



**BUSITEMA
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MAJOR CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF HIGH MORTALITY IN FREE RANGE CHICKEN IN
KAKIRA SUBCOUNTY



BY

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DECLARATION

I **Naika Vincent**, declare that this dissertation has never been submitted to any university or any other higher institution of learning in partial fulfillment of the requirement for any academic award

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APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

My sincere dedication goes to my beloved parents **Mr.Nziira Vincent** and **Mrs.Senkubuge Diana** who provided me with funds to print this dissertation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IC: Indigenous Chicken

HH: Household

LCF: Local Council One

SC: Sub County

MAAIF: Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries

UBOS: Uganda Bureau of Statistics

%: Percentage

ABSTRACT

Village chicken production systems in Africa have ridiculed because of low production potential. It can be argued that the high mortality rate is the major cause of low production (Velum, 1987). Mortality is high for free range chickens in comparison with intensively housed birds (Maphosa *et al.*, 2002), especially during the first 6 to 8 weeks of life. Mortality outbreaks have many consequences for livelihoods at both the community and individual household levels including lack of physical capital to convert into financial capital. Data was collected using questionnaire and simple random sampling method then analyzed using SPSS (Version 16), Microsoft Excel and presented using pie charts and bar graphs. The major causes of free range chicken mortality as ranked by respondents in the study villages were disease (64%), predation (22.7%), management causes (8%), and poor nutrition (2.7%). Although respondents could tell the causes of majority of losses in their chicken, still some cases occurred unnoticed. There is need for creation of awareness and training of households as to the importance of proper housing and good chicken management.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Poultry have been domesticated for thousands of years, archaeological evidence suggests that domesticated chickens existed in China 8,000 years ago (Alders; 2004). Domesticated chickens appeared in Africa many centuries ago; they are now an established part of African life. Rural poultry production plays a major role in the economy particularly of developing countries (sonaiya, 1990). According to Gueye (2002), livestock including chickens are often used as buffers to shield rural households from risks such as food insecurity and cash deficits. The rain-fed agricultural production system leaves a lot of rural households prone to seasonal starvation and malnutrition (Anderson, 2003). Village chickens have been shown to offset this seasonality by complementing with other enterprises and providing meat and eggs for consumption (Kitalyi, 1998).

Village chicken production is one of the few agricultural enterprises used to address gender issues in developing countries (Dolberg, 2004). Village chickens are raised mainly in free-range, backyard or semi-intensive systems (Mukiibi-Muka, 1992). They obtain most of their feed and water by scavenging in the natural environment, and may or may not be given shelter. The larger proportion of village poultry in the national flock population of developing countries makes them worth paying attention to improved management and breeding. Almost every household in rural areas of Uganda keeps village poultry, but the smallholder poultry production sector continues to be hampered by low productivity, poor management, poultry diseases, predation, poor reproductive performance, poor growth rates, and lack of organized markets. These constraints result from the use of low-performance poultry breeds; various biological, cultural, social and economic factors that influence healthy flock management in villages; and shortage of feed resources (Kusina and Kusina, 1999). There are different constraints in village chicken production systems. Village chicken production systems in Africa have been ridiculed because of the low production potential. It can be argued that the high mortality rate is the major cause of

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