

Socio-Economics Factors Affecting Poultry Farmers in Ejigbo Local Government Area of Osun State

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ABSTRACT The study investigated factors affecting poultry farmers in Ejigbo Local Government area of Osun State, Nigeria. Structured questionnaire were used in interviewing 80 poultry farmers randomly selected in the study area. Frequency distribution and Pearson correlation technique were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that a national support to strengthen the poultry production is required in the area of finance and input. This is essential for substantial improvements in the contribution of the enterprise to household food production and economic well being of poor farmers. However, a critical gap is still needs to be filled by the research extension outfit in combining the technical and socio-economics aspects of poultry production in order to boost country's egg and meat production.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of poultry to the national economy cannot be overemphasized, as it has become popular industry for the small holders that have great contribution to the economy of the country. The profession has assumed greater importance in improving the employment opportunity and animal food production in Nigeria.

Poultry have a significant effect on national economy. An earlier report by Okonkwo and Akubuo (2001) show that about ten (10) percent of the Nigerian population are engaged in poultry production, mostly on subsistence and small or medium-sized farms. Presently, the industry had been adversely affected by stringent government economy measure. The measure had been very pronounced on poultry production due to high level of sensitivity of the industry to management factor and resultant effect on live and productivity of the birds.

Study by Ojo (2003) revealed that, the industry falls short of its aim of self-sufficiency in animal protein consumption in the country that is put at 5gm/caput per day which is far cry from F. A. O. recommended level of 35gm/caput per day.

In the past ten years, many large scale operators in the industry have been forced out of the business due to various problems ranging from shortage and high cost of feed, high cost and availability of veterinary services and drugs, poor quality of equipment to other input.

This study attempted to examine the limita-

tions posed by these problems to the growth of the poultry industry. Recommendations on how to control these problems being faced by the industry were also made.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ejigbo Local Government area of Osun State, Nigeria. Random sampling technique was followed to arrive at a total of 80 poultry farmers from 10 political wards in the local government area. Interview schedule was used to gather information from respondents. Frequency distribution and Pearson correlation technique were used to analyse the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that majority of the respondents (74%) fall within the age group of 20-40 years followed by 24 percent in the age group of 41-50 years and 2 per cent in the age group of 60 years and above. It was also observed that 89 percent of respondents had one form of formal education or another while 11 per cent had no formal education.

With respect to the nature of poultry keeping, 63 per cent of respondents engaged in layer birds production, followed by 36 per cent that keep both layers and broiler birds. Only 1 per cent of the respondents engaged in broiler production alone.

The study also revealed that majority of the respondents (70%) had birds ranging from 1000

to 3000 followed by 25 per cent in the range of 3000 birds and above while 5 percent had less than 1000 birds. This confirmed the earlier report by Okonkwo and Akubuo (2001) that poultry production is mostly at small or medium sized level.

Seventy-six (76) percent of the respondents recorded about 101-300 crates of eggs per week while 11 per cent realized 301-400 crates of eggs per week, 4 percent of the respondents recorded 400 and above crate of eggs per week and 9 percent of the respondents realized less than 100 crates of eggs per week. On the contrary, earlier report by Okonkwo and Akubuo (2001) show that poultry production is mostly at subsistence level.

The study also indicated that 70 per cent of the respondents had access to extension services while 30 per cent had no access to extension services. Majority of the respondents (90%) had access to veterinary services mostly rendered by private sources while 10 percent of the respondents depended on self-management and medication.

Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents sourced their finance through personal savings and friend/relatives with 32 per cent of the respondents sourcing their finance through financial institutions. Nine-seven per cent of respondents agreed that government policy do affect their operation while only 3 percent of the respondents did not consider their operation being affected by government policy.

With regard to location of the industry, 77 per cent of the respondents expressed that availability of the land determine the location of their poultry site while, 13 percent considered marketing as a determining factor.

The findings of this study revealed that limited finance; high cost of input and labour coupled with unfriendly government policy had adversely affected the overall performance of poultry farmers. Earlier reports (Akeeb, 1997; Agbato, 1997) also revealed the problems militating against poultry production such as limited finance and high cost of input.

Furthermore, inability of the respondents to have access to extension services is an indication of the unstable government politics and policies. For example, mass retrenchment of extension officers and subsequent merging of extension outfit (Agricultural Development Programme) with other agencies were carried out by the

present government in the study area before the research was carried out. This exercise however, had negatively affected the effective functioning of extension system and work efficiency of the extension officers in the study area.

Factors Associated with Poultry Production:

The study revealed that, educational level of farmers had positive and significant relationship with average production while age has negative and non-significant relationship with the average production of the respondents (see Table 1). However, the significant relationship between educational level and average production could be due to sound knowledge and efficient management required of poultry farmers to ensure profitability in poultry business.

Table 1: Correlation coefficient between independent variables and average poultry production. (n = 80)

S. No.	Independent Variables	Average production 'r' value
1	Educational level	0.285
2	Input	-0.307**
3	Finance	0.303*
4	Access to extension services	-0.112NS
5	Access to veterinary services	-0.167NS
6	Labour	-0.142NS
7	Infrastructure	0.074NS
8	Government policy	0.114NS

* Significant at 5% level of probability.** Significant at 1% level of probability.

NS: Not significant.

Among the constraints identified in this study, finance and input had significant relationship with average production of the respondents. Probable reason for this may be due to the fact that, only few respondents had access to credit facilities or loan from financial institutions. Earlier reports (Agbato, 1997; Akeeb, 1997) also confirmed that credit facilities or loans from financial institutions are not accessible to the poultry farmers in the rural area.

The rest of the factors viz, access to extension and veterinary services, labour and market had negative and non-significant relationship while infrastructure facilities and government policy had positive and non-significant relationship with average production.

CONCLUSION

In this study, attempt has been made to identify some factors/constraints affecting the poultry production in the study area. Age distribution of the respondents fell within the

productive age of 25-50 years. The literacy level is generally high. input, finance, infrastructure facilities, access to veterinary and extension services, labour and government policy were constraints being faced by the poultry farmers in the study area.

Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations were advanced towards alleviating the problems being encountered by poultry farmers and increasing their productivity.

It is recommended that, government policy should be adjusted to improve on the provision of input at a subsidized rate; effective extension and veterinary services.

Poultry farmers should be encouraged to have access to financial institutions in obtaining loan at low interest rates. Extension activities should focus on training of the farmers on the improved

production management to enable them use the available resources efficiently and increase productivity.

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