



Improving poultry productivity in Nigeria

Since July 2016, smallholder farmers in Oyo, Osun and Ogun states in southwest Nigeria have benefited from Newcastle Disease (ND) I-2 poultry vaccination and deworming. Already, the treatment is unlocking the economic potential of poultry production and improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

Initiated by the Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GALVmed) – a non-profit organisation improving smallholders' access to livestock vaccines in developing countries – the project was launched to control this highly contagious and lethal infection. Devastating for farmers, ND can kill 80-90% of infected birds. "The aim of the project is to develop sustainable smallholder poultry production in rural communities for improved livelihoods," says Dr. Samuel Adediran, GALVmed Assistant Director for Market Development and Access.

Positive partnerships

Through GALVmed's Nigerian partner in project delivery, Bdelium Consult, young people are trained as Community Poultry Agents (CPAs). Providing rural smallholder poultry keepers with information on improved poultry management, vaccination and deworming at an affordable cost, enables CPAs to earn a living while contributing to the improved economic wellbeing and livelihood of smallholder farmers.

Morufat Adedeji, a young mother in Osun state has meaningfully increased her income since becoming a CPA in 2016. She says, "On August 8th, I participated in GALVmed training to become a vaccinator and started enjoying the benefits of the new business immediately. I encouraged a farmer with about 15 birds to vaccinate her flock and after three days, she excitedly told me she had started seeing the positive results of the vaccination and gave me a gift of a grown live chicken." Having carried out over 1,500 vaccinations in four months at 20 naira (US \$0.06) per dose, Adedeji has realised a profit of at least 30,000 naira (US \$95) from vaccinations alone. "I have been getting phone calls from people I don't know, asking me to come and vaccinate their birds. More farmers are now vaccinating and deworming their poultry."

Another CPA, John Olugbohunmi, is an Ordinary National Diploma graduate in pharmaceutical technology who vaccinated about 500 birds in the last four months of 2016. He purchases vials, each one containing 50 doses, and sells a dose for 10 naira (US \$0.03) each. After deducting purchasing costs, he makes a profit of about 250 naira (US \$0.79) per vial. John says the CPA work has also provided him with extensive information on poultry keeping, enabling him to educate his clients and consider starting up his own poultry business as an additional form of income.

Spreading the word

Adedeji currently administers around 400 vaccinations and 270 dewormings on average per month, but plans to increase sensitisation of the project to poultry keepers in surrounding towns. The target is to sell 2,500 vaccine doses per month but, with referrals mostly disseminated via word of mouth, further resources are required. "I inform people generally about the programme, but would need more posters and flyers to paste so I can distribute the message further and increase awareness," says Adedeji.

Lack of awareness is also a problem in Oyo state where Olugbohunmi operates. The free range system practised in this area means poultry wander freely and eat what they can find. Often, the poultry keepers operate a minimum input system with little or no feeding to supplement the fowls' diets. Mindful of these challenges, Olugbohunmi is intensifying sensitisation on best practices in poultry keeping in addition to promoting ND I-2 vaccination and deworming.



John Olugbohunmi provides poultry keeping best practices and vaccinations to smallholder farmers.

Saving village chickens

One poultry keeper whose 35-bird flock was vaccinated by Adedeji is Rachel Oyebamiji, a tailor and mother of six. Oyebamiji says, "I need the proceeds from selling live chickens to pay my children's school fees. After my fowls were vaccinated in August, there have been no deaths, no sickness, and they have all grown so big. I also feed my family with some of the eggs and chickens." Explaining her previous dilemma, she continues, "In 2015, I had 25 birds and about 10 died before I could sell them. The money was barely enough to pay my bills. But since I started using the ND vaccination, none of my fowls have died."

The vision for the vaccine

According to Dr. Adediran of GALVmed, poultry keeping is an untapped resource that can generate employment for young people in rural and peri-urban areas. "GALVmed supports partners like Bdeilium to promote awareness and set-up market networks which facilitate sustainable and affordable access to these and other products for improved livestock health and production," says Adediran.

The project with Bdeilium is GALVmed's first entry into vaccine delivery in Nigeria, but the overall vision is to make the ND I-2 vaccine for ND control a routine practice among smallholder poultry producers, globally.



Morufat Adedeji aims to sell 2,500 vaccine doses per month.

Article and photos by Oluyinka Alawode