

## **Lecture 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Animals and birds that are kept by man are called domestic animals and birds. There are many kinds of domestic birds which include Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea Fowl and Domestic fowl. However, when we speak of domestic fowl we mean ordinary cocks and hens. Farm animals can be divided into poultry and livestock, or small farm animals and large farm animals. The small farm animals comprise of poultry and rabbit. They have small body sizes compared with large farm animals like cattle, buffalo, camel etc. The two classes exhibit different production parameters.

The economic services rendered by poultry specie include the provision of poultry meat, egg, feathers. The meat and the egg are both of nutritional and economic importance. The poultry is used to know when the day is approaching by cock crowing. It is also used for entertainment as in cock fighting. The essential amino acids present in the egg of poultry and poultry products generally are rated highest in quality. The amino acid present in the egg is a reference standard for other proteins.

### **The role of farm animals in national economy**

Animal production is a traditional activity in all parts of Nigeria. It forms a significant component of most farming systems in the country, whether pastoral, agro-pastoral or agricultural. According to FAO (1997), Nigeria has a population of 140 million sheep, 24.5 million goats, 7.6 million pigs, 19.61 million cattle, and 126.0 million chickens.

The contribution of animal production to the national economy is multi-faceted. The ruminant animals (cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats and camels) in addition, have a dual role of being important both for utilizing natural grazing lands and for combined crop/livestock farming, supplying animal power in many countries and by-products of great value. The role of animal production can be grouped into 3 categories:

**(a) Economic Roles**

Farm animals supply man with meat, milk and eggs which are primary sources of much needed animal protein and are sold to obtain monetary benefits. Livestock husbandry in Nigeria is an employer of labour e.g. meat sellers, farm animal attendants in government and private establishments, veterinary doctors. It also supplies raw materials for industrial uses e.g. hides and skin in manufacturing leather materials, blood for blood meal and bone for bone meal in animal feeds, wool for clothing material, bristles of pigs for brushes, intestine for surgical use and casings for sausages, fat for cooking and manufacturing of candles, horns for musical instrument, feathers for pillow, hoofs can be turned into glue etc.

Livestock generates revenues for government and income for individuals. Considerable sub-regional trade in live sheep, goats, cattle, pig and poultry products exists between Nigeria and other neighbouring West African countries. Trade in animal skin is a source of foreign exchange earnings e.g. the “morocco leather” from Red Sokoto goat skins is very much in demand internationally. Large ruminant animals serve as power source e.g. cattle can be used to pull ploughs on the farm for tilling and cultivation of land (i.e. Animal traction) while camels and donkeys can carry farm products. Animal dungs can be used in the production of methane gas.

**(b) Roles in farming systems**

When livestock production is combined with crop production enterprise, the land becomes more effectively utilized. The animal dung when mixed with soil increases the soil nutrient status for improved and economic performance of crops. Livestock production enterprise facilitates the conversion through feeding to animal products of crop residue and by-products e.g. oil seed meals, wheat bran, etc. to produce foodstuffs for human consumption. Livestock enterprises also stabilize seasonal and yearly food production, improve net farm income, better distribution of labour and proven-requirements for production, thus supporting more profitable farming systems. Livestock enterprises in combined farming systems stabilize incomes and cash flow, improved control of plant pests, contribute to soil conservation and sustained land productivity by use of forages grown in relations to of control erosion, weeds and to improve soil fertility with animal enterprises providing the income from consumption of these forages. Farm animals can be raised comfortably in land areas that are unsuitable for crop production.

**(c) Socio-cultural roles**

Livestock production enhances the social status of farmers. Livestock also play a socio-cultural role as they are of great use during cultural and religious festivals in the country. Animals like sheep, goat, poultry and rabbits serve as handy gifts to close relations and friends. They are used to pay bride price as well as sporting activities, thereby, enhancing unity and oneness.