

Present position of Poultry Industry

As we know poultry industry includes both the layer farms and broiler farms in the country. Large numbers of farms in different sizes are operating all over the country. The poultry industry was hit by bird flu in 2007, 2009 and 2011. The number of farms reduced to 55,000 in 2013 from 1,15,000 in 2007 due to outbreak of diseases along with other problems. Another source reported that there are about 65,902 poultry farms upto February 2013 in the country. In two years since 2011, nearly 25,000 farms were closed mainly due to the outbreak of the diseases (Daily Star, 2013). **There are 6 Grand Parent farms which supply 80% of the total demand for parent stock and rest 20% are imported. In the country 82 parent stock farms are operating and of producing 55-60 lakh DOC of broiler and 5 lakh Layer DOC per week.(Estimated by Breeder Association).**

What are the reasons for excess production of chicken meat?

It is very important to note that although two-thirds of poultry farms are closed but the total production has increased rapidly. This could be due to increase production by large farms. It is also reported that the foreign entrepreneurs have doubled their farm production. But the demand has not increased rapidly so it creates a situation of excess supply of poultry products as compared to demand in the market. The excess production leads to lower price in the market.

Consumers' attitude toward indigenous chicken and broiler

There is an idea among a group of consumers that indigenous chicken is better than broilers in terms of taste and quality of meat. For this consumers' preference indigenous chicken are sold at much higher price than the broiler. In the market traders use to sell 'Sonali' in the name of indigenous chicken as the phenotypic appearance of 'Sonali' is similar to indigenous chicken.

Misconception about egg

Are Brown Eggs Healthier Than White Eggs?

There is no difference in nutrient contents between brown and white-shelled eggs. But consumers prefer brown-shelled eggs to white shelled eggs considering more nutritious. So price of brown-shelled egg is higher than that of white-shelled egg in the market. Secondly, brown feather chicken lay brown eggs, they are larger in size than white ones, The selection of commercial white layer and brown layer should be based on their comparative advantage as feed intake of brown layer is higher and slight price advantage for brown eggs but no difference in quality.

The Layer chickens are grown for eggs production is very much sensitive in environment. The red layer laid red (brown) eggs and white feathered layer laid white eggs. But there is no difference between these red and white eggs in nutrition value. Eighty Weeks Older Layers would be sold out in the market as meat.

An entertaining matter is the people of Bangladesh prefer brown eggs rather white eggs. But the people of USA like the white eggs very much. The preference depends on the cultural thinking process nothing another reason.

Eggs from local poultry vs farm eggs

In the market eggs of indigenous chicken fetch higher price per unit than the farm supplied eggs as a segment of consumers consider Deshi egg as more tasty and nutritious. But there is no scientific support on this point. Size and type of eggs have no different impact on the taste. But volume of nutrient contents will vary with size.

Colour of egg yolk

Some consumers believe that deep yolk colour is the sign of more tasty and nutritious than the pale

yolk colour. **Presence of xanthophylls pigment in feed is responsible for yellow color of egg yolk** (Akter et al.,2011). Now synthetic xanthophylls are available in the market for yolk coloration.

Organic eggs are more nutritious than regular eggs

Organic eggs are produced by hens using organic feed, free from antibiotic, growth hormones and enzymes. If the organic feed is not well balanced as the commercial layer feed, then the nutritive value of organic eggs tends to be lower than the regular eggs(Watkins, 1994). Organic feed is expensive than commercial feed and production of organic eggs is lower thus organic eggs are sold at higher price compared to regular eggs (Das et al.,2014).

Consumption of eggs and heart disease

There is a tendency to avoid use of egg as it may cause cardiovascular/heart disease. But in fact, fat in egg yolk is mostly composed of unsaturated fatty acid, which may have very little effects on blood cholesterol levels. Research findings support that daily egg consumption has a very limited effect on total cholesterol in healthy individuals (Ohman et al., 2008).

Removal of misconception

Misconception about egg are age old but not based on scientific reasoning, these are either due to ignorance or mere taboos. By removing these misconceptions from the people through market development tools (Kohls and Uhl 2005) that will generate a good market for poultry egg and meat in the country. Market development activities should be launched by the members of the poultry industry. Government support will accelerate the programmes.

Challenges

The major challenges to poultry sector are limited access to credit, competition from foreign firms and outbreak of diseases like Avian Influenza. The foreign firms have been investing in poultry sector in Bangladesh. They are borrowing money from their banks at a cheaper rate of interest i.e.4%. But the local entrepreneurs borrow funds with the rate of 15-18%. So the local firms are unable to compete with the foreign firms.

In addition following points need quick attention:

- a) Most of the poultry farmers are young who have started farming without having any prior training and management orientation.
- b) Slaughtering of poultry birds in open space in marketplace is the common practice which may help in outbreak of diseases.
- c) Lack of reliable data in poultry sector and its unplanned growth in the country is a great concern for development of poultry industry in the country.
- d) There is national poultry development policy 2008 in Bangladesh. But the policy has not been implemented in field.
- e) Unorganized poultry farmers at rural area throughout the country.

How to face the challenges

1. The problem of limited access to credit can be solved through government policy, change in attitudes of the bankers and the poultry entrepreneurs.
2. Foreign farms are large in size and vertically integrated so the non-integrated local farms will not be able to compete with them. If the expansion of vertically integrated firms continues then ultimately non-integrated small and medium poultry farms will disappear from the market. And its consequences will not be beneficial for the nation.
3. Avian influenza is a great threat to poultry industry. To reduce the threat the country should have surveillance system for the virus in poultry and migratory birds.

4. Training on poultry rearing and management should be mandatory for the poultry farmers. All farms should be registered with government office at DLS
5. Selling of live birds in the market may be phase out step by step.
6. Lack of data on poultry sector is one of the obstacles for proper planning and implementation of any developmental programmes. So establishment of a reliable and comprehensive data bank is prerequisite for the development of the poultry industry.
7. Poultry development policy should be implemented for the development of poultry sector.
8. Poultry farmers at rural areas throughout the country are operating the poultry farms independently and highly unorganized. If they are organized, then the picture of poultry industry will be different. All the stakeholders will be benefited from the action of the farmers' organization.
9. Indigenous chicken comprises about 50% of the total poultry population of the country. Although genetically their productivity is low but they are survived in harsh rural condition where feed is scarce, housing and medicare facilities are inadequate, improper or absent. There is scope for development of indigenous chicken through better feeding and management. Commercial diets may contribute to growth, mortality and profitability of indigenous chicken(Sarker, 2013).

Conclusion

Poultry industry is one of the important industries in Bangladesh in terms of employment avenue and source of protein supply at cheaper price for the nation. All categories of stakeholders should participate in policy formulation for the development of the poultry industry. Policy should be based on reliable and comprehensive field data. For the protection of national interest the government should be more active in implementation of poultry development policy in the country. Poultry farmers should be organized into group and follow the scientific management system.

Contribution to society

Based on this poultry industry a number of industries are developed both in inputs sector and outputs sector along with a number of service providing organizations (Fig.1). Poultry industry contributes 1 per cent to the country's GDP while at least 60 lakh people are involved in the sector, but the industry lacks proper support from the government as claimed by stakeholders.

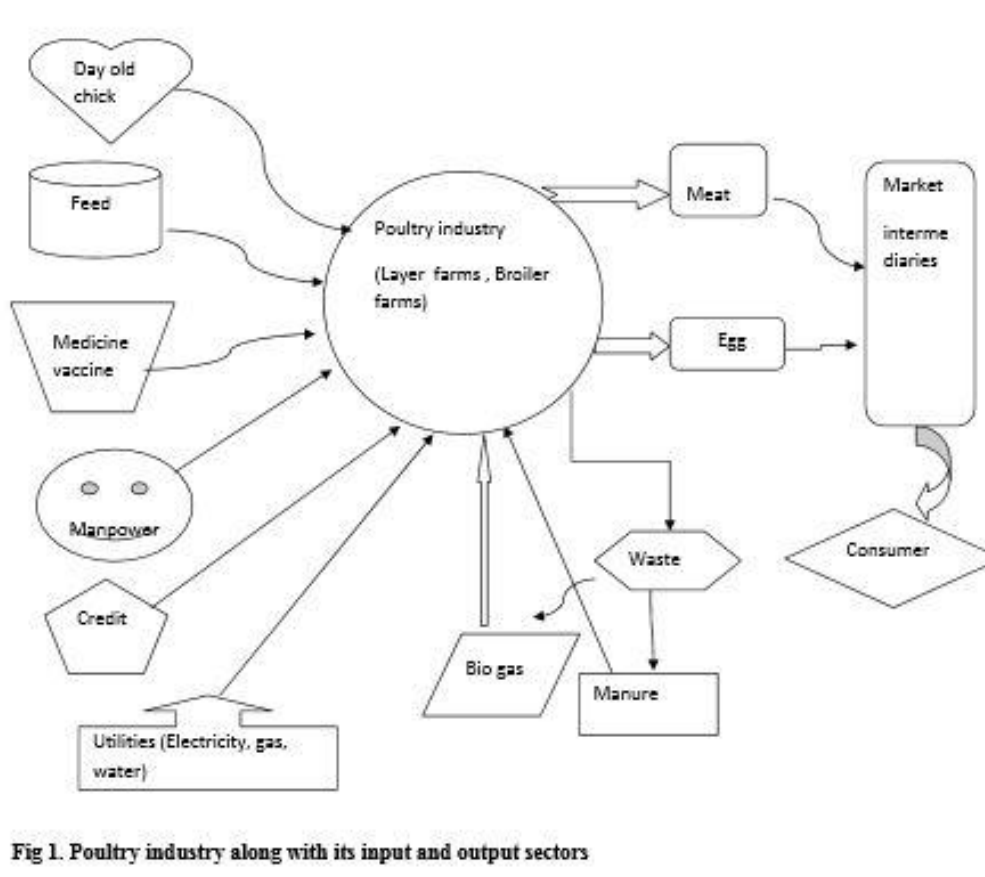


Fig 1. Poultry industry along with its input and output sectors