



CHICKS FOR CENTRAL FARMERS

One thousand subsistence poultry farmers in the Central division received nine broiler chicks each along with its Starter and Grower feeds.

The initiative comes under the Ministry of Agriculture's Household Meat Supplementation program.

The Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Mr. Ritesh Dass said the current distribution was possible through the assistance of the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

"Vinaka Vakalevu to FAO who provided the funding of \$120,000 that enabled us to provide poultry farmers we assisted a total of 10.5 tonnes of Grower and 4.5 tonnes of Starter feed. This would benefit 2,700 households in Fiji.

Our Agriculture officers have been

going around delivering the chicks and feed to villages and farmers in the rural areas of the Central Division where each province received 250 chicks. So Tailevu, Rewa, Naitasiri, and Serua/Namosi each received that amount to support the objective of the program which is sustainable livelihood and food security.

These recipients are current farmers who are raising chicks on a subsistence level," he said.

The current distribution is the second phase of this assistance. The first was conducted in the first quarter of this year.

Mr. Dass said the earlier initiative was part of the Ministry's ongoing capital program under Poultry Extension where a total of 100 broiler farmers were assisted in the Central

Division. In other words, 25 farmers from each province of Rewa, Naitasiri, Tailevu and Serua/Namosi received six broiler chicks, six local crosses, and broiler starter and grower feed packages.

"A total of 576 households benefitted from that country-wide assistance valued at \$30,000."

In addition, he said, the Ministry had been encouraging and providing technical assistance to the subsistence broiler farmers and would be conducting basic husbandry training on broiler farming, as well.

According to the 2020 Fiji Agriculture Census Report, there are a total of 326,175 farmers in the Central Division who focused specifically on raising broiler chicks.



Recipients of chicks and feed packages.

BASIC INFORMATION ON BROILER FARMING



Day-old chicks

BROILERS

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 10-12 ft.
- 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 3-4inches.
- 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. (ref .fig 2)

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 20cmx20cm (8 inchx8inch) 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, 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.

Proper Brooding illustration

