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SCOPE OF DUCK PRODUCTION IN INDIA

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In India, the contribution of ducks for egg and meat production is next to chicken. There are many advantages of duck production over chicken. In India, the important available ducks are few exotic breeds *viz.*, Khaki Campbell (KC), White Pekin (WP), Indian Runner (IR), etc. and locally available indigenous ducks (Pati, Nageswari, Kuttanad, indigenous ducks of Tamilnadu, Andaman, Odisha, etc.). However, only Pati ducks of Assam and Maithili ducks of Bihar are registered under ICAR, New Delhi. The performance of ducks is by and large dependant up on breed, type of rearing, physiological stages, level of nutrition, etc. The cross breeding between two exotic pure breeds (KC, WP, etc.) or between exotic pure breed with the locally available non-descriptive desi (D) breeds is made for the enhancement of the production and reproduction potential of the ducks. Besides, Muscovy ducks is also kept mainly for meat purposes. Feed is the major factor in livestock and poultry production system as it accounts about 70-75% of the total cost of production. A standard duck feed contain cereal, cereal by-products, vegetable proteins, animal proteins, minerals and vitamin supplements. To minimize the cost of production, many locally available alternate or unconventional feed ingredients *viz.*, Azolla, cassava, broken rice are used for feeding of ducks.

Ducks can be reared under intensive, semi-intensive and extensive rearing system. Duck farmers mostly belong to very poor, small or marginal income group and ducks are reared in small flock size as subsidiary source of income. The various duck based integrated farming system are duck-fish, duck-rice, duck-rice-fish, etc. integrated farming system. The constraints of ducks farming are mainly due to unavailability of suitable germplasm, scarce in natural feed resources, drying of natural water bodies, unavailability of vaccines, poor marketing facilities, etc. In India, there is ample scope for duck production to meet the demand of egg and meat of the country. Suitable duck breeds or varieties need to be developed for rural backyard duck farming. Comprehensive feeding packages for different types of ducks should be formulated for economic production of ducks eggs and meat. Scientific management practices should be evolved for reduction in labour input and clean egg and meat production. There is a need for establishment hatcheries and other infrastructures to promote duck farming at rural level for sustainable livelihood of the people.