

**ASSESSMENT OF POULTRY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT WITHIN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The Lejweleputswa district is considered to be the poultry district due to several poultry enterprises which were established in it for the emerging poultry farmers as from the year 2002. Most of the layer and broiler production enterprises are considered unsustainable since 98% of them cannot progressively supply the formal market demand. However, the research need was identified to assess layer and broiler production enterprises as part of coordinated poultry projects planning for sustainable production. Gender, youth, disabled people and the training needs, training received by poultry farmers, available poultry enterprises and housing were also assessed. The aim was to revive them if possible by training the farmers and recommend funding to different funders. The education level of the farmers was looked into. It was found that when electing the representatives of various legal entities for poultry the level of qualification must be considered. Methods such as interviews, meeting, checklists, observations, profiles were used in collecting data. Findings reflected 213 poultry beneficiaries and twenty one poultry enterprises in the Lejweleputswa district. Four percent are with disability whereas 52% are females. This reflects that in poultry production in the district women are more involved than men. Twenty three percent (23%) of the total beneficiaries are youth a clear reflection that youth are inadequately involved in agriculture.*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Thirty nine percent of the Lejweleputswa district people are living in poverty (Lejweleputswa growth and development strategy 2007/2008). This reflects that there is a need for establishing development projects within the district. Hence, the farming commodities or enterprises particularly poultry within this district need to be assessed as part of planning for sustainable development. Poultry enterprises such as layer and broiler production were targeted for this assessment. The broiler industry in South Africa is dominated by two large producers, namely Rainbow and Astral. Together, these two companies produce 55% of total broiler production in South Africa. Rainbow, on average, produces 4.1 million broilers per week and Astral, on average, 3.4 million broilers per week. The third largest producer, Country Bird, produces 1.2 million broilers per week or 9% of total broiler production in South Africa. Four medium-sized producers (producing more than 400 000 broilers per week) supply 15% of the market followed by approximately 50 smaller producers (producing less than 200 000 broilers per week). A degree of consolidation has taken place in recent years, with bigger players buying up some of the smaller producers. In addition to producing economies of scale, these actions have reduced the potential for price wars in the consumer market. Increasing competition and energy cost in poultry industry are mainsprings for broiler producers to find ways to minimize the cost of growth (Firouzi, Haghbin Nazarpak, Habibi, Jalali, Nabizadeh, Rezaee, Ardali, & Marzban. 2014. 52-55). As a result, chicken meat prices increased by about 6% per annum between 2001 and 2006” (South African Poultry and Products Annual, 2007). The broiler or layer production within the emerging farmers in the Free State Province must be revived. Meaning that grouping of all the broiler

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enterprises need to be planned together starting with different districts within the province. With the layer production enterprises the same procedure need to be followed. If this idea could be implemented the bigger poultry producers would not buy the small once which are mostly dominated by emerging farmers. Grouping together the broiler or layer production enterprises may assist them in targeting one market. Registering of poultry farmers as secondary or tertiary cooperatives could easily assist in supplying their target market continuously. The foundation in this regard will be to assess the current status of poultry developments in the Lejweleputswa district, with the expectation that other districts in Free State Province will learn from this approach. According to South African Poultry and Products Annual, 2007, Brazil is still the most important trading partner for South Africa in terms of poultry meat, having more than 70% of the import market. Canada (11% of imports) and Argentina (7% of imports) are respectively the second and third most important trading partners for South Africa in terms of poultry meat. Though, throughout the year 2002, the exchange rate parameters tied up with a competitive position in the international market and placed South African egg producers in a position to utilize export opportunities hence towards the end of 2002, exports rose to between 5% and 6 % of total production (Habets. S. M, 2003). The import of broiler meat quantities increased significantly from 2003 and reached the highest level in 2006 before decreasing from 2007 to 2009. The Rand appreciated (average of R7.66/US\$) from the last six months of 2009 and led the broiler meat imports to accelerate (Directorate Marketing, 2010). However in India commercial layers are predominantly white egg producers (>95 per cent) with good farming practises, production is 350 eggs per hen housed in a 60 wk laying cycle (Srinivasan, Balasubramaniam, Gopala Krishna Murthy & Balachandran, 2014.30-36).

## **2. METHODS AND TOOLS**

### **2.1 Sample Area**

List of poultry farmers was extracted from the database of the emerging farmers of the Lejweleputswa district. This district is one of the five district municipalities of the Free State province and it comprises of five local municipalities. In this district there are eighteen towns. The layer and the broiler production farms or projects were identified from the secondary data as received from the extension officers' from different wards within the district. Hence, they were later requested to validate the compiled list. Fortunately twenty nine poultry enterprises were identified and that is inclusive of poultry interest groups. After verification enterprises or farms or interest groups on the list were reduced to twenty one.

## **3. POULTRY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A questionnaire was developed with the aim of validating and verifying the poultry secondary data which was already available in the office. Questions such as; number of beneficiaries in the project, level of their education, land type where the project is located, type of poultry enterprise, available infrastructure for both layer and broiler enterprises, training received by the beneficiaries as well as the training still needed by the beneficiaries. The questionnaires were distributed to be completed by the poultry farmers within the Lejweleputswa district.

### **3.1 Poultry workshops and meetings**

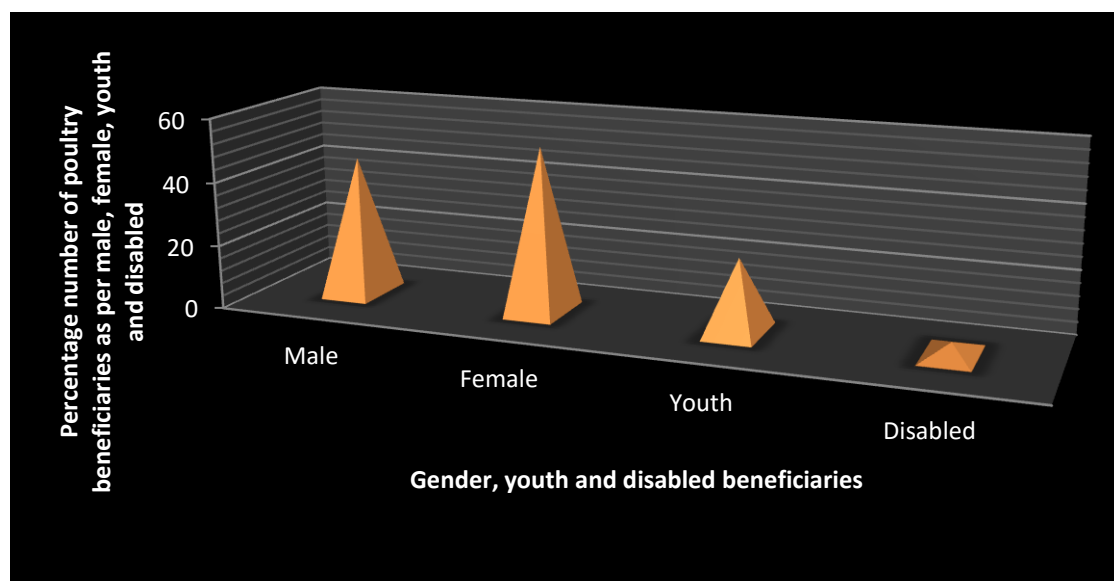
Workshops and meetings were also held with both the farmers and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development officials. Some data was collected from the meetings and workshops facilitated within the district.

### 3.2 Observations

Whereas, other data were observed during enterprises visits namely poultry, infrastructure such as layer houses and broiler houses.

## 4. POULTRY BENEFICIARIES

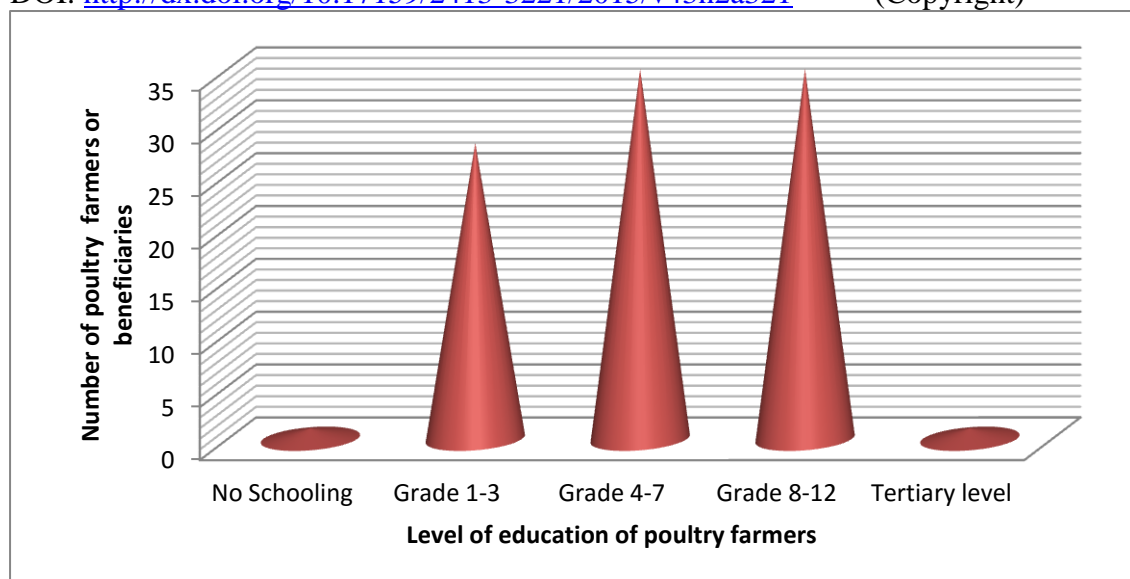
It was found that there are 213 poultry beneficiaries involved in the 21 poultry farms or enterprises in the Lejweleputswa district, of those reflected 4% are with disability, 44% are males and 52% are females. Twenty three percent (23%) of the total beneficiaries are youth hence this findings clearly reflects that youth (with less than thirty five years)are still less involved in agriculture although the government is busy developing programs such as YARD(Youth in Agricultural Development) to engage them. Whereas the involvement of women in agriculture is really promising as it is illustrated in the Figure 1: below.



**Figure 1:** Percentage number of poultry beneficiaries according to gender, youth and disability

## 5. LEVEL OF EDUCATION AMONGST THE POULTRY BENEFICIARIES

Majority (35%) of the beneficiaries' level of education is between grades 4 to 7 whereas there is still a need for improvements from the side of the beneficiaries in terms furthering their studies particularly the youth. It is worth mentioning that only 1% did not attend school at all as compared to other farming commodity groups with the district.



**Figure 2:** Level of education amongst the poultry beneficiaries

## 6. POULTRY ENTERPRISES

Number of poultry enterprises and their availability are reflected below.

**Table 2:** Type of poultry enterprises in the Lejweleputswa district

Type of poultry enterprise	Number of enterprises	Number of enterprises in percentage
Layer production	6	28.6
Broiler production	15	71.4
Total	21	100

## 7. POULTRY INFRASTRUCTURE

### 7.1 Layer houses

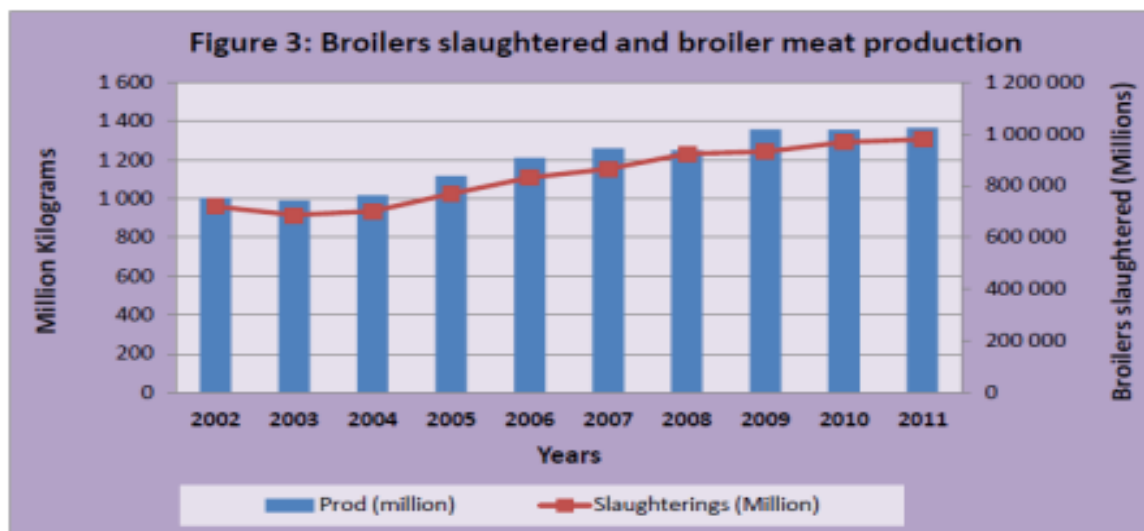
Currently there are twelve layer houses for the black emerging farmers within the district, 42% are for a layer enterprise belong to a single group for each member to run his or her house and 33% respectively, since there are only 6 layer enterprises within the district. The total carrying capacity for all the twelve layer houses is 29 230 layers. Only 28% of the total carrying capacity is currently stocked with layers. It was observed that most of the layer houses are still in good conditions though in some of them a need for expansion was identified.

### 7.2 Broiler houses

Eight broiler sites or farms with different houses with various broiler carrying capacities are available within the district. Most (90%) of the observed broiler house' carrying capacity is 1000 chickens per house and they each have eight houses. Though some of the broiler houses are made out of woods and they need to be renovated now and then, they are therefore

prune to fire damages. New broiler projects are already planned within the district though environmental impact assessment studies are still to be done before they can be implemented. During 2006 to 2009, it was more expensive to import broiler meat as less quantity was imported at a higher value due to the depreciation of South African rand against dollar (Directorate Marketing Profile of South African Market Value chain, 2010)

Below figure 3 reflect the amount of Broilers slaughtered versus their production hence the district shows great improvement with the broilers projects it has if they can all be in production.



Source: Agricultural Statistics and SAPA

**Figure 3:** Broilers slaughtered and broiler meat production

## 8. TRAINING

### 8.1 Training received

It is important to assess the courses attended by poultry beneficiaries before any other courses could be provided to them.

**Table 3:** Courses previously attended by the poultry beneficiaries

Course attended	Course provider	Duration of the course in days
Broiler production and management	Non Formal Training	2
Constitution writing	Non formal training	2
Marketing of Broiler Chicken	Skills for All	5
Farm finance	Skills for all	5
Layer production and management	Skills for All	5
Record keeping	Non Formal training	2
Business management	Skills for All	5
Conflict Management	Non Formal Training	2

It was reflected by the beneficiaries that most of the courses attended are once off and some of them still need refresher courses because lack of knowledge create conflicts amongst the beneficiaries. Other projects are registered as legal entities and their legal statutes are not user friendly to the beneficiaries. Hence, there is a need for training regarding interpretation of different legal entities statutes. The extension officer ensures that the above trainings are organized and attended.

## **8.2 Training Needs**

The following training needs were identified and send to the Department of Agriculture (Non formal training) namely; broiler meat packaging, chicks slaughtering, broiler feeding, conflict management, basic bookkeeping, physical and financial record in layer manufacture, physical and financial records in broiler production, computer skills and general financial management and marketing.

## **9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that all the broiler production enterprises or farms and poultry interest groups were registered as legal entities and were funded. Most of the stated projects are currently running profitable poultry farming businesses.

The beneficiaries who have completed grade 12 at high school or who are in possession of tertiary education must be elected or recommended for chairmanship in a specific poultry enterprise or farm to improve communication amongst the poultry farmers.

All the twelve layer projects or farms with the total carrying capacity of 29 230 layers must be financially assisted to acquire funds for production inputs. A study on market research must be proposed before all the poultry enterprises or farms are revived for maximum production.

High broiler feed costs are reflected in the globalization ([www/poultrysite.com](http://www/poultrysite.com), 2015) hence farmers are encouraged to manufacture feed mills for their poultry.

According to the findings the 213 poultry beneficiaries and twenty one poultry enterprises are located in the Lejweleputswa district, 4 % are with disability whereas 52% are females. This reflects that in poultry production in the district women are more involved than men. Twenty three percent (23%) of the total beneficiaries are youth a clear reflection that youth are inadequately involved in agriculture.

All training needs requested by the beneficiaries needs to be provided to them and it will be evaluated accordingly. Though, the majority (35%) of the poultry beneficiaries' education level is within grade 4 to 7 they cannot read and write. There is a need for the poultry beneficiaries to upgrade their qualifications and to improve chairmanship in the poultry enterprises as earlier stated. In conclusion, a model has been developed to assist the new interest groups in establishing a sustainable layer or broiler production enterprise. Extension officers must also provide technical advices and informal training to poultry farmers. Picture 1: Reflects one of the success stories-MVM food farming business.



MVM food farming business is most sustainable poultry farming business within the district. It has been bought from Mr Carly Stelberg in the year 2011. It managed to do well up to so far base on commitment shown by the project manager and his staff with about eight broilers houses with the carrying of 27 500 broiler chickens each.



**Picture 1: Broiler chickens inside the intensive broiler house**

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