

Boosting Chicken Production for Markets: Nutrition and Income for Smallholder Farmers

Crop livestock Integration and Marketing in Malawi (CLIM²)

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Background

In Southern Malawi chicken flock sizes are very small, due to frequent disease outbreaks, especially Newcastle disease; most chickens are left to scavenge for food and water. Production levels are not high enough for self-consumption and sale.

Chickens' short growth cycle and affordable prices makes them attractive for raising protein intake, addressing rampant malnutrition. Further, it's a value chain that women and youth can venture into with limited conflict with men.

However, costs related to the first flock, improved housing and processing facilities are major hurdles. Smallholder farmers, especially women and youth, lack collateral, reducing their access to finance.

Approach

The CLIM² project enhances smallholder farmers' capacities in business enterprises through chicken production.

- At Innovation Platforms, farmers express desire to establish chicken business
- Local authorities approved land
- Extension workers help with registration of business
- Improved dual-purpose chicken breeds being introduced and tested
- Comprehensive business plans developed, infrastructure (for hygienic production) and market linkages established.

The CLIM² Chicken Business Model:

Infrastructure development: Supporting self-organized producer groups with appropriate infrastructure to ensure hygiene and sanitary production processes. Farmers gain business skills and experience.

Homemade feed rations: Farmers learn to process feed rations using locally grown ingredients (pigeonpea feed sells at 5,000 MK against 20,000 MK poultry mash). Agro-dealers provide minerals and information, while extension technicians provide support.

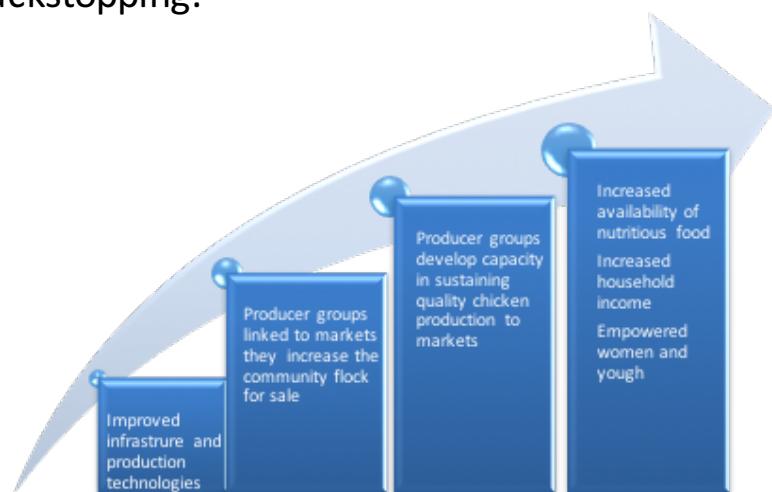
Linking enterprises to markets: Large scope for supplying chicken through rural market outlets.

Financial support: Banks providing loans assist farmers producing larger numbers of chicken. Business approach to chicken production will help farmers repay the loans.

Results

Namagazi Women's Group and Chimtengo Youth Group in Thyolo district have started chicken production as a business. They contribute their own money towards start-up capital. CLIM² linked them to FINCA to facilitate a loan for infrastructure and running costs.

Agribusiness officers facilitate capacity development and linkages to markets. CLIM² provides technical backstopping.



Increasing gains from improved chicken production

Key messages

Feeding undervalued crops such as pigeonpea to chicken can increase returns on farm enterprises.

Improved chicken production not only enriches rural households' nutrition; smallholder farmer businesses also gain access to valuable markets.



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