



Poultry scenario of Kerala

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Indian poultry industry, over the years has emerged as the most viable enterprise with annual production of 30,000 million eggs and 600 million broilers. The country is 4th in table egg production and 19th in broiler production. Per capita consumption of egg and meat reached up to 35 numbers and 550 gms respectively.

Over the last three decades, poultry meat and egg output witnessed a spectacular growth in Kerala. An impressive performance has recorded in the layer and Broiler sectors. Moreover, Duck, Turkey and Quail production have increased substantially. Per capita consumption of poultry products recorded a rapid growth during this period, even higher than the national average.

As part of the homestead farming, backyard Poultry production programme have recorded remarkable growth in the state. More than 90% of the total egg produced in the state is from backyard sector. With its low cost of production, since birds will feed on kitchen wastes and insects, it is one among the sustainable farming systems in the state. As far as economically backward people

are concerned, backyard poultry rearing with 5 - 10 numbers of poultry in a household was the usual practice in Kerala.

In Kerala commercial layer farms are comparatively very few in number. Increased cost of production makes them unviable. Increased population density, high land pressure, high feed cost and increased labour charges coupled with adverse climatic conditions are the major hurdles faced by the poultry farmers. Moreover the state is fully depending on near by states for poultry feed since raw materials needed are neither available nor cultivated. To meet the increased demand we depend on other states for eggs. Once in every 3 years, the industry witnesses a mismatch between feed prices and egg prices. While procuring egg from other states, increased transportation cost and a gap in producer and consumer price always create problems.

Gramalakshmi, Gramapriya, Rhode Island Red, Hassarghatta Strain, Naked Neck, Giriraja and Kalinga Brown layers are reared under backyard system along with the traditional local varieties. Athulya birds have shown excellent performance under cage system of rearing.

During the last two decades, poultry production has transferred itself from backyard to an increasingly sophisticated employment venture. This has been achieved through the introduction of genetically superior hybrid chicks and scientific inputs with the proven techniques of poultry management and production. With regard to layers, average production has come up to nearly 250 eggs per year. Various innovative schemes and extension programmes of the State Animal Husbandry Department encouraged the people to actively involve in poultry rearing and production. It is an established fact that new research findings have made poultry farming a source of assured income and improved the socioeconomic status of the weaker sections in rural areas and unemployed youths. To assure regular supply of hybrid chicks, poultry farms are functioning in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, Ernakulam, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and

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Intensive Poultry Development Blocks are functioning at Pettah (Thiruvananthapuram) and Moovattupuzha (Ernakulam) to extend financial and technical support to the farmers engaged in poultry production. An assistance of Rs.10,000/- for construction of poultry sheds and Rs.10,000/- for purchasing chicks, feed and equipment has been given as loan from IPD Blocks. To reduce the cost of production of poultry feed, five feed production units are functioning under the Department of Animal Husbandry. Moreover a Feed Analytical Laboratory is functioning at Central Hatchery, Chengannur to ascertain the quality of poultry feed.

As far as disease control aspects are concerned, the Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals, Palode is playing a key role. From this institute vaccine against Ranikhet Disease, Fowl pox and Duck plague are produced and distributed free of cost to Veterinary Institutions. In order to diagnose various diseases of poultry and to suggest the remedial measures, Avian Disease Diagnostic Laboratory and chief Disease Investigation Office is functioning at Thiruvalla and Palode respectively. They used to conduct regular diagnostic tests in various departmental farms, as a precautionary measure to prevent diseases. Moreover Avian Disease Diagnostic Laboratory has got the facility of testing Aflatoxin level in the feed.

To impart free training on modern techniques of poultry production to the poultry farmers of the state Livestock Management Training Centres are functioning at Kodappanakunnu, Aluva, Mundayad and Chengannur. The Chick Sexing Schools at Kodappanakunnu and Chengannur impart five months training to unemployed youths.

To augment poultry production in the state chicks produced in the farms have been given to 262 egger nurseries where chicks will be reared up to 2 months of age. Then the pullets will be distributed to the public at a subsidized rate through the institutions of the Animal Husbandry department under decentralized planning.

Animal Husbandry Department has given assistance to Grama Panchayats and municipalities in establishing backyard poultry units. With an aim to increase the egg production and availability of eggs more

Preference was given to women beneficiaries and they were supplied with pullets and poultry feed. This scheme is still continuing in Grama Panchayats.

With a view to enhance the broiler production in the State, the department introduced a Scheme under Special Livestock Development Programme wherein subsidy will be given for the construction of shed and procurement of broiler chicks. 250 chicks unit is the standard size and it is a loan-linked scheme. The beneficiaries of the scheme jointly organized broiler societies and have helped to increase the broiler production to some extent.

Kerala State Poultry Development Corporation is now engaged in production and distribution of broiler chicks. The Meat Products of India is playing a major role in marketing poultry meat and its products.

Commercial and backyard duck units are acquiring popularity in Kerala. Khaki kambel and crossbred varieties are reared to egg production, where as whitepekin is mostly preferred as a broiler duck. Broad breasted large white variety turkeys are reared for meat. As an important source of meat its potential has to be exploited. There is ample scope for quail production in the state. Broiler and layer unit recorded remarkable growth.

In order to exploit the international market, the poultry products have to be exported. Even though there are tremendous potential for export of chicken meat, inadequate support, international price structure and improvements required in technology of packaging, transportation and preservation create major problems.

The markets of poultry meat and egg in the state are controlled to a certain extent by neighbouring states. By reducing the cost of production of poultry feed and effectively utilizing the family labour, these constraints can be minimised and will considerably help in increasing the poultry production in the State.

