who posited that cooperative sources provide little capital and can hardly support expansion of poultry enterprise. According to Smith, (1996), all livestock farmers, large or small require some form of credit if they are to expand their operations. However, most often, credit is available only to the large specialized farmers while the credit needs of small producers are neglected by lending agencies. Majority (93%) of the women practiced deep litter management system whilst 7% kept their birds in battery cages. Although deep litter is easy to manage and is suitable for flocks of different types and sizes, the system generates more waste than battery cage (Ogunjumo, 2000). Also, the preponderance of deep litter over battery cage might be attributed to the low capital base of the interviewed women farmers who could not afford the high cost of cages. Lack of space and training could also have contributed to the choice of this system.

The rearing of pullets was the most favoured by majority (70%) of the respondents. The rearing of pullets by majority of the women could be attributed to the desire to raise money to

supplement the family income and to lesser extent, to improve family nutrition. This agrees with the reports of Amballi *et al.* (2005) and Ajala *et al.* (2007) where it was indicated that most women poultry farmers do so to raise income. In Asia, similar results have been reported among women poultry farmers in rural areas of India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Herath, 2008). Analysis of results showed that Gumboro disease (IBD), Newcastle disease, coccidiosis, fowl pox and lousiness to be the major poultry diseases affecting their birds respectively (Table II). This result is consistent with those reported by Ajala *et al.* (2007) among agro-pastoral women poultry farmers in Giwa, a rural setting, in Kaduna state. This might suggest that these diseases are common in both urban and rural poultry settings.

Table I. Level of experience of respondents

Year's	Frequency	Percentage
1	26	30
1 - 2	18	21
3 - 4	36	42
5	6	7
Total	86	100

Table II. Common disease problems identified by respondents

Disease	Frequency	Percentage
Gumboro disease (IBD)	42	49
Newcastle disease (NCD)	20	23
Coccidiosis	12	14
Fowl pox	8	9
Lousiness	4	5
Total	86	100

Table III. Management constraints associated with small holder poultry in Kano

Constraint	Frequency	Percentage
Lack/ Inadequate capital	25	29.07
Diseases	10	11.63
High cost of poultry feeds	16	18.61
High cost of drugs and vaccines	6	6.97
Weather	18	20.93
Lack of Training	11	12.79
Total	86	100.0

Management problems identified as being the major constraints to the success of the poultry business of the respondents were lack of capital,

diseases, high cost of feeds, high cost of drugs and vaccines, the hot weather and lack of training (Table III). These findings are in agreement with results of similar studies in other parts of the country (Ibrahim and Tanya, 2001; Bukar-kolo *et al.*, 2006). However, despite the numerous problems listed by the respondents as affecting their business, 72% of the respondents agreed that poultry business is quite profitable and would continue with the business while 28% said the business wasn't profitable to them because they were operating at a loss.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that rearing poultry is a business that many women are engaged in, in Kano. Many have found the business to be profitable and wished to expand their flock size but are constrained by lack of capital, diseases and lack of training. Provision of accessible capital to these women either through loans from banks or other cooperative societies should be a priority of policy makers especially through the poverty alleviation programme as well as through other agriculture funding agencies. This would go a long way in assisting the women expand their business. Equally important is the need for extension services to be tailored to reach these groups of women. Similarly, women who keep poultry should be educated about the importance of vaccinating their flocks considering the fact that most of the diseases identified as causing great losses can be prevented through timely vaccinations.

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