Meat

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Congo: Self-sufficiency in poultry production hindered

Self-sufficiency in poultry and egg production around one of Africa's largest cities is being hindered by a number of factors, according to a study produced by Dutch research specialists Wageningen Livestock Research.

The study looked at current production, import and consumption of eggs in the area in and around Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo, taking into account the DRC's statistics which showed about 420,000 tons of chicken and 30,000 tons of eggs being imported into the capital in 2014.

It found that self-sufficiency was being hindered by three key factors:

Imports cheaper than local products

Costs of imported products in the market are often cheaper than locally produced ones. A dressed broiler chicken locally produced costs US 5.5 while the same imported broiler costs about US$3.8. Meanwhile, a tray of local large sized eggs costs US$3.75 at farm gate while the same from imported eggs bought in the market costs US$3.

Quality not an issue

Consumers, according to the study, mostly buy on price. Cheaper products are bought faster, such as internal organs, including the liver, gizzard and heart. Other more expensive parts of the chicken take longer to sell.

High price of feed

The study adds that local poultry production is stymied by very high feed prices. Most of the feed is imported, including 70% of concentrates to serve local farms in Kinshasa.

There is also a high dependency on imported farm equipment and vaccines which contribute to high prices and the high cost of production.

If the imports were to be replaced by local production, there would be the need for about 3,200 poultry farms in the region, which would create more than 30,000 jobs.

The study recommends that:

• Producers grow more local feed given the availability of land and suitable climate for maize, wheat, millet and soybeans

• Greater support should be given for local production of water drinkers, feeders, veterinary products and other goods with the caveat that commercial investments are not likely to improve local production due to the difficult ongoing political and security issues in the DRC

• The Netherlands could support the growth of safe local products through investments such as G2G projects on food safety and veterinary capacity as well as by providing subsidies to stimulate Dutch-Congolese joint ventures in feed and poultry production.

The study was carried out following requests from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency and the embassy in Kinshasa.