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Agriculture de groupe

Paris : CIHEAM
Options Méditerranéennes; n. 6

1971
pages 84-87

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To cite this article / Pour citer cet article

Shuman H. **The Lebanese poultry syndicate and its relations to the poultry industry.** *Agriculture de groupe*. Paris : CIHEAM, 1971. p. 84-87 (Options Méditerranéennes; n. 6)



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The Lebanese poultry syndicate and its relations to the poultry industry

HISTORY OF THE POULTRY INDUSTRY IN LEBANON

Lebanon, one of the smallest countries in the Middle East, highest in standard of living has long been recognized as a trading centre, and has many possibilities as a poultry centre because of location, climatic conditions, research, and educational opportunities.

The country is thirty miles in width, and one hundred thirty miles in length, and has a population of approximately two million people.

Poultry production, one of the fastest growing phases of the agricultural program, has reached a place of national significance as a business in the scheme of human food production. Prior to 1952 Lebanon did not know poultry production in its commercial aspect; it was primarily that of the traditional village system where an assortment of birds forage themselves and provide a few eggs and a little meat at virtually no expense.

Commercial poultry farming was started in 1955, it is a young industry which has grown very rapidly since 1959. In addition to farms which specialize in either broilers or eggs for hatching and sell baby chicks.

Following reports of profits and the demand of the larger eggs and younger chickens turned out by commercial poultry farms, businessmen were establishing modern poultry farms as a profitable investment. Investments on poultry buildings and equipment is estimated now at over 75 Millions of U.S. Dollars. The running capital in feeds and chicken is over 30 Millions U. S. Dollars.

ECONOMICS OF THE POULTRY INDUSTRY IN LEBANON

As mentioned previously, the poultry industry in Lebanon has been quite rapid since 1959 in production, tending to increase faster than domestic demands. Now that the risk of diseases are well over, and modern methods of management are possible, it was become certain that the production of poultry is economically sound, particularly since the costs of the buildings, equipment and labour are reasonable and a fair margin of profit can be made above the operational cost.

A. — LAYING FARM AND EGG PRODUCTION

About 750 laying farms are concentrated mainly in Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa' valley. These regions saw the beginning of commercial poultry production in the country. The average egg farms had around 1,500 layers in 1960, and six percent of these farms had a number of 4,000 birds; but in 1970, the average egg farm had 10,000 layers and over thirty percent of these farms had a number of over 20,000 birds.

In 1960, the local production of eggs was 57,500,000 eggs, and in 1970 it jumped to 575,300,000.

Lebanon was importing eggs until 1964, the imports in 1960 were 15,375,570 eggs. But the export of eggs from Lebanon in 1970 averaged 260,697,000 fresh eggs. Most of our exports of eggs go to the Arab countries mainly Kuwait (70 Million eggs, 1970) and Saudi Arabia (68 Million eggs 1970).

The best prospects for expanding markets for Lebanese eggs are the oil producing countries where the hot climate makes successful poultry farming difficult. Still competition in sales encountered by Lebanese exporters, comes from Denmark and East European countries (Bulgaria and Poland).

B. — BROILER FARM AND MEAT PRODUCTION

More than 600 broiler farms are distributed in the country mainly in Mount Lebanon and in the North of Lebanon. The average broiler farm in 1960 producing 500 birds per week with about 15 % of more than 2,000 broilers per week, and by 1970 the average flock became more than 6,000 birds, and many farms are producing 20,000 birds per week.

In 1960, Lebanon was importing 465,212 Kilograms of poultry meat and producing 2,015,932. When the broiler producers had the protection of an import tariff of twenty five percent of the value in 1963, then no more imported broilers were coming to Lebanon.

In 1967 the production was increased to 12,250,000 chickens and in 1970 had another increase of 14,000,000 chickens.

The consumption of dressed poultry increased rapidly during the past ten years. It was 2,481,144 Kilograms in 1960, and 13,823,942 in 1970.

Eventhough most of our production is consumed in our local markets (Exports in 1970 was only 176,058 Kilograms). We face a lot of competition from the European countries in the Arab countries to whom we export. This leads us to say that the establishment of modern poultry processing plants with continuous inspection, veterinary examination of the live chicken, and supervision of the eviscerating process would increase materially the acceptance of Lebanese broilers in the Arab countries, and in the local markets.

This showed that Lebanon is fast becoming a regional centre for the development of a modern poultry industry in the Near East. In 1962 a project was established to have a poultry laboratory staffed by Lebanese personnel with the assistance of the U. N. Development program and executed by F.A.O. for the establishment of four departments of Bacteriology, Parasitology, Virology and vaccine production plus an efficient diagnostic and advisory service. A Salmonella reference Laboratory was established and has been in operation since 1964. The U.N.D.P. has agreed to extend its assistance for another three years starting September 1967 to meet the needs of the growing Lebanese poultry industry and to serve as a Near East regional poultry health laboratory for training and research in the development of methods of control for a number of major poultry diseases especially Newcastle diseases, coccidiosis, salmonellosis, respiratory diseases, leucosis and mareks disease.

C. — BABY CHICKS PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

Baby chicks from the faster growing strains and crosses developed by the specialized in breeding for efficient meat and egg production was imported to Lebanon since 1960 primarily from Holland, England and U.S.A.

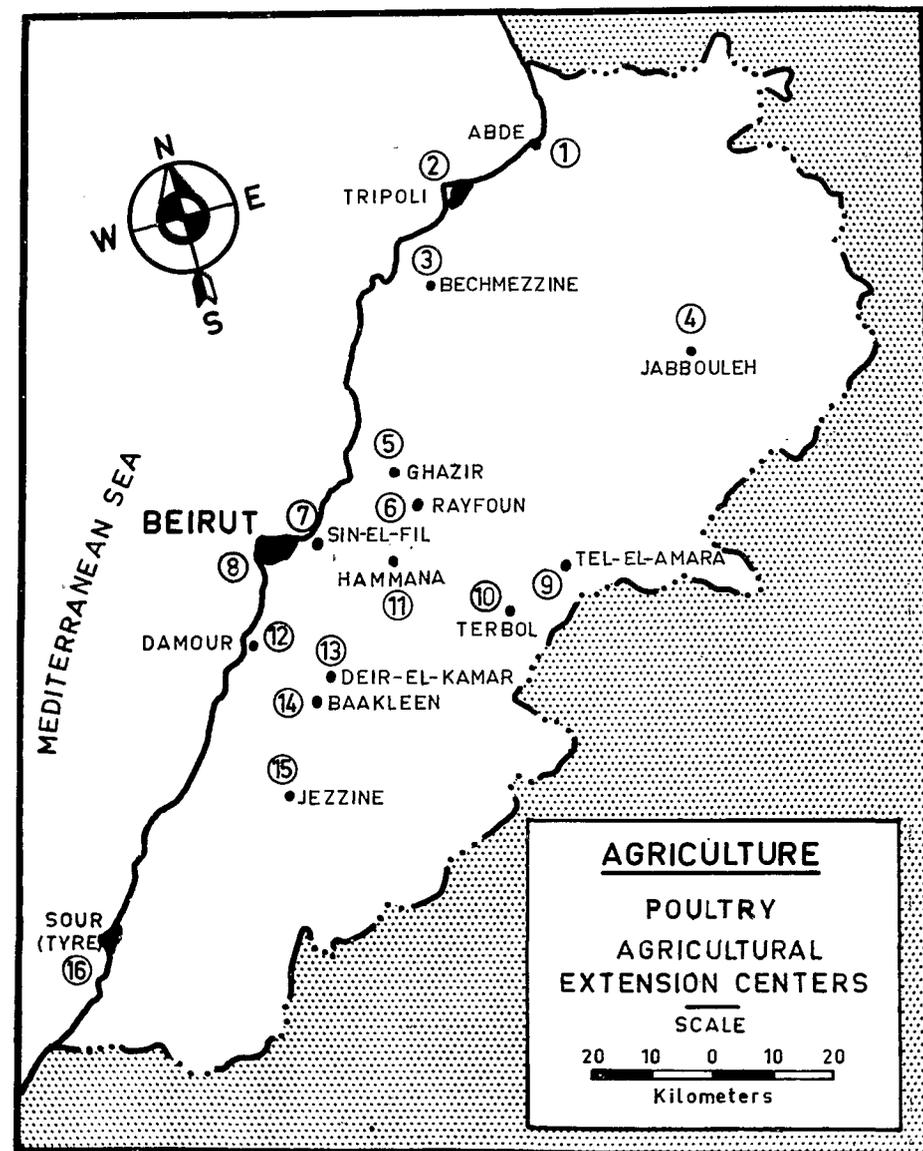
Chick production in 1960 was 3,392,000 and became 23,520,000 in 1969.

Lebanon geographic location with its International Airport made the export of baby chicks easy. Lebanon exported in 1960, 246,140 chicks for broiler meat. This amount increased to over 5,600,000 in 1970, the countries that import chicks from Lebanon are mainly : Syria, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

THE POULTRY SYNDICATE

In June 19, 1959 the Lebanese syndicate was established by the approval of the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs ; and it held its first meeting on June 23, 1959 when the first administrative board was elected. The following were some of the Syndicate accomplishments :

1. In August 1959 the Syndicate deci-



ded to issue a poultry magazine where articles, research and statistics will be published to help the poultry men in their business.

2. In May 1960, a committee was formed to draw out a constitution for the first egg cooperative in Lebanon.

3. In August 1962, the Syndicate took the decision for grading eggs and this was approved by the Ministry of Economics few months later.

4. In the years 1962-1970, the Syndicate with the cooperative of the Ministry of Economics achieved the following re-

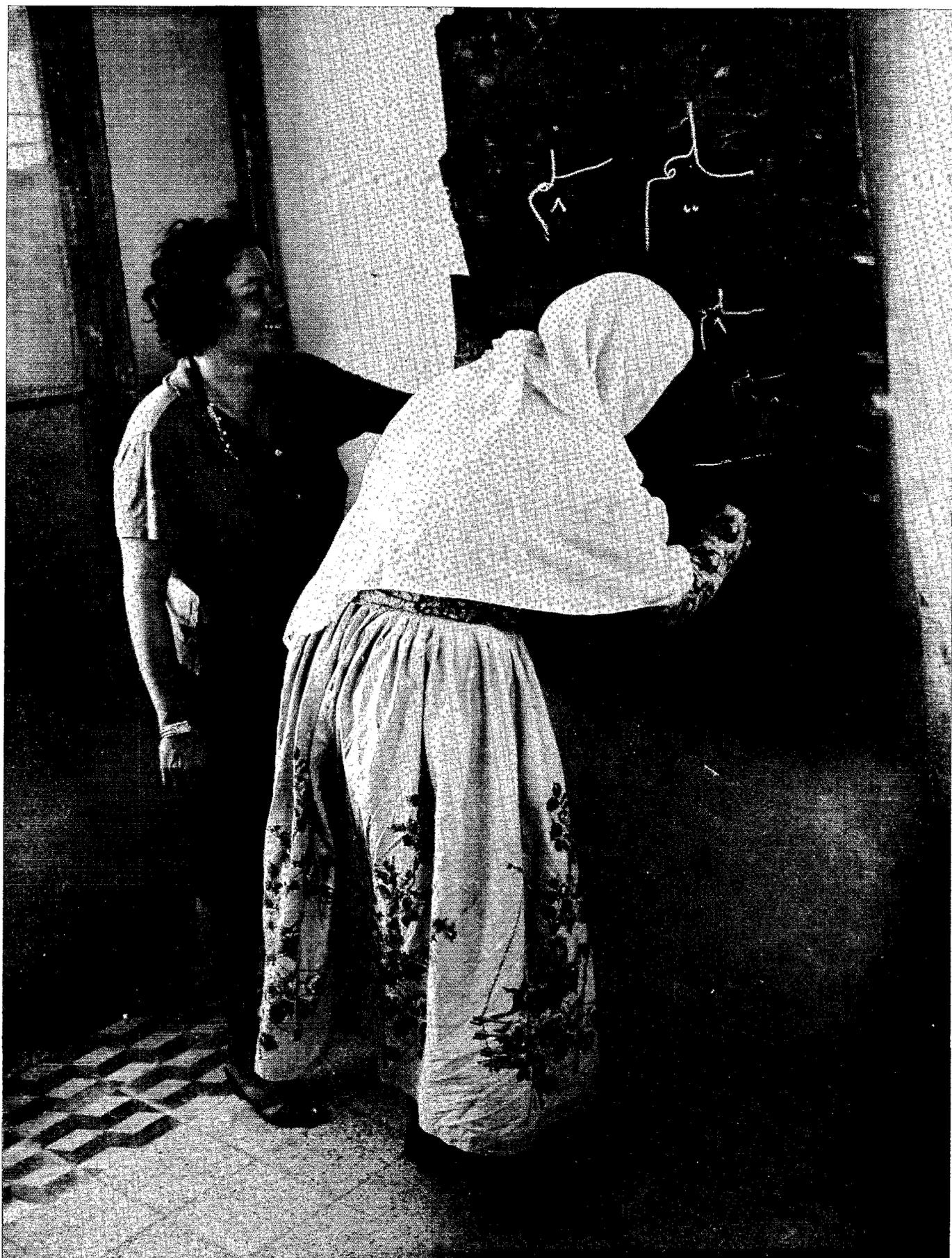
gulations which were basic in the life of the poultry industry in Lebanon.

a) Protection of the local eggs and broilers from the imported product.

b) Duty free on the imported, Yellow Corn which is the basic ingredient in the poultry feed, thus reduced the cost seven dollars per ton.

c) Organized a Board for the producers of baby chicks.

d) Organized the office of animal husbandry where the poultry farmer turn for their needs and problems.



Alphabétisation au Liban (Beyrouth, 1966).

e) Poultry farmers and hatcheries were freed from the income tax.

The following table is just an example of the production and the imports of eggs between the years 1960-1964, showing the change in production after the tax that was put on the imported eggs.

Year	Production	Import
1960 ...	58 Million	15 Million
1961 ...	70 Million	33 Million
1962 ..	100 Million	38 Million
1963 ..	120 Million	6 Million
1964 ..	204 Million	0,700 Million

With the cooperation of the office of animal husbandry, the Syndicate also was able to accomplish many things that helped the poultry industry in its progress and growth.

1967 specialists were called upon to do research on some diseases like Newcastle and Bronchitis and help in controlling them.

Committees from the government and the private sector were formed to draw special programs for the preventions of diseases in the light of the research.

The Syndicate has drawn the attention of the office of Animal Husbandry on the following items, and hopes to accomplish them soon :

1° To set a special budget for advertising in the local market in order to raise the consumption of the chicken and eggs. The money will be provided by putting a nominal tax on the feed and breeding stock imported by the poultry farmers.

2° To limit the permits on the imports of breeding flocks so that the production of baby chicks and table eggs will be controlled in the country.

3° To give the poultry farmers a subsidy on their exported products because of the over production in the local markets and the decline of prices in eggs and broilers.

Thus, we can see that the poultry Syndicate and the poultry industry have grown together and all that they have achieved is due to their cooperation. Today, the Syndicate has taken full responsibility to take care of the welfare of the poultry industry.

However, there are many handicaps and problems that should be taken care of mainly :

1° To expend the Lebanese poultry Syndicate for further improvement and advertising of the industry. The constitution and by laws should provide for membership not to be limited to poultry growers, but open to people with interest in poultry — for example poultry supply and equipment dealers, feed dealers, and bankers.

2° To develop a source for importing poultry feed and produce more grain in the country.

3° To continue further development on the research of diseases with the poultry diagnostic laboratory.

4° To encourage the passing of a law that requires feed manufacturers to label feed to show the composition of its contents.

5° To develop an extension service program. The extension agent is one of the most valuable man to help expand the industry and community cooperation.

6° To encourage the establishment of more modern processing plants and find facilities of cold storage for the preservation of eggs and meat.

