

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POULTRY AND LIVESTOCK

Although problems impeding growth in the livestock and poultry sectors are easy to ascertain, development of these sectors may prove particularly difficult in comparison with other types of rainfed farming. Sheep raising, for instance, is faced with increasing restrictions on grazing land. The producers of commercial scale cow herds find it almost impossible to compete with TNUVA's products. Poultry farms suffer restrictions in the supply of replacement chicks and have to compete with subsidized Israeli produce.

Thus the implementation of a national developmental policy for livestock is more difficult than that of most other types of agriculture, because the ensuing constraints are less manageable. But conforming with the implications of national viability outlined earlier (see Chapter X), there is still ample room for improvement should adequate financial support be provided. This chapter discusses recommended projects and courses of action.

10.0 Poultry

Poultry farming ranks high on the list of priorities because it is an area where West Bankers have a limited comparative advantage, either in the form of expertise or utilization of available low-opportunity family labour. Furthermore, rapid expansion of poultry meat supply is more feasible than beef or mutton, at least in the foreseeable future. But expanding poultry farming is far more demanding on capital than most other types of agriculture. Furthermore, the magnitude of losses in cash, should the market move in the wrong direction, is also much greater. This means, therefore, that expansion in production should be carefully paralleled by a

number of measures to deal with occasional market declines.

10.1 Establishing a chick hatchery.

Due to chronic problems of chick shortages and occasional inferior quality, the cornerstone for stabilizing broiler farming is the establishment of a local hatchery to specialize in producing broiler chicks, with a starting monthly capacity of 120,000 chicks (around 25 percent of current placements). The production capacity would be raised substantially shortly afterwards.

For many practical reasons, it is proposed to open shareholding in the proposed hatchery to poultry farmers, dealers of poultry supplies, cooperative societies, and the Agricultural Development Corporation.

During the early stages of the project, hatching eggs would be purchased from Israeli breeding farms. In the meantime, a few good farms on the West Bank would be persuaded to convert to raising breeding flocks by supplying them with sufficient credit and contracting them for their produce of hatchable eggs at negotiated prices. In other words, the hatchery would be urged not to rely solely on its own egg production capacity. By so doing it would spread the risk more thinly and cut down on its capital requirements. This kind of arrangement has proved itself in most countries in the Middle East with advanced poultry industries, such as Jordan and Lebanon.

Evidently, the proposed hatchery will face competition with Israeli chick suppliers. It is therefore unlikely that it will be able to compete with them without receiving a