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“Development on the margin”

Guinea Fowl Rearing: A Tool for Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Food security is a major global concern that requires proper balance between saving the environment and feeding the poor and as a consequence, modern agricultural needs to change radically to cope with growing population and climate change without irreversibly damaging the environment. It is globally recognised today that guinea fowl is an ideal vehicle that can be utilised to curtail poverty in the developing world. In order to verify this assumption, the potential of the role of investing in guinea fowl rearing was investigated through research utilising guinea fowl production practices and corresponding productivity potential. The study investigated guinea fowl production practices and corresponding productivity potential of 73 fowl flocks using RRA techniques. Eight-one percent of flocks were found to free range with the remainder, semi-intensive. The helmeted guinea fowl was the only breed found represented by several varieties, an observation for future improvement in selection of the most fertile variety for promotion. Important but surprising was the finding that 69% of flocks were managed by males: mean flock size found was small: 8 ± 6 with variation of 1 to 30 birds/flocks compounded by significant variation in responses among productivity traits, as highlighted by findings that mean annual egg production estimate was 89 ± 50 ranging from 10 to 200 per hen while young produced averaged 64 ranging from 0 to 100; weaned young for market, approximating 60 ranging from 1 to 100. Taking fowl rearing output numerical perspective, it was clear that diminished numbers of young keets being produced impacted negatively on the economic viability within the fowl keeping community, therefore, there needs urgent address to minimise losses thereby improving the numbers of young fowl presented for market. In view of the massive egg production reported in this study, it is recommended that keepers be encouraged to alternatively consume and or sell some of the eggs thereby curtailing economic losses incurred as reported, finally, it is clear that massive potential exists in guinea fowl rearing using free range.

Keywords: Extensive, guinea fowl, productivity, rearing, scavenging, semi-intensive