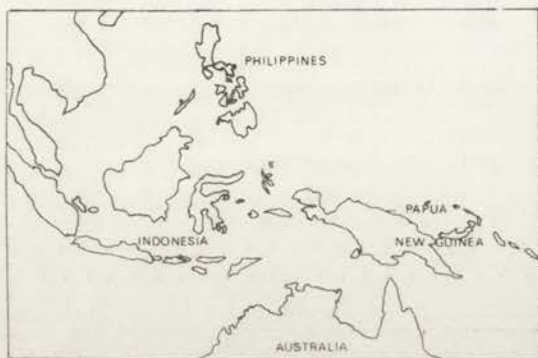


DUCK RAISING IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Kup Manape, Rural Development Officer, Kindeng

The Philippines are a group of islands to the north of Indonesia, with a similar climate to Papua New Guinea. Most crops which grow in the Philippines will also grow in Papua New Guinea, and many of their agricultural problems are similar to ours. For this reason, the agricultural methods used in the Philippines are worth studying to see what new ideas we can introduce to this country. Mr Manape has recently returned from a fact-finding tour of the Philippines.



Duck raising is an old and well-established industry in the Philippines. Ducks are raised in the same way as chickens on both large and small scale for both commercial and personal use. Duck raising was believed to have been first introduced to the Philippines by early Chinese traders. The centre of duck raising in the Philippines is a place known as Pateres which is south-east of Manila and from there it has spread to all parts of the country. Ducks can now be seen in many parts of the country and their popularity and economic importance are second only to chickens.

Duck raising is a prosperous business and there are plenty of opportunities open to farmers who wish to go into this kind of business. Like here in PNG, ducks were first raised in the Philippines for meat purposes, but today most duck raisers are involved in egg production. Compared with eggs, little duck meat is consumed. Ducks are sold for meat as culls or boilers. Another branch of the meat industry is known as green ducks or what we would call broilers. These are male ducks raised up to 10 weeks of age and then sold for meat. Since the egg industry requires only a few males for breeding, the rest of the

male ducklings are sold out to farmers at low prices for this purpose. The meat is more tender and much preferred to boilers.

As mentioned most income derived from duck raising is from eggs. According to farmers duck raising is a profitable business and it is stimulated by the heavy demand for duck eggs in the market. Duck eggs are treated or prepared in two main ways. They may be sold as "balut" (incubated duck egg with premature embryo) or "penoy" which is salted egg. This type is also referred to as red eggs due to the pinkish or reddish colour of the shell after it has gone through salt treatment. Both are popular in markets all over the country.

Location

Ducks being semiaquatic animals, the most natural places where ducks can be raised are near streams, canals and other open bodies of fresh water where they can swim and feed on freshwater snails. However, ducks can also be seen raised in areas where there are little or no natural streams or ponds. In such cases a little artificial pond is helpful. Farmers dig a small pond within the duck yard so that young ducks can swim during the day.

Ducks also require much green feed. They feed on the rice stalks and leaves and other green feeds near the farm. Green feeds may be chopped and fed to ducks the same way as we feed our chickens here with leucaena leaves. They also consume a lot of green leaves etc. during their daily walks in the mornings and afternoons when it is cool.

Unlike chickens ducks can live in water or muddy conditions.

Breeds of ducks

There are two main types of ducks raised in the Philippines. They are raised either for meat or eggs or both. The two breeds that are most common are known as Indian Runnar and the native duck. Both breeds are used for egg production and are good layers. They lay about an average of an egg per day. There are also quite a few breeds of duck which are of lesser importance. Muscovy ducks are raised on subsistence level mainly as pets. A few of them are also mixed with the egg-laying breeds as watch birds, since they will sound



Disabled man tending a flock of ducks at roadside.

the alarm if strangers or intruders come to the farm. Peking ducks are also quite popular and are raised mainly for meat. The Muscovy breed of duck is also raised for meat by poor farmers. This is because this type of duck can live practically on its own.

Housing

Ducks raised by the average farmer are usually kept in a small A-shaped nipa and bamboo house. Roofs are either grass or iron. On the floor there is usually rice hulls, cut-up bits of rice stalk or grass, or some farmers even use sand. This flooring material is to mix with the manure and prevent bad odour and also makes it easier for cleaning. The litter may be changed once or twice a year or when one batch is culled or sold out. The house is built near a pool or a canal or a small river so that the ducks may swim and wade around during the hot part of the day. In areas where there is no natural body of fresh water available the farmer may dig a small pond instead. To keep the flock in, a yard is generally erected which may extend right to the pond.

Purchase of ducklings

All small farmers purchase their ducklings from established hatcheries when the ducklings are about a day old. From these hatcheries farmers are able to obtain the best

ducklings and according to some of the farmers mortality rates are quite low compared to chickens. Farmers place their order a week or two beforehand so that the hatcheries have enough time to get prepared. Ducks may be delivered to the farmer or the farmer may personally collect them. Whatever the case it is quite easy and convenient due to the wide range of transport facilities available plus excellent roads.

Management practices

Separation of sexes

Ducklings are separated into two groups, the male and female, at the age of two to four days. It requires a lot of practice to be able to distinguish the two sexes. After the separation only one male per ten females is allowed in most farms and the rest of the male ducklings may be raised for meat. The males are required here for the purpose of the production of the "balut" which is a fertilized, incubated egg. If some sexes were mistaken, this can be remedied when the birds are a bit older by distinguishing certain feathers on their tails.

Care for ducklings

Like chickens, for the first couple of weeks of life the ducklings are very delicate. Special



Flock of ducks with their tender outside a duck shed.

care is taken at this stage and enough space is provided per bird to prevent overcrowding. Frequent and regular feeding is also required, even at night.

Just as for chickens, a special brooding house with kerosene lamp and rice hull floor is provided.

Management or care of ducks

Ducks are quite simply managed. Ducks are turned out during the morning and someone manages or tends the flock. Usually a young boy or an old man takes this job. When the birds are out then the owner can collect the eggs and clean the place. The ducks sometimes lay eggs outside, so the watcher keeps a lookout for them. When the sun is hot the ducks are taken back to the house and allowed to rest. Then in the afternoon when it is cool, they are led out to pasture again until late in the afternoon.

Feeds and feeding

In the Philippines, since people may have very little money, most simple farmers try to make use of locally available feeds as much as possible. The common farmers rely mainly on freshwater snails as a source of protein for the ducks. These may be plentiful in rice paddies during the rainy season and are plentiful in any body of fresh water. For the source of energy or carbohydrates, grain feeding is common. Grains may be in the form of rice or corn. These are fed during the morning, lunch and in the afternoon before they go to sleep. With young ducklings they may be fed four times a day in some places or by some farmers. During the cool part of the day the flocks are taken out to the fields so that they may have free access to snails, grains, green feeds and insects etc. As mentioned, ducks like a lot of green feed and this may be chopped and fed to the ducks, or they may have access to it when they are taken out.

In any common farm from 50 to 500 birds may be found. With larger flocks, two or more people may be required to pasture them. It

was observed that young boys, old men or disabled persons usually do this chore.

Freshwater snails as a source of protein may be collected daily, even if the farmer has to go some fair distance to do so. This is one of the main reasons for the need for availability of areas of fresh water. However, a large number of farmers are also using shrimpmeal, fishmeal and even meatmeal and poultry rations.

It is most important that farmers also provide a lot of fresh drinking water with the feed. This is given in bamboo troughs or water cans.

Conclusions and recommendations

As mentioned duck raising is a prosperous business on a small scale as well as on a large scale. Here in Papua New Guinea we have lots of places suitable for this industry. Even in the highlands, ducks can be comfortably raised in the drains or in areas near fish ponds, creeks or any bodies of fresh water. Duck raising should not be looked upon only as a source of getting income but also as a means to supplement inadequate protein diets.

Unlike chickens, ducks seem to be hardy and can survive in some conditions that could be unsuitable for chickens.

At present the price of frozen poultry meat is very expensive and village people have very little excess poultry to eat. If ducks could be locally raised there could easily be an excess of duck meat to eat and people could get meat at a cheaper price.

The other industry is the production of duck eggs. With the help of qualified technical staff, possibly from the Philippines, I think we could easily learn the techniques used in the Philippines for duck raising. Our country is young and agriculture is the backbone of this country, so we must try all sorts of new agricultural ways to be self sufficient.

Therefore to conclude I can say that this could be a prospective industry in the future for our young nation.