

EVALUATION OF SMALLHOLDER POULTRY PRODUCTION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND NUTRITION IN KIAMBU WEST DISTRICT, KENYA

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Abstract

Evaluating the contribution of poultry farming in Kenya is essential in the implementation of poultry production policies amid a growing trend of agricultural intensification and urbanization. Purposive and stratified sampling methods across two divisions with extreme agricultural productivity in Kiambu West District, Central Kenya were used to evaluate the contribution of poultry to household income, food supply, livestock and crop enterprises. Kiambu West District borders Nairobi Metropolitan area, an important egg and poultry market. Limuru and Ndeiya divisions were chosen for the study. A questionnaire was administered to eighty four households. The households were stratified into three categories; less than 500 commercial chickens, more than 500 commercial chickens and indigenous chickens and comparisons made between farmers in the three categories. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants were used in addition to the questionnaire. The landless monogastric systems and the semiintensive systems were identified. Flock sizes per household ranged from 4 to 30 birds for indigenous chickens and 200 to 2,300 chickens for commercial layers. Most of the farmers keeping poultry (59.3%) were 50 years and above. The contribution of poultry to household income, dairy production and household nutrition was significant ($P < 0.05$). Poultry contributed significantly to household nutrition by directly providing animal protein and also improving the purchasing power of the households. Poultry manure was used as a supplement in dairy cattle production and complemented crop production. The net effect of keeping poultry was improving the welfare of the households through increased income and better nutrition. Appropriate policies addressing the improvement of the quality and cost of poultry feeds, marketing and delivery of extension services can contribute to the development of the poultry industry and help alleviate poverty.

Key words: Smallholder poultry farmers, Kiambu West District, Farm incomes, Nutrition