

Characterization of urban production of roadrunner (indigenous) chicken in Harare, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

In many developing countries, Roadrunner (Indigenous) chicken production in urban areas offers multifaceted opportunities. However, this local enterprise also has some potential hazards and constraints. The research aimed to characterize Roadrunner chicken production in Harare. A descriptive survey was conducted whereby 107 respondents were identified using a multistage sampling approach and were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. Respondents comprised 52% men and 48% women. Roadrunner chickens were kept either for sale only (58%) or both household consumption and sale (42%). All the respondents (100%) were not registered as poultry producers. The Roadrunner chicken breeds kept were the Boschveld (41%), Koekoek (21%), Australorp (20%) and non-discrete native strains. The average flock size was 125, ranging from 25 to 715 birds and the average stocking density was 7 birds/m². Only 8% of respondents practiced the free range system with supplementation and the rest (92%) provided feed to the chickens. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the farmers vaccinated their chickens against common poultry diseases. The average mortality rate was 7%, being caused by diseases (99%) and unknown (1%). Bio-security was achieved through cleaning, disinfection and restricted entry. The most preferred age at sale was 18-24 weeks. An informal market system was mainly used (95%) and the average selling price per bird was \$8 (ranging from \$6–\$11). The most commonly reported challenges were unreliable customers, lack of capital, few markets, theft, and insufficient feeds. Addressing these challenges could improve urban production of roadrunner chickens and have a positive impact on Zimbabwe Poultry Industry.