

Village Chickens are Used in The Informal Market by Vendors as an Underutilized Product for Sustainable Livelihoods in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

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Abstract

Village chickens in developing countries are essential for food security as a source of protein. There are insufficient investigations on village chicken's value chain contribution to sustainable livelihoods. The objective of this study was to assess and evaluate the contribution of the informal market of village chickens to sustainable livelihoods in KwaZulu-Natal. The study was conducted in Durban (Area 1) and Pietermaritzburg (Area 2), KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, Central Business District. A questionnaire was administered to village chicken vendors in the central business district. A total of 50 village chicken vendors were selected and interviewed. The majority of village chicken vendors in the central business district of KwaZulu-Natal were women ($P < 0.05$) in Area 1 (100%) and Area 2 (77%). In Area 1, (26 %) of village chicken vendors were at the age of (50 to 60 years) and 62% (40 to 50 years) in Area 2 ($P > 0.05$). The primary source of income was the selling of chickens and vending in both areas ($P > 0.05$) and the purpose was income generation (100%). None (0 %) of the village chicken vendors had access to chicken farming training on village chickens in Area 1 and only (11%) in Area 2 were observed ($P < 0.05$) with over (85%) interest in attending in both areas. 89% of village chicken vendors in these Areas depend on indigenous knowledge followed by scientific knowledge (1%) and 10% on both gender and age ($P > 0.05$) had the weakest association (0.23). At the same time, the type of breed in demand and reasons breeds are in demand ($P > 0.05$) had the strongest association (0.64). On the other hand, there was a significant difference ($P < 0.05$) between the main source of income and the uses of chickens. Village chicken consumers were mostly Africans (82%), followed by Pakistanis (2%). Live chickens (98%) were preferred compared to cooked meat (2%) and uncooked meat (0%). Village chickens are stored for 24 hours daily with the flock size ranging from 10 to 20 in a cage. It was concluded that the informal market for village chickens contributes to sustaining livelihoods through income and consumption, primarily driven by cultural practices.