Technology and programmes for sustainable improvement of village poultry production

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Although the commercial poultry sub-sector has reached a dominating position globally during the last three decades, village poultry production is still very important in most developing countries. Village poultry make up more than 80 percent of the poultry stocks in many of the countries of Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America. The village poultry sub-sector contributes significantly to food self-sufficiency, poverty alleviation and gender empowerment. It is a noticeable source of employment and well-being, especially for disadvantaged groups and in less-favoured areas. Despite many constraints, including high mortality from diseases and poor nutrition, significant improvements can be achieved through well-designed development programmes that endow the different actors dealing with village poultry with the necessary knowledge, skills and resources. Beyond this need for substantial improvement in human and institutional capacity building, planners and policy makers should be sensitized to recognize the significance and potentials of village poultry production. This paper highlights the importance of village poultry production as a tool for poverty reduction, food security and gender-empowerment strategies in developing countries. It identifies the development objectives for such production systems and their contributions to meeting the Millennium Development Goals. It reviews the options, strategies and technologies that have been used to achieve these objectives and draws a few lessons.