

Backyard Poultry in Balochistan

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ABSTRACT: The term backyard poultry production designates chickens reared on small scale at household level. The first chicken was lured from the rain forests of Southwest Asia over 3,000 years ago. Since then chickens have been kept for meat and eggs throughout the world. In Balochistan province of Pakistan nearly all rural families keep a small flock of poultry to have a steady supply of fresh eggs for household consumption and to sell surplus at the local farmers market. Household level poultry production is mostly owned by women and managed by women and children. The profits are usually low as mostly *Desi* type chickens are reared with low egg and meat production. For increase in production and household income rearing of improved backyard poultry breeds is of utmost importance. During past 50 years through genetic research many high producing chicken breeds have been developed world over. These new breeds are well adapted to different climates and can be reared in both intensive and free range systems. The present study was conducted in the rural areas of five districts of Balochistan, where majority of people are dependent on livestock and poultry. The main objective of this research was to investigate economic status of rural poultry in the study area. Compilation of study data concluded that backyard poultry farming is commonly practiced in our rural area, mainly for family consumption and as a small income generating unit. The average number of birds kept is 12. Information from 200 females was obtained during the year 2013-14 to investigate status of backyard chicken in 5 district of Balochistan. Training status of the farmers and vaccination schedule affected egg production and mortality in backyard chickens. Average egg production reported per bird/per year has been 140.

KEYWORDS: Backyard, poultry, RIR, Fayomi, Balochistan.

1 INTRODUCTION

The poultry sector is an integral component of Pakistan's economy. The share of poultry industry in agriculture and livestock sector is 5.76% and 10.4%, respectively. In spite of developed commercial poultry system, backyard poultry still occupies significant position in the rural areas of the Pakistan [1]. The term backyard chicken designates rearing of chicks on small scale (10-12 birds) [2]. Backyard poultry rearing is common in rural communities and a valued resource that provides food and income for subsistence farmers. The surplus birds and eggs are sold in the village or nearby market and the cash earned are utilized in household economy. This practice is common in about 2/3rd of rural families in our country mostly for family consumption and as a small income generating unit [3]. Furthermore, it is an ideal activity for women as livestock and poultry keeping are done traditionally by female members of the household. Keeping in view the very low cost of producing rural poultry, the net return from rural poultry could be several times more than that of birds produced on commercial scale. Contribution of rural poultry to household economy could be further enhanced through genetic improvement of the rural birds, in addition to their feeding, management and health status [4].

Balochistan is developing province of Pakistan and people of the rural area are mostly dependent for meat on rural poultry. Poultry is maintained in Balochistan rural area in small fragments. Majority of the inhabitants of Balochistan rural

area are farmer so people are dependent on livestock and poultry. Poultry production is one of the significant source of income because of rapid turnover and higher returns. The present study is therefore planned to investigate economic status of rural poultry in Balochistan. The importance of relative factors will also come up with certain recommendations for better returns. Also, the study will be much useful for devising strategies for optimum productivity from the backyard chicken production in the study area with the following objectives.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 SAMPLING OF THE STUDY AREA

A total of 200 farmers were selected to investigate production status of household chicken in five district of Balochistan during the year 2013-14. In each district, five villages were randomly selected and in each village 10 farmers were randomly interviewed. Information regarding area location, family size, flock size, training received by the farmers, academic qualification of females involved in chicken production, type of birds maintained, eggs produced and mortality among birds were collected. After collection of the data it was transferred into tally sheets and then punched into computer. Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used for further analysis.

2.2 UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Zhob, Quetta, Mastung, Loralai and Killasaifulla districts of US Assisted Agricultural Development project for Balochistan Border Areas (USABBA) being executed by FAO of the United Nations. Agriculture is the main occupation in the study area. Most of the farm families are small land owners. They grow crops as well as keep livestock and poultry. Main crops are wheat, maize and green grams while livestock includes cows, buffaloes, sheep, goats and domestic poultry bird. Horticultural crops like apple, grapes, cherry, pomegranate, apricot, plums are also grown in the study area.

Strengthening of backyard poultry production has exclusively been a women empowerment endower where each household was given one set of improvised high yielding birds. These birds aged between 12 - 14 weeks and were given on 25% cost share. Before delivery of birds' village level trainings on poultry management and chicken health care were conducted. Moreover for sustainable availability of replacement stock local made prototype egg incubators was designed and introduced on cost share. Literate community female activists were given training on operation and maintenance of these egg incubators.

2.3 SOURCE OF DATA

To collect data an interview schedule was designed to cover all relevant aspects of the study. The data were collected through interview schedule from the male respondents directly, while the female respondents were interviewed by a guided male member of the household, to whom each and every question was made clear.

3 RESULT

3.1 ROLE OF POULTRY IN THE FIVE DISTRICT OF BALOCHISTAN

In the study area due to small land holdings farmers keep poultry to supplement their family income. Generally they keep chickens to sell poultry products and earn additional income for their families. Thus poultry contributes towards the improvement of socio-economic conditions of the people. Generally they keep 10-12 birds primarily for their family consumption in the form of eggs as a food. While the additional is sold to earn cash income.

3.2 TYPES OF BIRDS GIVEN IN BALOCHISTAN

The average number of birds given to household was 12 in the study area. The main types of birds given to the communities were RIR, Fayomi and RIR cross Fayomi respectively as shown in Table-1.

Table-1: Types of birds

Types	Pullets Birds (F)	Pullets Birds (M)
RIR	10	2
Fayomi	10	2
RIR cross Fayomi	10	2

3.3 PRODUCTION OF EGGS BREED WISE PER YEAR

Table-2 shows the production of eggs breed wise per bird annually. The production rate of Fayomi was 120 eggs per year, followed by RIR type which was 140 eggs per year and 160 eggs per year was produced by RIR cross Fayomi.

Table-2: Productions of eggs breed wise per year

Breed Types	Annual egg per year
RIR	140
Fayomi	120
RIR cross Fayomi	160

3.4 MORTALITY BREEDS WISE PER YEAR

Table-3 shows the mortality breed wise per year. The lowest mortality rate was that of RIR cross Fayomi 2%, Fayomi was 4% and RIR was 3% mortality rate. The overall mortality rate of all the breeds was 3%. Chicks were less vulnerable to mortality. The low mortality rate shows that the respondents used proper vaccination and the housing facility for poultry was sound.

Table-3: Mortality breeds wise per year

Breed Types	Mortality/year
RIR	3%
Fayomi	4%
RIR cross Fayomi	2%

4 CONCLUSION

Proper health care of chickens coupled with capacity building of farming communities in poultry management skills and profitable marketing of surplus produce along with introduction of improved poultry breeds, ensuring sustainable availability of replacement stock are suggested as key factors for better backyard chicken productivity in study districts of Balochistan.

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