



Poultry farming in Bukavu city, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Constraints and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to characterize chicken farming systems, and to inventory opportunities and constraints to this sector in Bukavu city, east of DR Congo.

Methodology and results: A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 60 poultry farmers in three municipalities (Kadutu, Ibanda and Bagira) using semi-structured interviews and closed- and open-ended questionnaires. The main findings show that most of chicken farmers in Bukavu are male (81.7%), single (53.3%), have an average level of education equivalent to a state diploma (50%), and most have trade as their main occupation (79.1%), with poultry farming being secondary (78.5%). They have an average of 3.5 ± 4.4 years' experience in poultry farming. Semi-intensive farming (70%) is the most common method. The two main motivations are increased income and job creation (85%), followed by self-consumption (8.3%). The most common improvement is improved breeds (73.3%). In addition to chickens, quails, ducks, guinea fowl and pigeons are also raised, albeit in small numbers. The main constraints faced by poultry farmers are the resurgence of diseases (100%), a lack of feed (91.7%), a lack of access to credit (25%), insufficient support from government services (10%), and problems selling poultry products (3.3%).

Conclusion and application of results: This study has certainly highlighted progress in the poultry sector, particularly regarding improvements in farming conditions, such as feed, watering and healthcare. However, certain constraints are associated with this type of farming. These include unsustainable buildings, non-compliance with stocking densities, heating and lighting system problems, feed importation from neighbouring countries, a shortage of qualified technicians, uncontrolled poultry house movement and a lack of expertise among some farmers. Despite the constraints faced by poultry farmers and the fact that chicken farming in the city of Bukavu is a secondary activity, it remains essential for farmers' diets and their socio-economic lives, particularly for young people. The poultry sector deserves special attention with a view to improvement. This would involve encouraging sustainable practices, such as providing poultry farmers with training and capacity building, giving them access to credit or subsidies, offering them support from state and non-state services, promoting local feed production and encouraging the widespread use of phytotherapy. These measures would increase poultry production in the city of Bukavu. The aim is to develop locally adapted solutions to overcome the many obstacles commonly encountered in poultry farming.

Keywords: Livestock farming, chickens, Bukavu City, South Kivu, Constraints, Opportunities.