Household Duck rearing as a tool to combat malnutrition and poverty among rural communities in Bangladesh

Introduction

Micronutrient deficiencies and stunting rates in Bangladesh are among the highest in the world. Interventions that aim to increase the consumption of nutrient-dense foods should be sustainable and culturally acceptable to address the underlying causes of malnutrition. Village poultry production in Bangladesh is an important but underutilized practice for both consumption and income generation, with approximately 80% of rural households owning some poultry. However, maintaining and increasing poultry production in rural village settings is challenging as diseases can cause substantial losses every year. Interventions that could increase poultry production in Bangladesh have largely been focused on village chickens in the past. Duck-rearing is a culturally acceptable option for women who wish to produce animal source foods.

Study Objectives

The goal of our project is to explore the feasibility of improved duck management and production and to evaluate its impacts on consumption, dietary diversity and income for women. We hypothesize that increased availability of ducks and eggs will result in improved dietary diversity in particular by women and children and increased income and resources controlled by women. In this project we will explore perception, needs and requirements for duck rearing of farmers interested in duck rearing and of farmers that rear ducks already. We will also conduct surveys on duck production and its constraints.

In addition, an intervention study will explore the impact of duck rearing on consumption, economic and potential nutritional household parameters and an ecological, feeding supply and market assessment will explore if husbandry, feeding and marketing conditions are adequate for sustainable duck rearing. Studies will be conducted in the Moulavibazar District and in the Chittagong District of Bangladesh. The project is conducted in collaboration between The University of Queensland, Australia, Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Bangladesh and the Royal Veterinary College, United Kingdom.

Partners

University of Queensland (Lead), Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, BRAC in Bangladesh, and Royal Veterinary College, UK.