



Innovative Backyard Poultry Development To (Increase Assets, Income and Nutrition)

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Introduction/Background:

Family poultry is presently considered as a Special Tool for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation particularly at the developing countries in the world.

In Afghanistan, the changing lifestyles have rendered the Afghans dependant on imports which are increasing with every passing day. Imports of mutton, poultry, eggs, cereal grains and even vegetables and fruits have become the order of the day. The present state of affairs have resulted in the imports of table eggs alone to the tune of hundreds thousands per annum amounting to millions flight of capital from our country if allowed uncontrolled.

In Afghan culture, the self-contained routine dealings of the agricultural activities, including livestock rearing are considered as a symbol of welfare and security. The poultry rearing is one such endeavour and the predominant poultry production system in the villages is the extensive system and is mainly based on the local indigenous chicken types and on a scavenging feeding system. Studies by FAO have shown that 93 percent of the chicken ownership in the villages is in the hands of the women and in many cases it is the only major asset of the village women. The indigenous breeds have very low production potentials. The birds are normally kept under traditional systems and village women have limited technical knowledge. Mortality rates of the birds can be extreme due to the locally prevailing diseases (ND in particular).

This simulated approach towards the day to day affairs needs to be altered in favour of a self-sustained economy of which the poultry rearing in backyard, other than the commercial rearing, makes an ideal part-time. Feeding of chickens, collection of eggs, cleaning of coop, hatching of eggs, all take us very close to the nature and give us a feeling of the essence of life. To peak it all, the collecting of fresh eggs from the backyard which are far more superior in taste, flavour, nutrients and free from drug residues.

As a mean of poverty alleviation and food security, the Government of Afghanistan through the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) is promoting small holder poultry production and gives special emphasis to disadvantaged groups and less favored areas. Accordingly the Backyard Poultry Development project funded by IFAD via RMLSP through MAIL, was initiated in 2010 in North of Afghanistan with the aim to reduce vulnerability and improve on a sustainable basis the livelihoods, incomes, food security and nutritional status of 5000 poor and vulnerable rural households.

In Afghanistan small-scale poultry production has a number of comparative advantages, namely:

- It needs less capital investment compared to other species and land ownership is not a requirement.
- Short reproductive cycles ensure quick financial returns.
- Village women can manage and benefit directly from household poultry.
- Part of the daily feed requirements can be obtained from scavenging, kitchen waste and spoilt grains.
- Crossbred pullets, the Golden Breed, which are well adapted to the rural environment in Afghanistan are locally available and popular.

There is a growing evidence about the role that backyard poultry production can play in sustaining and enhancing poor peoples' livelihoods. Market oriented backyard poultry is increasingly recognized as a

stepping stone for the poor to move out of poverty. Effective functioning of a rural poultry value chain delivering 3 week old chicks to highly vulnerable families in far flung areas of Afghanistan contributes to overall household livelihood development.

Based on a case study from North Afghanistan, this practice note shows how the backyard poultry can create a viable business model, build rural market acumen, and doorstep delivery mechanisms by improving the traditional system of women rearing backyard poultry. Some of the key elements that contribute to the success and sustainability are:

- applying the right technology
- innovation in production, husbandry and marketing channels
- adopting a pro-poor approach
- Incorporating the FFFPS approach

While positive interest in smallholder production system is warranted, poor technical skills and knowledge and lack of proper institutional arrangements subjected these systems to negative pressures. To overcome these negative pressures and increase the family poultry productivity, the project introduced new training approach of **Female-Farmers Family Poultry School (FFFPS)**, innovation in production, husbandry and marketing to maximize benefits and minimize the damage/risk when the support given by the project is ending. The impacts of the Family Poultry through integration of FFFPS approach are summarized as follows:

Impact on Food Security and Nutritional Status:

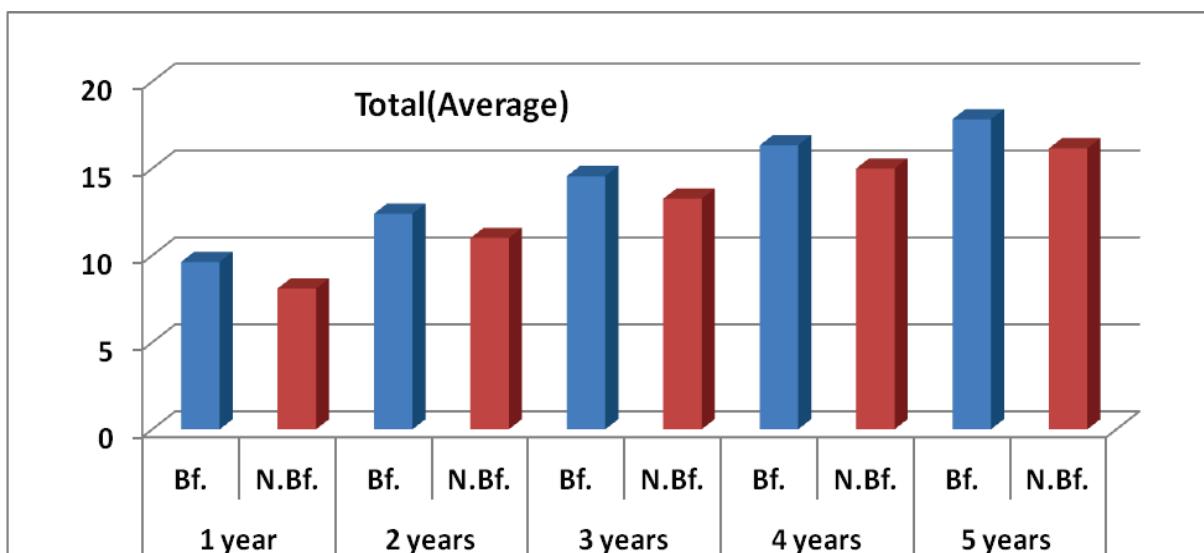
As the main objective of family poultry, the food security and improved nutritional status of poor rural farming families and household was achieved and evidenced in a field study through recording of body weight of 373 children of 1- 5 years ages, compared through a brief survey in three targeted districts between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries and presented in the bellow table and graph :

Table. Impact on food security and nutritional status of children of beneficiary and non-beneficiary

District	No. Children 1- 5 year age and (Average Body Weight in Kg)									
	1 year		2 years		3 years		4 years		5 years	
	Bf.	N.Bf.	Bf.	N.Bf.	Bf.	N.Bf.	Bf.	N.Bf.	Bf.	N.Bf.
Aqcha	10.5	9.7	12.6	11.4	15.12	14.4	16.9	15.1	17.5	16.0
Balkh	9.5	8.5	12.2	11.5	13.9	13.0	16.8	15.5	18.3	17.1
Nahri Shahi	8.9	8.5	11.6	11.0	13.3	12.4	15.3	14.3	17.7	16.8
Total(Average)	9.63	8.1	12.13	11.0	14.10	13.16	16.33	15.0	17.83	16.16
	(29)	(28)	(44)	(49)	(38)	(33)	(44)	(36)	(37)	(35)

The figures in parenthesis means, the number of children included in the survey,

Graphic presentation: Body weight compared among children of beneficiary and non-beneficiary:



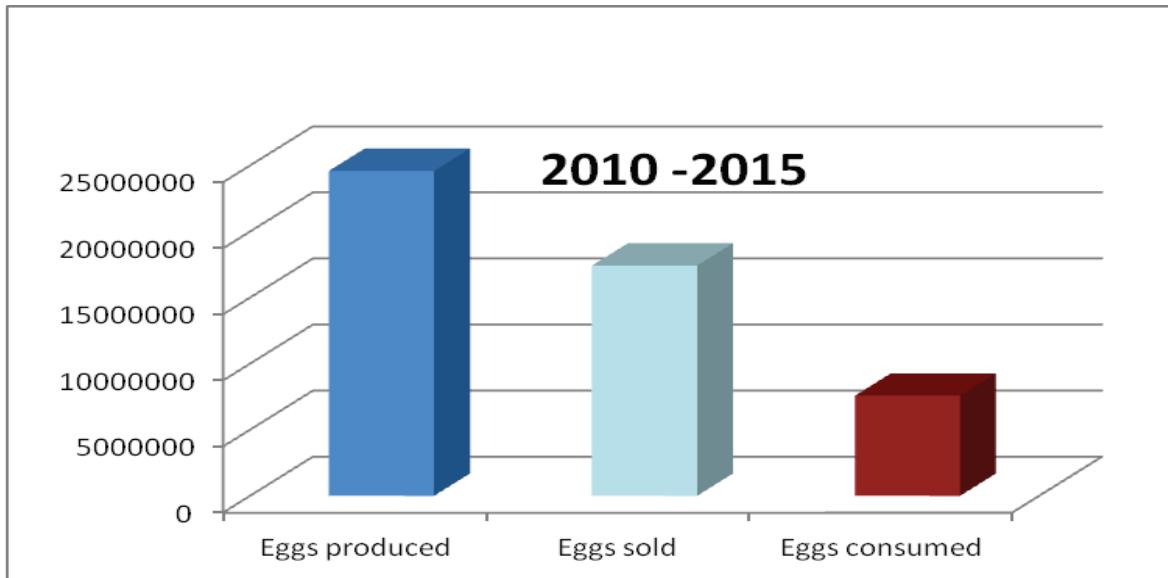
Bf : Beneficiary,

N. Bf. : Non-Beneficiary

As shown in above graph, the body weight of children belong to beneficiary families were higher than that of non-beneficiary in all three districts.

Eggs produced, sold and consumed by the beneficiary families is shown in the following table graph:

Years	Eggs produced	Eggs sold	Eggs consumed
2010 -2015	24596944	17424346	7581442





Female-Farmers Family Poultry School (FFFPS)





Acronyms:

- FFFPS Female-Farmer Family Poultry School,
IFAD International Fund for Agriculture Development,
MAIL Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
ND New castle Disease
NPA National Poultry Adviser
RMLSP Rural Microfinance and Livestock Support Project
VGLs Village Group Leaders