POWER OF A COMMON INTEREST GROUP (CIG)

RABBIT REARING INDUSTRY

Rabbit rearing was initially a boys’ undertaking who kept them as pets and show animals. The rabbits were not well taken care of therefore highly affected by diseases, curbed with a lot of inbreeding, poor feeding and housing. National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme (NALEP) was started in the year 2000/2001 in Thika district. It was among the pilot district and the work plan targeted 23 Focal areas, during which only 20 Focal areas were successfully implemented. A total of 5 rabbit CIGs were formed with 25 members (10 youths and 15 women).

The following year 2001/2002 another 24 focal areas were planned. Only 13 were successfully implemented. Rabbit CIGs increased from 5 to 7 CIGs while membership increased from 25 to 35 members (10 youths 5 women and 18 men).
In subsequent years focal areas reduced while the number of CIGs and membership increased. In the Year 2009 /2010 the district worked on 2 Focal areas. 25 rabbit CIGs were formed with membership of 200 (100 men, 60 women and 40 youths). Currently there are over 3000 (2200 Men, 500 women and 300 youths) rabbit farmers. This shows a steady growth in the rabbit CIGs among the gender groups.

The rabbit common interested groups (CIGs) were scattered in Thika Gatundu District. The CIGs members decided to come together and register as self help group under the name THIGAR with an aim of strengthening rabbit production and marketing. The self help group was registered in 2005 with 50 members (30 women, 10 men and 10 youths).

**RABBIT AGRI-BUSSINESS AND VALUE ADDITION**

Rabbit farming as a business enterprise picked up in the region in the year 2004, where a group of 50 CIGs members of THIGAR keeping 5 rabbits each sold 500 rabbits at Kshs. 500 per live animal and made Ksh 250, 000 in a month. The profit motivated the group members as they realized they can make a living out of rabbit farming. Their success story of increased proceeds attracted more members especially men.

The members are currently selling the Rabbit meat at Ksh 300 per kilo. The rabbits kept by members are now weighing on average 3 kgs per rabbit live weight. -Acquired a regular market for rabbit meat in the retail outlets, 50 kilos of rabbit meat per week. Currently the group is making Kshs. 60,000 per week but has the potential of selling 200kgs per week @ Kshs. 300 per Kg generating a total of Kshs.240,000 per month if funded by other potential partners.

**RABBIT BY PRODUCTS**

After the sale of meat the skin is tanned and later made into various items such as sandals, handbags, belts, key holders, clutch bags which are sold at the local market and others targeted for external markets.
OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT
The project has uplifted the living standard of the farmers through;
- Increased income
- Employment creation
- Improved family health
- Improved soil fertility and the soil structure.

LESSON LEARNT FROM THE PROJECT
- Rabbit farming is viable if there is an increased technical input.
- Emphasis has not been put on rabbit husbandry by the ministry of livestock development.
- If another opportunity could present itself, the group would:
  - Focus on setting up a feeds manufacturing factory to lower on the cost of production,
  - Embark on vigorous capacity building to farmers and extension officers on proper rabbit husbandry,
  - Strive to incorporate more vulnerable individuals in the society since rabbit rearing is user friendly.

THE POWER OF FADC IN LOCAL POULTRY PRODUCTION

NALEP - Sida in Njiru district (jointly implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Livestock Development), was commissioned and implemented in the second phase between January 2007 to December 2011 and covered 5 focal areas. The Focal area approach remained the basis of planning and implementing the activities in the work plan. Major extension method was group targeting through CIGs and individual targeting and emphasis was also laid on cross cutting issues as far as they affect the success of the programme in Njiru District.
Formation:
The group was formed in Githunguri focal area in 2010/2011 financial year. The focal area was mobilized into various groups by flagging opportunities to the farmers. The energy saving opportunity was picked by the FADC as their project in March 2011.

Among the 19 FADC members who were registered as a group have also mobilized other 18 groups in similar activities but linked to the focal area economic activities. The registered 18 groups with 55% female, 30% male and 15% youth members composition. The Group members also engage in similar activities such as table banking, energy saving devices and local poultry production. More women and youths are engaged in Common interest groups (CIGs) for commercial ventures. Every member keeps between 50-100 birds and they sell as group between 800-1000 birds per month at selling price of Kshs 700-800 Cockerel and Kshs.500-600 for hens.

The group members have engaged in a robust marketing avenue by selling through hotels and restaurants on top of ICT platforms Nafis Commodity and Inputs Exchange (NACIE) introduced by NALEP. The income that accrues from both table banking, sell of poultry and jiko liners has enabled members to diversify to other economic activities including and not limited to tissue culture bananas, Green house, fish farming, rabbit keeping and dairy cows and engagement in small trade.

In addition to the above, through the Focal area approach, the group of drunkards i.e brewers and drinkers, were identified and linked to other services providers like NACADA, Njaa Marufuku Kenya, and through these initiatives a number of them stopped the alcohol and drug abuse and after capacity building by NALEP they are now engaged in local poultry, Green house management and rabbit keeping. Some of the members have been engaged as trainers outside the focal areas, all over the country and two are currently working in southern Sudan. The greatest beneficiaries of these interventions by NALEP are women who no longer are faced with domestic violence from drunkards’ husband, loss of property and are currently engaged in economic activities.