

Empowering Small-Scale Farmers Through Participation of Women Group in Indonesia : Training and Publication Media as Means of Technology Transfer

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ABSTRACT

Duck farming has been practiced widespread in Lombok Island as part of farming activities in rural areas, however the ducks are mostly kept under traditional scavenging system. With the outbreak of avian influenza this practice poses a serious threat to the human population, and consequently intensification program should be encouraged among small-scale farmers. In support of the intensification program the Indonesian Research Institute for Animal Production has designed technology packages for layer duck production system for small-scale farmers with the development of farmers' group mechanism. The challenge is therefore on convincing farmers in order to adopt the technology packages, for the prevention of avian influenza and improvement of farmers' income and welfare as well. A women group was targeted in this project because feeding and rearing ducks are mostly done by women as part of their daily routines, and also they are better in financial management and record keeping. The activities were initiated by the construction of a demonstration farm, and then followed by a series of trainings and discussions, and the production of publication media. Dissemination materials included all aspects of duck rearing under full confinement, development and management of group mechanism, financial management, and marketing. Publication media were used effectively in the form of posters, leaflets, technical books, and interactive computer CDs. The project was implemented in Aikmel District of East Lombok Regency, starting in May 2007 and still running until the end of 2009. So far, the demonstration farm, trainings and discussions, and the publication media have resulted in strengthening the women group (with 20 members) for developing and running the layer duck production system, started as an extra social activity and developed into a commercial entity. Using the local wisdom and the available natural resources research results can be transferred into the field through the use of appropriate information and communication technologies in the forms which are suitable to local community and tradition. Close communication and supervision are required for the development of an effective farmers' group especially in the financial and commercial aspects of the production, and the project has succeeded in convincing traditional farmers to shift into more intensive operation. The success in technical and institutional aspects of the project has prompted the local government to allocate fund for the development of intensive layer duck production system in the regency, by duplicating the model used in the project.