

Japanese quail farming a profitable venture for self-sustainable livelihood in Udalguri district of Assam

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Abstract

Since the dawn of time, tribal farmers in the area have been raising indigenous poultry in backyard systems. Backyard farming is practised by the vast majority of the local tribal women, boosts the economy, food safety and status of woman in the society. Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Udalguri conducted a demonstration project to analyse the results of intensive Japanese quail farming among such woman farmers. This initiative was launched in 2018-2019 as part of the Tribal sub-Plan project with the goal of improving the lives of the tribal people of the district. A total of 1600 chicks were distributed to 40 different farmers, along with feed and medicine. Mostly tribal farm woman for creating woman empowerment were selected based on their interest towards rearing of quail birds. The adult birds have an average body weight of 185 gm at 6 weeks of age and lay 187 eggs every year. Farmers earn immensely from the average of three eggs produced per bird

per week over the course of a year. In addition, quail birds can be reared in a very small space and require less feed than other birds.

Keywords: Poultry, Japanese quail, woman empowerment, KVK

Introduction

Because of the use of unproductive poultry varieties, the Udalguri district in Assam experienced economic challenges in livestock and poultry farming. The profitability of indigenous poultry breeds has been low, reducing farmers' revenue. To address this issue, the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Udalguri has implemented an intervention aimed to increase productivity and doubling the farmers' income. Under the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) program, the KVK introduced a new poultry variety, the Japanese quail, which has proven to be a suitable replacement for traditional poultry farming. Quail farming not only supply animal protein in the form of meat and eggs, but also provides a source of income. The quail farming as a supplement to poultry and duck farming has the unique advantage of tapping the growing market demand for poultry products. The time has now come for creating alternative employment opportunities for the educated people. Quail rearing is a simple approach that may lead to more woman empowerment in society if it were adopted by women of the community. The success of a progressive farmer who embraced quail farming has inspired many others, leading to its rapid adoption in various villages of Udalguri district. Poultry is a highly emerging industry in India and most of people reared small scale poultry in their households. Quail farming is the utmost importance to self-security and livelihood security of tribal farmers of the district. Due to its high productivity and lack of management practices. It can grow in a

small area which provides nutritional security to farm woman and family.

Materials and method

The present investigation was carried out on the basis of the farmer's data of one year of journey with Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Udalguri, AAU, Lalpool. A total of forty (40) numbers of interested farmers were selected from eight (8) different villages of Udalguri district and they were provided with 40 numbers of quail chicks (3 days old) each. Initially the chicks were reared for 3 weeks under brooding and then transferred into low-cost bamboo cage for rest of their life. In this study, we observed the average weight of first marketed age (6th week) the average age of first egg production per bird, the average number of eggs laid by each bird, looked at the age at which hens started laying eggs, the number of eggs each bird laid, the average cost of raising birds, and the B:C ratio.

Result and Discussion

Avg. body weight gain: Productive and reproductive parameters of Japanese quail birds are studied for a period of one year. The programme was started on October, 2018 and completed by October, 2019. The body weight of the bird recorded up to the market weight at the time of distribution was 35g at 1st week of age. The avg. body weight of the quail bird at 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th week was recorded 55g, 80gm, 110gm, 128gm, 155gm and 50gm, 72gm, 128gm, 155gm, 185gm for male and female respectively. The avg. body weight of the male bird varies from 138-155gm at the age of 6th week and female birds from 160-210gm.

Avg. age at egg production and egg produced per bird: Male female ratio of the stock was maintained at 1:5 ratio to produce fertile eggs. The avg. age at egg production varies from 50-65 days (avg. 55

days was recorded) and the avg. weight of egg recorded 8-10gm. The avg. egg production per bird per week recorded 3nos. and annual avg. egg production per bird was 187 nos.

Economics of quail farming: Japanese quail farming is a profitable enterprise for to self-sustain a farmer. The economics of 40 birds were under study which implicates a net return of Rs. 5760.00 out of 40 birds in a year and a B: C ratio of 2.1:1. As the technology was totally new in the district so there is horizontal expansion of more than 210% from the time of introduction within a year. The eggs were sold at Rs. 50.00/dozen and for meat purpose adult birds were sold at Rs.150.00/bird. The easy rearing and high return leads to good scope for entrepreneurship development in the district.

Conclusion

The KVK's intervention in Udalguri district has led to a transformation in livestock farming, particularly with the successful adoption of quail farming. The introduction of Japanese quails as an alternative poultry variety has not only increased productivity but has also improved the financial well-being of farmers. Enormous potentiality of Japanese quail as an alternative to chickens in providing gainful employment, supplementary income and as a valuable source of meat and egg, quail farming should be encouraged and promoted in Udalguri district. Moreover, the KVK's effective use of ICT in disseminating regular advisories has further strengthened the scientific practices and success of the farmers. As the KVK continues its efforts to popularize this technology, more pockets of the district will witness a shift from indigenous practices to modern and profitable farming methods, ensuring a brighter future for the livestock sector in Udalguri district.



Fig1: rearing of quail birds



Fig2: quail bird eggs ready for marketing