



## THE INCEPTION OF BATIKI POULTRY



Day-old Chicks

In our last Weekly Issue publication, we brought to you the story of Netani Kuila Jnr, the 2020 Ginger Farmer of the Year for the Central/Eastern Division, this is the continuation of that piece, where he details the inception of their Batiki Poultry Farm.

The Kuila family originally from Vanuavatu in Lau are a tight knit unit who have mastered ginger farming to a tee, yet in 2010, they decided to diversify to poultry farming.

The reason for this diversification was due to the fluctuation in ginger prices and seeing as the Kuila extended family operated farm needed to be kept afloat, the only rational option was to secure alternative sources of income to complement their current revenue stream.

Mr. Netani Kuila Snr branched off and pursued poultry farming, he maneuvered the family's journey through unfamiliar territory but eventually, he would succeed at poultry farming too, just as he had done

with ginger.

All of his knowledge, he passed down to his two sons, who are now the stewards of the farm.

The Kuila family are the proud owners of Batiki Poultry Farm in Naitasiri, and from the savings earned throughout the years, they have managed to purchase another piece of land in Bau Road which houses another poultry farm, a welcome inclusion to their ever-growing farming venture.

"My father has always been someone who was keen in developing the land, it ran like medicine in our blood and we the children all turned to the land for our livelihoods, no one ventured outside of farming," said Netani Kuila Jnr.

To date, the Batiki poultry farm boasts an impressive 35,000 birds, with the Bau Road farm housing 5 poultry sheds, an investment which derives from their ginger farming prowess.

"Having a poultry farm is equivalent to looking after a child, it requires our full attention, from feeding time to their health, that is all included in their welfare," he said.

"There are also times when we experience natural disasters, with the possibility of some of our birds dying, we also have contingencies in place for their safe keeping," said Netani Jnr.

"We make sure the chicken are disease free and for this, the credit goes out to the laborers and the family members. The workers understand the need for sustainability, therefore we work together to effectively achieve goals," he said.

A testament to their commitment to succeed in their venture, they invested \$200,000.00 in the purchase of the Batiki Poultry farm sheds, the cost of which was all earned from their ginger farm; "The farm revenue is often used to upgrade the farm, to lift it to another standard, so we reinvest on the farm," he said.

The poultry farm, which has been developed and upgraded to New Zealand poultry standards has also further branched off, via the sale of affordable PTN poultry equipment to interested farmers.

"There are standards that should be met for poultry farmers with Goodman Fielder and because we want farmers to grow too, we often advise them on the adequate required poultry shed," said Netani Jnr.

"We help these other poultry farmers so their contractual agreements with Goodman Fielder are not terminated because they also have a lot to offer and the demand for supply is high," he said.

The poultry farm has opened its gates not only to farmers in the area but also to agriculture students of the Fiji National University and the University of Fiji for a 6-month practical work experience attachment.

"We often encourage the students to dwell on the essence of hard-work and management of land and money and to refocus their main purpose to that of wanting to become farmers," he said.

"We would like to also drive into them the importance of wise financial management, whether you end up in the office or in the field," he said.

The Kuila family, having known what it felt like to have pleas lend on deaf ears and the hardships of having meals on the table to feed family, employs laborers amidst the pandemic; "The poultry laborers are now working together with the crop laborers, they have not been laid-off as all our laborers have mouths to feed," he said.

Recognition is perseverance' companion, and the Kuila family have indeed kept at it, the long years of hard-work and sacrifice culminated with a cupboard full of farming trophies and accolades as they again received recognition during the most recent Central/Eastern Agriculture Show held at Syria Park, in Nausori.

"If you want to farm, you have to be passionate about it and make use of the available resources around you, there is a lot of land available, you make use of it and you can keep upgrading your farming standards with revenue from the land," said Mr. Netani Kuila Jnr, the 2020 Ginger Farmer of the Year for the Central/Eastern Division.

## BASIC INFORMATION ON BROILER FARMING

Broilers are chicken raised for meat production. Poultry meat is an important source of high quality protein for human diet. Broiler farming can be taken up as backyard farming for food and income security purpose or can be taken up as a commercial venture.

### Advantages of broiler farming are:-

- Rearing period is 6-7 weeks [Short cycle]
- Broiler has high feed conversion efficiency
- Broiler has faster return from the investment
- Demand of poultry meat is more as compared to other meat.

### HOUSING

#### Site selection

- Farm to be well connected to roads.
- Should have the availability of electricity and water at all times.
- High land with loamy soil for good drainage.
- Enough space for further expansion.
- Open space for good ventilation and biosecurity.

### VENTILATION

- Proper ventilation for movement of fresh air into the building for removal of stale air.
- Wire mesh to be fitted on the upper side of all the walls.
- Wet litter due to poor ventilation is the predisposing factor for coccidiosis and other health issues.

### Floor Space

- May vary according to age, size, type and number of birds.
- 1-1.2sqft/bird is recommended for matured birds.
- Floor to be strong, durable, free from

dampness, smooth and rat free.

- Floor to be 1ft high from soil level.
- Cement concrete floor is best.

### BUILDING

- Should be in the East-West direction lengthwise.
- Distance between sheds to be at least 50 feet (open house).
- Width of the house not to exceed 30-35ft.
- Shed height should be from 10-12ft.
- Roof is necessary to protect birds from rain and direct sunlight.

### LITTER

- Broilers are generally raised on deep litter system.
- Floor to be disinfected by phenyl, bleaching powder or lime before placing litter material.
- Litter material such as rice hull, wood shavings dried leaves etc. can be used to cover the floor.
- The depth of the litter should be 3-4 inches.
- Cover the litter with paper for the first few days to avoid chicks from eating litter.
- Litter is used for keeping birds clean and comfortable as it absorbs moisture from droppings.
- Litter should be free from mould, injurious materials and dust.
- Litter should be kept in good dry condition.
- Remove wet litter if any and replace with fresh litter material.

### PREPARATION BEFORE CHICK ARRIVAL

- Building, surrounding areas and equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Cover the dry floor with litter.
- Prepare and setup brooder guard.

- Place feeder and waters in a circle around the brooder.
- Operate the brooder for at least 24 hours before the chicks arrive for optimum temperature and condition.
- Fill the feeders and waters a few hours before the chicks arrive.

### AFTER CHICK ARRIVAL

- Introduce chicks to feed and water.
- Observe chicks closely and routinely.
- Keep feed and water available to the chicks at all times.
- Provide fresh, clean feed and water.
- Provide plenty of fresh air without draft.
- Keep litter dry.
- Adjust brooder light if needed.
- Once brooder or heat lamp is removed provide another source of light.

### BROODING

- Broiler chicks need a source of heat to keep them comfortable.
- For the first week the chick environment needs to be in the range of 90-95°F.
- Reduce temperature gradually by 5°F each week until broilers are 3-4 weeks old or the temperature is 70°F.
- If the chicks are too warm, they can become dehydrated which may lead to death or growth delay.
- Use thermometer for pen temperature by observing chicks response to heat source-cold chicks huddle together under heat source.
- Hot chicks move to the outer limits of the brooder guard.

### BROODER

- A brooder provides the heat and protection the chicks would receive from the mother.
- A simple brooder is made from heavy box or basket with a layer of sawdust or

newspaper placed at the bottom of it for brooding small number of chicks.

- A newly hatched chick will require an area of 20cm x 20cm (8inchx8inch) for each bird. A box of 1mx1m (3.2ftx3.2ft) will be enough for 25 chicks.
- For large farms, brooder can be constructed within the poultry shed using brooder guards and plastic curtains.
- Brooder guard should be 1.5 ft in height.
- Heater, bulb or hurricane lamp can be used to provide heat. Put the light bulbs about 18 inches above ground.
- Spread saw shavings or bedding material and cover with newsprint and spread feed on newsprint for first few days. Also provide fresh clean water. Feed troughs can be introduced later.
- The birds can be kept in the brooder until they are 2 weeks old and later released into the poultry coop or shed.

### OTHER ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Once the birds are over 2 weeks old and released into the shed, it is important that the following is provided for optimum growth up to marketing.

### LIGHTENING

- Light should be provided 24hrs a day.
- This will increase the feeding time, increase weight gain and improve feathering in broiler.
- First 15 days in brooder 40, 60 and 100 Watt bulbs are used according to the requirements.

### FEEDERS AND WATERERS

- Keep feeders and waterers clean all the times.
- Feeders should be kept at height that is level with the birds back height.
- Feed consumption is directly related to water consumption.

Adequate water is necessary to optimize growth.

### TYPES OF DRINKERS

- One drinker can be used for 50 chicks.
- After four weeks, use one automatic drinker for 100-150 chicks.

### TYPES OF FEEDER

- One linear feeder for 50 chicks.
- After four weeks, use one round feeder for 25 birds.

### FEEDS AND FEEDING

Broiler Starter (21%CP) – 0 to 14 days (500g feed/chick)  
Broiler Grower (19%CP) – 14 to 28 days (1200g feed/chick)  
Broiler Finisher (18%CP) – 28 days to market (1200g/chick)

### PESTS AND DISEASES

- Sheds should be well-secured and free from predator.
- There is no major disease, if proper management and farm hygiene is practiced.
- Buy and feed medicated feed.

### RECORDS

Keep records of all transactions for farm inputs, mortality, flock, feed and water consumption, disease and treatment etc. These will assist in planning and better decision making.

### MARKETING

Farmers can market their birds by selling live. All in and all out basis should be practiced in broiler farming provided there is sufficient demand however, selective harvesting can be done based on sales demand. Clean shed by disinfecting and leaving it to dry for at least one week before next batch of birds are placed.