

## **NIGERIA NEEDS TO RECOVER FROM ITS PRESENT STATE OF POULTRY PRODUCTION**

**DR. V.O AWOSANMI**  
Acting General Manager  
Folawiyo Farms Limited, Ilora.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The importance of food in the Socio-economic Development of any economy cannot be over-emphasized. Animal protein deficiency in the diets of an average Nigerian has been well documented.

There is an increasing evidence of high infant mortality, Marasmus, unthriftiness, low resistance to diseases, poor growth and development, mental retardation, Kwashiokor e.t.c and lack of suitable food containing protein of high quality with which to treat and prevent these conditions. At present, only a small proportion of the protein in the diets of the average Nigerian is derived from livestock products.

The need to meet part of our animal protein requirement from domestic source demands intensification of production of meat derived from more prolific animals like poultry. Poultry has a shorter life cycle and is much more prolific than larger livestock such as cattle. They are easy to raise and adaptable to a wide range of climatic conditions. More-over, the relative energy and protein conversions of a unit of available meat is highest for poultry.

Consumption of high quality protein and vitamins supplied by poultry products aids greatly in building strong muscles, bones and other body tissues in young children and adults and increases the capacity of the population to perform productive work, thereby helping to improve standard of living.

However, the Nigeria Poultry Industry today is in such a sorry state of neglect and decay to play any meaningful roles in sustaining food security and supporting nation building. Some of the factors responsible for this situation will be identified in this paper and possible solutions would be profered, so as to arrest this trend and launch Nigeria into the fast approaching next millennium with a healthy populace.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The change and challenges that the future portend for the Industry are the foci of this paper. These can be better appreciated when viewed in historical perspectives. Commercial poultry production began in Nigeria in the 1960's. Prior to this period, extensive rearing of local, un-improved indogenous breeds was wide spread, in most cases managed on free range. This trend continued for almost two decades. The modernisation process began particularly in the Old Western Region where programmes were initiated for self sustainance through community development effort e.g Farm Settlement Scheme. This,

coupled with liaison with government of the State of Israel assisted to gravitate the budding poultry industry in the Region thereby securing a lead in the industry which is maintained till date. Technological revolution by ways of intensive system of Management (battery cage and deep litter) in place of extensive system substantially accelerated the growth of the industry. The establishment of Egg Marketing Scheme also assisted farmers to dispose of their eggs at reasonable prices. All these, coupled with the vital contributions from the Ivory Tower helped to sustain the tempo of development. The rate of growth became un-precedented on the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War, though for a short period. Thereafter especially 1984/85., the industry was brought abruptly to the verge of collapse. The most limiting factor then was availability of feed, which normally accounts for more than 75% of the production cost in poultry enterprises. This was due to the restriction on import of feed ingredients, especially grains resulting in sharp increase in the prices of these ingredients and livestock feeds.

The malaise took a worst turn between 1993 - 98 with the Socio-political economic crisis that virtually paralysed the sector with factors such as low purchasing power, energy crisis, fluctuating availability of raw materials e.t.c. It is widely reported that during this period the poultry population in the Nation declined to an all time low level of 4 million in 1998 compared to 45 million in 1983.

#### PROBLEMS OF POULTRY PRODUCTION

- \* Inconsistencies, contradictions, instability, inadequate planning and poor implementation of government policies
- \* Over-burdening of the real sector of the Nigeria economy with high operating costs resulting largely from the poor state of infrastructure such as electricity, water supply, roads e.t.c coupled with multiplicity of taxes/levies/rates.
- \* Un-precedented influx of imported products into the Nigerian market added a new critical dimension to the survival challenges in the sector as local producer are exposed to an unfair competition from those imported.
- \* Smuggling and dumping posed a serious threat.
- \* High inflation and contraction in purchasing power of consumers.
- \* Lack of credit from financial institutions to support capital investment and working capital requirement and with the advent of deregulation of interest rates, extremely high cost of loanable funds (up to 28 - 38%).
- \* High cost of maintenance and replacement of machinery and equipment due to tariff structures, exchange rates e.t.c.
- \* Scarcity and poor quality of vital inputs such as vaccines, day-old-chicks. medicinals, Feed raw materials e.t.c.
- \* Lack of facilities for veterinary back-up diagnostic services to cope with disease challenge. This make disease control a matter of guess work with attendant risks and losses.
- \* Poor funding of Research coupled with the need to focus searchlight on practical problems on the field and need to improve extension services.

- \* High cost of feed raw materials based on seasonal availability or production shortfalls induced by crop failure or marketing problems.
- \* Un-coordinated and inadequate depth of efforts mounted by pressure groups in the industry to lobby and influence the thinking and policy formulation of governments

#### THE WAY FORWARD:

Poultry production in Nigeria today is bedevilled by these, myriad of problems and many others. The impact of the situation is such that producers do not operate at full capacity or and with optimum efficiency, thus the idea of developing the poultry industry remains more of a dream than reality.

It therefore becomes imperative to evolve measures to improve the supply of high quality protein like eggs and frozen chicken or in the alternative the nation should accept as inevitable a persistent low level of protein intake and its adverse consequences.

Some suggestion to the various stakeholders involved are as followed:

#### GOVERNMENT:

- \* Creation of enabling environment for profitable production by:
  - Fiscal policies such as tariffs, tax reliefs e.t.c.
  - encouraging financial institution to increase the sectoral allocation of loans and advances to agriculture backed up by a credit-guarantee scheme.
  - ensuring that agricultural credit is granted to practicing farmers and serious entrepreneur ge nuinely involved in Agrobusiness and not tent makers.
  - introduction of price stabilization scheme
  - institutional support on input sourcing, quality control of inputs (revitalization of standard organisation of Nigeria, SON) and marketing or processing of products.
  - import subsidy for farm machinery and inputs.
  - accelerated development of infrastructure.
  - better funding and coordination of research accompanied with effective extension services.
  - allowing limited importation of maize (grains) to bridge production short-falls when necessary
  - review of policies that do not promote the local industry such as importation/ dumping of cheap, poor quality products.
  - improved policing of the Nations borders to minimise smuggling.
  - accelerated production of grains and oil seeds which form the bulk of feed raw materials and most susceptible to supply fluctuations.
  - establishment / re-vitallization of laboratory dignostic services
  - enhancement of purchasing power of Nigerian households so as to ensure consumption of adequate and nutritionally balance diets.
  - improving the attractiveness and result orientation of Agricultural Insurance.

- consistent implementation of government policies with adequate monitoring and control.

### ENTERPRENEURS

- \* Maintenance of goal
  - oriented investment pattern
  - avoidance of over-capitalization
  - optimum size
  - optimum use of capacities
- \* Optimum mix of source of fund in order to minimise cost of capital.
- \* integration , to exploit complimentary and supplementary relationship between units.
- \* minimisation of leakages by optimum employment of labour and other resources also ensuring good security to minimize pilferage.
- \* dynamic input sourcing and product pricing.
- \* aggressive marketing strategies
- \* timelines of operations
- \* disease prevention by chemotherapy, good sanitation, good nutrition and management standards.
- \* recruitment of competent staff, maintaining stability by means of remuneration and incentives.
- \* good technical support (consultancy, scientific monitoring schemes like serology, bacteriology and drug sensitivity tests, virology feed and raw material analysis e.t.c
- \* adequate and timely funding
- \* proper match of source of funds to type of investments.
- \* adequacy of working capital should be ensured.
- \* need to plough - back part of profits into Research and pressure group activities.
- \* expansion of Cooperative efforts beyond sourcing of funds into joint marketing of products, sponsorship of projects like feedmilling grain procurement e.t.c

### ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES

- \* Reseach should be geared towards praticals problems of farmers
- \* Communication linkage with farms should be improved.

### PRESSURE GROUPS

- \* Need for and Apex Organisation to ensure focus of activities
- \* Intensification and sustainance of efforts to influence policy direction concerning the industry.

### CONCLUSION

This paper has highlighted the current, depressed state of poultry production in Nigeria and the need for urgent attention. Some measures have also been suggested in order to bring about desired changes. Adoption of some of these

and focussed, co-ordinated implementation of some will no doubt bring about rejuvenation of this vital sector of the Nigerian economy which is endowed with a very high potential for growth and capacity to contribute to sound health of the citizenry of our great nation.