

LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Livestock refers to animals reared mainly for food and profit. Livestock may include animals kept as pet but it is estimated that over 90% of livestock are raised for food or business.

Major livestock produced in Nigeria are Cattle, Poultry, Sheep, Goats, Pigs, Donkeys, Camels, Horses, and Rabbits, with cattle, chicken, sheep and goat being the most common. Today in some parts Nigeria, Dogs are also kept as livestock.

As huge as livestock business is, its production has remained under- exploited. From the report of Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, annual production livestock is about 350 million animals, consisting of 76 million goats, 43 million sheep, 19 million cattle, 180 million poultry birds and 6 million other animals. This production falls far short of domestic requirements. Not being enough for local consumption, Nigeria therefore depends on massive importation of meat and meat products. A huge business opportunity therefore exists for agripreneurs.

CATEGORIES OF LIVESTOCK

Livestock can be grouped into three categories

- 1. Macro-livestock:-** Large animals, including Cattle, Donkeys, Horses, Camels
- 2. Micro-livestock:-** Small animals, including Goat, Sheep, Pigs, Rabbits, Guinea pigs, Snails, Grass cutter, Snakes, Cockroaches, Bees, etc.
- 3. Poultry:-** Birds, including Chickens, Turkeys, Ducks, Geese, Guinea fowls, Ostriches, Quails, Pigeons

BENEFITS OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

- Serves as source of essential protein
- Provides employment
- Poverty alleviation for families
- Foreign Exchange for the nation
- Provides organic fertilizer for crop production
- Source of raw material for shoe and other industries

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA

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| ■ Poor access to credit | ■ Difficult or Inadequate Extension services |
| ■ High cost of animal feeds | ■ Inadequate Transportation (Road/Rail) facilities |
| ■ Animal diseases | ■ Inadequate basic infrastructure |
| ■ Poor Access to veterinary services | ■ Climatic and environmental factors |
| ■ Low level of education of farmers | ■ Attitude to animal production |
| ■ Government policies | ■ Cultural values |
| ■ Rapid Urbanization | ■ Religion |
| ■ Lack of processing and storage facilities | |
| ■ None availability of organised Market | |

CATTLE FARMING

Cattle Farming is a very profitable business, though capital intensive. Over 90% of cattle reared in Nigeria is done by families, mostly in free-range. Cattle rearing is a simple business since they are herbivorous, eating grass mainly. However, for better performance, cattle should be kept in ranches or sheds and fed on concentrates. When fully grown, the profit margin is high.

Cattle are reared mainly for the following

- meat
- milk
- hide and skin
- wool

Other products from, or uses of the cattle include

- bone meal and blood meal used for formulating animal feed

- dung used as manure to fertilise crops
- used to pull some farm implements such as the mouldboard plough

The major challenge of free-range cattle farming is access to veterinary services due to the nomadic nature, making difficult to maintain cattle health.



Cattle reared for meat only are referred to as **Beef cattle** while those for milk and milk product are **Dairy cattle**. Cattle reared for both meat and milk products are call **Dual purpose Cattle**

POULTRY FARMING

In livestock farming business, poultry farming is the most popular in Nigeria, and among poultry birds, chicken is most common. Chicken rearing is easier in that it less expensive to set up. It is comparatively cheaper but requires more careful attention, especially at the commercial level. There are four types of chicken reared, namely:

Layers: These are chicken reared for commercial egg production. They are usually brown in colour. White coloured layers are available but not common. On the average they start producing eggs at 18 - 22 weeks of age and can continue laying about 18 months.



Broilers: These are chicken reared for meat. They are fast maturing, generally reaching table size within 6 - 8 weeks of age.



Cockerels: Like the broilers, cockerels are reared for meat but their growth is much lower. Cockerels are a special breed in that they are more resistant to environmental changes and would survive where broilers would not. For this reason most farmers who rear cockerels would release them in free-range to feed like traditional local chicken thereby reducing cost of production.



Noilers (Nuellas): This is a new breed, dual purpose chicken, able to produce meat and eggs. It was developed in Nigeria by Amo Farm for smallholder farmer. It is a hybrid of broiler and local chicken. They grow faster than layers and cockerel, and can adapt to changing environmental conditions.



Poultry Housing

The nature of the house provided for the birds is very important for performance of the birds,

especially for layers and broilers. Due consideration must be given in the design of a poultry house.

1. **Ventilation:** The poultry house must be well ventilated for good health. Where there are more than one house, there should be a distance of about 12m from one house to another. Wind direction should also be considered to improve ventilation. Lack of ventilation is one of the causes of wet litter.
2. **Cleanliness and warmth:** Day old chicks are very sensitive. The house should be cleaned, fumigated and heated up before the birds are brought in. While in, ambient temperature should be maintained. Fans or heaters may be used where necessary.
3. **Avoid excitation:** The house should be located in a place where the birds are not unduly excited, especially with layer. Much noise and excitation affect egg production.
4. **Lighting:** The birds need light to be able to feed. Ensure that adequate light is provided, especially for broilers

Feeding and Care

Poultry birds are very sensitive. They must be properly cared for. Adequate feeding and watering at the right time is very important. Ensure that they are promptly vaccinated against common poultry diseases (viral, bacterial, fungal). Consult a veterinary doctor regularly, even more than you consult your personal doctor.

Although poultry business is labour intensive (layers and broiler), the return on investment is good as there is always market for eggs and meat. Additionally, droppings from the poultry is also a good source of revenue.

GOAT/SHEEP FARMING

Goat and sheep farming is very similar to cattle farming. Goat and sheep however produce faster than cattle implying a quicker turnover. The unique taste of their meat and the richness of their milk make them even more marketable. Goat/sheep farming is a very lucrative business, promising a very high return on investment.



FISH FARMING

Fish is an alternate source of animal protein in Nigeria and fish farming is booming. Fish farming is the process of breeding fish for food in fish Tanks or Ponds. With a coastline of 853km and inland water of 14 million hectares, the potential for fish farming is huge. Nigeria produces about 1 million metric tons of fish annually but this only about 40% of the fish requirements of the country. Nigeria is the largest consumer of fish in Africa and among the largest in the world, yet producing little. This gives room for more farmers to go into fish farming.

Factors Favouring Fish Farming

1. **High Demand:** Many senior citizens have been advised by their doctors to cut down on red meat consumption. This places a high demand on fish and fish product.
2. **Low Startup Capital:** Starting a fish farm is easy and not so expensive.
3. **Rapid Growth:** Fish grows fast and ready for harvest within a very short time
4. **Little Space Required:** Fish farming does not require much space. A small tank behind the house is sufficient to start a fish farm.
5. **Affordability:** Fish is comparatively cheaper than meat therefore sells faster. This should encourage anybody wishing to go into fish farming.

Common Fish Type Produced in Nigeria

The most common type of fish bred in Nigeria is **Catfish** and **Tilapia**. Catfish has the following characteristics:

- can survive in harsh climatic and water conditions
- can be cultivated almost anywhere

- can be processed easily
- widely acceptable
- Catfish breathe fresh air from the atmosphere;



Tilapia fish is next to catfish in production and market. Following are the characteristics of Tilapia.

- easier to breed
- tolerant to poor water quality
- grows rapidly in warm climate
- feeding is easy because they eat almost any kind of feed and natural organisms



Starting a Fish Farm

- Get trained
- Register your business, especially if you plan to export
- Do a feasibility study
- Choose a good location for the tank (PVC or Tarpaulin) or pond
- Position the tank or construct the pond
- Get a good source of water. Water must be available all through, and must be clean
- Choose the type of fish to breed
- Purchase the fingerlings or juveniles
- Get the right feed. Feed must be available always
- Plan and choose your market



Circular Plastic (PVC) Tanks



Tarpaulin Tanks



Concrete Tanks



Earth Pond

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