

# THE HINDU

Semi-intensive system for backyard poultry fetches good dividends

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Most rural households in India have backyard poultry.

“Although farmers mostly maintain native birds or improved varieties leading to greater number of eggs as well as meat, there is no denying the fact that backyard poultry provides a good source of supplementary income” says .,” says Dr. R. Unnikrishnan, Veterinary Surgeon, Animal Husbandry Department, Govt of Kerala.

Compared to commercial poultry, backyard poultry rearing is simpler because there is no great investment involved in it. The birds are let loose and forage on whatever they can find, thus curtailing feeding expense for a farmer.

## **Significant move**

In a significant departure from the traditional way of rearing backyard poultry an entrepreneur-cum-farmer, Srinivas, from Anchipuram village in Kunigal taluk, Tumkur district in Karnataka, devised a semi intensive system of rearing.

In this system of rearing, the birds are kept inside sheds for the first four months and later are allowed to forage in the morning till they attain good weight after which they are sold.

“If the birds are let out before a four month window, chances of being attacked by predators such as eagles and large birds are quite high. When I let them outside for foraging in the morning hours I place a mirror on the ground and also tie dark coloured plastic bags on poles placed around the area to scare away predator birds,” says the farmer.

Due to this system of foraging there is a great deal of saving on feed costs, and the meat of the birds is leaner and better in taste than in the case of confined broilers.

Especially in Tumkur region this type of semi intensive poultry farming is emerging as a good model.

### **Advantages**

“Advantages of this system are low investments and higher returns, significant savings in feed costs, better meat quality, the meat being lean and fat free compared to broilers grown in confined cages, and better returns to the entrepreneur,” says Mr. K.T.Shivshankar, Livelihood Extension Co-ordinator, Initiatives for Development Foundation (IDF) an NGO in Bangalore working in Tumkur and Belgaum districts.

Mr. Srinivas took up this activity in his two-acre land. He purchased day-old chicks mostly of the indigenous variety/improved variety from nearby hatcheries and provided them heat and extra care for the first two weeks, as done in commercial farms.

### **Feeding**

Initially, for the first four weeks he fed them with commercially available starter feed, after which he switched to locally available feed materials.

As in commercial poultry rearing, vaccinations for all diseases are given as per schedule and deworming done at regular intervals.

“I sell the birds for Rs.180 a kg to wholesale dealers from Bangalore and Tumkur, who in turn sell them at Rs.220 to others,” says Mr. Srinivas

The meat being to a large extent organic, commands a premium price in the market . Initially he started this technique with about 800 birds with which he made a net profit of Rs.25,000 in four months.

Sensing the good profitability he increased the holdings and today he has nearly 2,000 birds in a two-acre farm.

From a flock of 1,000 birds he makes a profit of around Rs. 50,000-60,000 in four months.

### **Several queries**

“In Tumkur region Mr. Srinivas is a model entrepreneur for many farmers wanting to do the same. Since the profit margin is quite encouraging several rural women are also keen to try this model,” says Mr. Shivshankar.

For more details contact

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Mobile No. 07760979021 and this is a video link depicting the activity as practised by him <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdfP1SJUZZw>