
Editorial

For some time now the World's Poultry Science Journal has regularly published papers associated generally with poultry production in developing countries, and more specifically with issues related to small-scale family poultry farming in developing countries. Over the past twenty years or so, the World's Poultry Science Association (WPSA) has recognized the importance of improving the efficiency and sustainability of poultry production to meet the burgeoning needs for high quality animal protein in the developing world with its expanding human population and increasing levels of affluence. This extends to the recognition of small scale family poultry production as essentially the only form of poultry production to provide meat and eggs to the rural poor in many countries. This system of production is, however, for the large part, very low input-low output. Improving the efficiency of production under this system whilst maintaining its applicability and sustainability, presents a real challenge to all those dedicated to the alleviation of poverty and improvement in household food security in rural communities in the developing world.

The commitment by WPSA to improving the efficiency and sustainability of small-scale family poultry farming was very much in evidence in the scientific and technical programme at the 19th World's Poultry Congress in Amsterdam in 1992; this commitment has continued in subsequent Congresses. In keeping with this, at the 11th European Poultry Conference in Bremen in September 2002, the WPSA Board endorsed the proposal to include the International Network on Family Poultry Development (INFPD) as a global working group within WPSA. In that same year, the Asian Pacific Federation of WPSA established a Working Group on Family Poultry Farming; the inaugural meeting of the working group was held in March 2005 in conjunction with the 4th International Poultry Show and Seminar in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In March 2007, the working group convened a symposium on *The Impact of Avian Influenza on Small-scale Family Poultry Farming in Developing Countries* in conjunction with the 8th Asia Pacific Poultry Conference in Bangkok. The symposium, subsidized by WPSA, FAO and CTA was very well attended by internationally recognized family poultry researchers and supporters.

More recently, at the 23rd World's Poultry Congress held in Brisbane, Australia in July 2008, one of the eight main concurrent streams was on *Poultry Production in Developing Countries*. There were some 40 papers presented in the stream and the final session within the stream involved a workshop aimed at facilitating cooperation and collaboration between all stakeholders involved in support of small-scale family poultry production. A key recommendation from the workshop report was that an over-arching entity "*Poulet Sans Frontiers*", mooted in an AusAID-sponsored conference in Tanzania in 2005 and with membership from all agencies and organizations supporting family poultry farming, be established. The collective desire was that this body should impact meaningfully on the level and nature of global support for small-scale family poultry farming to enhance opportunities for improved productivity and profitability and reduced endemic poverty in rural communities.

The papers published here in this special edition of WPSJ include the invited papers in the above Congress stream as well as three papers from the *Genetics and Breeding* stream dealing with breeding for small-scale poultry production in developing countries and genetic resources and conservation. The workshop report is included here as the final paper. It is hoped that this publication will be a useful resource for all stakeholders with interests in small-scale family poultry production.

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