

Review of the Ministry of Agriculture's

Poultry Project

by

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The Poultry Industry has developed at a rate far exceeding what had been estimated when I first visited the country in the summer of 1974. The greatest development has been in the production of broilers by the private sector. A number of factors have contributed to this development:

1. The favorable live broiler price.
2. The rapid growth of the broiler, being ready for market in 6-10 weeks.
3. Technical help supplied by outside donors.
4. The assistance of the Yemen Government.

This broiler market will eventually become saturated at which time the growers will either have to:

1. Reduce the price of live broilers.
2. Export to nearby countries, which will mean processing and freezing the broiler.
3. Reduce the number of birds raised to sustain its price.
4. Shift to egg production which has a great potential in the Yemen economy.

The Ministry of Agriculture's program of supporting the development of village egg flocks shows foresight and, when the economy is ready, will be in position to lead in its development.

The Ministry of Agriculture Poultry Project at Sana'a has the potential of being self-supporting and should continue its program of (1) training farmers in poultry management, (2) supplying farmers with started-laying-pullets, (3) supplying farmers with complete feed for those pullets, and (4) carrying on an extension program of supervising flocks started in the various villages.

[1980]

The following is a list of recommendations:

1. Continue to work closely with the Dutch Project at Rawdah in obtaining chicks, feed and vaccines out of Europe.
2. Keep the houses at maximum hen capacity in order to generate income from the sale of eggs and pullets.
3. Only one-half of the available land is in use. Increase the number of poultry houses at the site. This should consist of two types; growing houses to make maximum use of the available breeder houses and wire laying cages. The laying cages will demonstrate another type of inexpensive housing and increase the egg production capacity of the farm. The growing houses will increase the brooding capacity and provide more pullets for sale to farmers.
4. Strengthen the training of farmers and continue the extension program. Check on started flocks every one or two months.
5. Continue to subsidize the cost of started pullets and feed to the farmer but reduce the present subsidy. The farm is presently paying 2.5 Rials for one kilo of feed and selling it for 1.5 Rials. 2.0 Rials would be more in line and still continue to entice the farmer.
6. Set up a priority system where once a farmer has established a flock of laying hens, he can replace them one year later with new pullets and, if doing a good job, be permitted to increase the size of his flock.
7. Keep the sale price of eggs produced in line with the inflation rate.
8. Keep the labor force taking care of the flocks at a minimum. A laying flock of 3,000 birds can be handled by two good workers.
9. Set regular hours for the sale of eggs at the unit. Three hours, two mornings a week, should be adequate. Place a sign listing the sales period and hold to it.
10. More time should be allotted to the maintenance, repair and cleaning of buildings and equipment.

11. Some consideration should be given to the establishment of village flocks of 10 to 12 birds vs. 50 or more. Small flocks disperse chickens into more villages but do not justify extension training or visits. Larger flocks are more apt to get the farmer to use modern feeds and management methods in handling the flocks.
12. Somewhere in the country's system, a poultry disease specialist should be established. The British have developed a good laboratory but do not have the money to staff it with a poultry pathologist. Some other third country donor may wish to staff this laboratory in co-operation with the British program. With the tremendous growth of poultry in Yemen, a poultry pathologist with assistants should have high priority.
13. To assist the Yemen poultry project to stay up-to-date a poultry specialist should be brought in about every six months to examine the program and make recommendations on management, planning and other factors that may be required. As the Yemen managers gain experience these visits could be spaced over longer periods of time.

In consultation with Karim Abutalib, a plan was formulated for the expansion of the Sana'a poultry unit. The expansion should be done in phases. As funds become available, a growing house should be constructed. The construction of two growing houses will make better use of the brooder houses and utilization of the laying houses. At the present time, the laying houses are being used to grow the pullets from twelve weeks until egg production. Open-house laying cages similar to the test model should be incorporated into the unit. This would provide demonstration housing for the Yemen farmer to see and increase the egg production capacity of the unit. There is room for at least 2,000 additional hens.

A four year schedule for the replacement of stocks at the Sana'a unit and sale to farmers has been designed. This is subject to change as additional houses are constructed and/or expansion of the extension-training program is enlarged.

The following page is a suggested four year replacement schedule.

Sana's Brooding Schedule

<u>Order from Europe</u>	<u>Number to Order</u>	<u>To Arrive in Sana's*</u>	<u>Start Laying</u>	<u>House Number</u>
-	-	3/22/80	8-80	1 and 4
-	2000	7/22/80 Some for sale	12-80	3
July - 1980	2000	11-80 Some for sale	4-81	2
November 1980**	1-2000	2-81	7-81	all for sale
February 1981	2000	6-81 any surplus for sale	11-81	1 and 4
June 1981	2000	10-81 Some for sale	3-82	3
October 1981	2000	2-82	7-82	2
January 1982**	1-2000	6-82	10-82	all for sale
May 1982	2000	9-82 any surplus for sale	2-83	1 and 4
September 1982	2000	1-83 Some for sale	6-83	3
February 1983	2000	5-83 Some for sale	10-83	2
April 1983	1-2000	8-83	1-84	all for sale
September 1983	2000	12-83 any surplus for sale	5-84	1 and 4

* Subject to arrival with Dutch dreiler stock.

** All pullets to be sold to farmers - plan for training sessions ahead to get them ready for the pullets.

The poultry project at Taiz could also be self-supporting. There are some serious management problems there, however. The workers complained that they had not been paid in five months. I am surprised they were still working and the birds looked well.

Laying house one was empty; the hens having just been sold at 30 rials apiece.

Laying house two had 237 birds and is getting 150 eggs per day. These birds should have been replaced with new pullets within the last month.

Laying house three had 226 birds and is getting 135 eggs daily. They should have been replaced like pen two.

Laying house four had 327 birds and is getting 173 eggs daily. They are now recovering from fowl pox which means that all birds at the Taiz plant must be vaccinated for fowl pox before they start laying.

Based on very conservative estimates, the Taiz Poultry Unit should have been generating income over the past six months of:

600 flats of eggs monthly @ 15 R	9,000
6 month x 9,000	54,000
Sale of pullets to farmers 400 x 10 R	4,000
Sale of feed to farmers 1,000 kilos x 1.5	1,500
Sale of 250 cull hens at 30 R	7,500
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Total for 6 months	<u>67,000 Rials</u>

The Sana's operation paid for the cost of all feed, chicks and supplies sent to the Taiz unit. Certainly the labor could have been paid by the sale of products. It looks like there is gross mismanagement of funds at the Taiz unit.

The following is a list of recommendations

1. Continue the program similar to those recommended at the Sana's unit.
2. Keep the laying houses to full capacity in order to generate egg income. 450 to 500 pullets should be started in each house.
3. Replace all laying hens at the end of 12 months lay. This means planning and raising pullets in advance of the sale of the old hens. The Taiz unit has two houses of hens that should be sold and only pullets to replace one of them. Income for this unit will be very low during the next six months.

4. It is very important that all pullets at the Sana's unit be vaccinated for Newcastle disease at least two times and pullets at the Taiz unit be vaccinated two times for Newcastle disease and once for fowl pox. The Sana's unit must import these vaccines either through the Dutch project or the British project and store them at the Sana's unit so they will be available when needed.
5. Keep the houses and equipment in repair. The doors on the laying houses are almost completely destroyed and need replacing. Other equipment such as the nests and feeders need immediate attention. If these repairs are not done immediately, it will be very costly to replace them.
6. Get electric power into the unit. Power lines now run directly by the unit. Lights are needed for laying hen management and security.
7. Two laborers should be able to do all works at the unit. Three laborers plus one guard are now employed.
8. Clean up the unit, cut the weeds, landscape the area. The research station of which the poultry unit is a part, has planted grass and flowers, put in fences and have a very attractive place. The poultry unit needs to do the same. They need to plant alfalfa, cut all the weeds, clean up the garbage, fill in the washed out road and plant a few trees. There is more than enough labor to do this, if the workers would do something besides sit around. The manager does not set an example. He never appeared during the whole morning we were there.
9. I do not suggest an expansion of the Taiz unit as I did for the Sana's unit. Until management improves at Taiz, it will be better to leave it as is with the suggested improvements.

The Ministry now has the facilities for good demonstration and training centers for egg production. The Sana's facility is doing well and, with a little assistance should continue to upgrade poultry egg production. The Taiz facility needs to be critically examined in relationship to its manager. The Taiz unit could be equally as effective as the Sana's unit.