

Decolonising Postgraduate Research Curricula and Its Impact on a Sustainable Protein Supply in Rural-Based Communities

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Abstract : Decolonisation is one of the hottest topics in most African Universities; this is because many researchers focus on research that does not speak to their immediate community. This research looked at postgraduate research projects that can take students to the community to apply the knowledge that they have learned as an attempt to transform their community. In regards to this, an honours project was designed to try and provide a cheaper and continuous source of protein (egg) using amber-link layers and to investigate the potential of the project to promote postgraduate student development and entrepreneurship. Two ban layer production systems were created: (1) Production system one on a Hill (PS-I) and (2) Production system two in a valley, closer to a dam (PS-II) at Nqutshini, Gingindlovu, KwaZulu-Natal Province. Forty point-of-lay (18 weeks old) amber links were bought at Inverness Rearers and divided into PS-I (20), and PS-II (20), and each of the production systems was further divided into two groups of ten (PS-I-1 and PS-II-1 (partially supplemented) and PS-I-2 and PS-II-2 (supplemented with layer mash)) by a random selection. Birds' weights were balanced in each group to avoid bias. The two groups in each production system were caged separately (1.5x1.5m² for ten birds) and in close proximity. Partially supplemented birds received 0.6 kg of layer mash (60g/per bird/day) and kitchen leftovers daily, and supplemented birds were fed 1.2 kg of layer mash (120g/per bird/day). Egg collection was daily after feeding in the morning while was given ad libitum. The eggs were assessed for internal and external quality after weighing before recording. Egg production from fully supplemented birds (PS-I-2 and PS-II-2) was generally higher ($P<0.05$) than those of PS-I-1 and PS-II-1. The difference in production was only 6% in the valley while on the Hill, it was only 3%. However, some of the birds in the valley showed signs of respiratory infections, which was not observed with those on the Hill. There are no differences in the internal and external qualities of eggs (york colour and egg shell) determined. This implies that both systems were sustainable. It was suggested members in the community living at the valley or Hill can use these hardy layers as a cheaper source of protein and preferable to the partially supplemented systems because it is relatively cheaper. The smallholder farmers are still pursuing the project long after the students graduate; hence the benefit of the project is reciprocal for both the university and the community (entrepreneurship).

Keywords : animal nutrition, ban layer, production, postgraduate curricula, entrepreneurship

Conference Title : ICLNAF 2022 : International Conference on Livestock Nutrition and Animal Feeding

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : December 09-10, 2022