

HUSBANDRY PRACTICES TRAINING REPORT

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IDRC Grant/ Subvention du CRDI: 109064-001-Transforming the vaccine delivery system for chickens and goats in Ghana: what approaches and what benefits for women?

REPORT ON BASIC HUSBANDRY PRACTICES TRAINING FOR AGRICULTURE EXTENSION AGENTS AND PROJECT FACILITATORS

1. LOCATION

Bawku West and Pusiga districts.

2. TRAINING PERIOD

Training was held a week each for the two districts from the 27/09/2021 to 08/10/2021.

3. PARTICIPANTS

A total of 42 AEAs (22 in Bawku West 20 in Pusiga) and the 4 Women Rear Facilitators. Below is the breakdown.

- i. Agriculture Extension Agents: 42
- ii. Project Facilitators: 4
- iii. District Livestock/Veterinary officers (Lead facilitators): 4

4. INTRODUCTION

The Women Rear Project is being implemented in Bawku West and Pusiga District, reaching out to about 2000 smallholder women livestock farmers. One of the project's activities is to train the Women Rear project Facilitators and Agriculture Extension Agents (AEAs) in two districts on Basic Husbandry Practices including routine health management for chicken and goats. The AEAs will sensitize participants of the project as well as other farmers in their operational communities to apply good husbandry practices to make profit from keeping livestock in the two districts. The facilitators will monitor the work of the AEAs providing technical support to ensure the objectives is achieved.

5. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

1. Build capacity of project facilitators to educate women livestock keepers in the project communities on improved husbandry practices for chicken and goat.
2. Enhance the capacity of government Agriculture Extension Agents in the two project districts to scale up capacity building on husbandry practices beyond the project participants and communities.
3. To strengthen the relationship between the project team and the department of agriculture to ensure sustainability of project interventions

4. METHODOLOGY

Prior to the training, the District Livestock/Veterinary Officers who served as lead facilitators developed and submitted training guides on housing, breed selection, feeding, pest and diseases control and records keeping. The training guides were reviewed, and inputs made by the acting

FSN Manager and the M&E Officer before they were finalized and used for the training. The methodology adopted were the use of power point presentations and practical sessions. Sufficient time was made for questions and sharing of experiences. These together increased learning and improved understanding of the training contents.

5. TRAINING CONTENT

The training started on the 27th of September 2021 in Bawku West district with an overview of the Women Rear Project followed by an introduction to improved housing system for chicken and goats. The team went through what an improved housing means for chicken and goats, types of improved housing and the benefits of each of the housing systems. In addition, the team discussed the appropriate sites for the constructing of pens and coops for chicken and goats. After the presentations and discussions, the team went through a practical session on how to construct improved chicken and goats' houses using locally available materials. The practical sessions offered the opportunity for participants to visit a few goat pens and chicken coops been used by communities' members, and also visited some improved structures in the project districts. They observed the different housing systems, materials used for their constructions and their appropriateness. Others, such as positioning (East to west) to avoid the direction of sun and flooding during rainy season, routine management of pen and the appropriate materials for flooring of pen were all discussed.

The training sessions continued with the introduction to breeding and breed selection for chicken and goats. The session looked at what breed selection was, the types of goats and chicken breeds in the locality, when to select new goat/chicken breeds and signs of good goat and chicken breeds. During these discussions, it was revealed that farmers should avoid going to market centers to buy new breeds but rather always first look within their neighborhoods, contact experienced breeders/other livestock keepers or acquire new breeds from breeding stations. Marketing centers as revealed were potential grounds for diseases and most of the animals at the market centers would be at risk of infection. Besides the disease infections, most of the livestock at the market center would not serve as goods breeds because farmers would not normally sell out their good breeds (except under serious financial constraint). Further discussions revealed that before introducing a new breed into an existing flock/herd, the animal must be quarantined for at least a week and observed to ensure it is healthy before adding to the existing animals.

Participants were also taken through feeding of chicken and goats for improved productivity. Topics included the importance of providing feed for chicken and goats, components of good feeds and formulation good feeds. Discussions included the dangers of feeding chicken on maggots, animals drinking polluted water from household latrines drainage, goats feeding on fresh soybean crops leading to bloating and death, consuming Newcastle infested dead chicken, and feeding animals with non-nutritious feeds crop residues. The facilitators then took participants through how to prepare good feed for both chicken and goats using local crop residues and other available materials. During the practical session, participants were taken through the formulation of various feeds with the correct requirements of carbohydrates, proteins, and other minerals to ensure balance diet for chicken and goats.

Routine health management was another area that was emphasized during the training. Some of the topics discussed included the signs and symptoms of diseases especially Newcastle for chicken and *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) for goat/sheep. The notable signs to look out for in Newcastle included loss of appetite, coughing, difficulty breathing, watery eyes, nasal discharge, bright green diarrhea and comb and wattles may swell and discolored blue. For PPR in goats, signs included sudden onset of depression, fever, discharges from eyes and nose, sore in the mouth, foul-smelling diarrhea, coughing and difficulty in breathing. Both PPR and Newcastle are viral diseases and so have no treatment. As such they must be prevented through vaccinations, adaptation of strict-biosecurity, quarantine and proper disposal of disease dead birds and goats. In addition, other routine health practices such as dosing/drenching, dipping, hoof trimming and debeaking etc were important to keep livestock healthy.

Record keeping which is another important activity in livestock rearing was also discussed during the training. The team discussed the importance of farm records, benefits of keeping records, types of farm records to be kept and how to develop different simple farm records such as health records, vaccination records and inventory records.

6. CONCLUSION

Overall, the training achieved its objectives as gathered from the evaluation of participants. The evaluation process revealed that both AEAs and project facilitators who had limited knowledge on good husbandry practices had greatly increased their understanding in that area. The training has served as a good platform that has prepared them sufficiently to build capacities of farmers to improve on the husbandry practices for chicken and goats. Most of the AEAs especially the newly recruited expressed their gratefulness for the opportunity. According to them, the training was the first of its kind that they have participated since they joined the department of agriculture after their college education. It was therefore a refresher training for them. They promised to utilize the knowledge acquired to help educate livestock keepers in the two districts especially the women groups through their weekly VSLAs sessions, home visits and other community meetings. The training also strengthened the relationship between the project team and the district department of agriculture for smooth implementation of activities and the sustainability of the project.

7. THE WAY FORWARD

At the end of the training both the AEAs and project facilitators proposed strategies to reach out to project participants and other farmers with good husbandry practices messages and they include the following:

- i. AEAs proposed to disseminate the information through Farmer groups/FBOs and home/farm visits in their respective operational areas with a monthly target of at least 30 farmers.
- ii. The project Facilitators also proposed to reach out to project participants through the routine meetings the VSLA groups and community meetings.

**Report compiled by Eliasu Abdulai, M&E Officer and reviewed by Rose Beyuo Siilo,
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