

While the above discussion has not included a detailed analysis of the relative production costs of growing livestock versus foodgrains, it does appear that in some areas of former Sind livestock production is a viable alternative. However, the major conclusions that should be drawn from this discussion are twofold: First, commercial livestock operations are worthy of a great deal more economic, agronomic, and animal husbandry research at experiment stations and at the farm level. Only after further research has been completed on points raised in the text and in Appendix A.6 can specific recommendations be made. Second, serious consideration must be given to possibilities of settling certain areas of Sind into larger livestock units. Though short-run "employment effects" would be reduced by such a strategy, other gains from livestock units may be considerable. The physical difficulties and high costs of reclaiming badly damaged saline and alkaline soils could be avoided, and the water and other resources thus saved could be used for more intensive development of other areas within the region.

Poultry Alternatives

Supplementary or specialized poultry enterprises represent still another alternative for increasing incomes and improving diets.⁽⁹⁾ Besides being a valuable source of protein (from both meat and eggs), chickens have other desirable features for Pakistani farmers. First, they offer the possibility of a quick return on investments. With proper care, a pullet will begin laying at 4-5 months, and a three-pound broiler can be produced in less than 10 weeks. Chickens are also extremely efficient in the utilization of feed. With proper feeding, disease control and housing, a three-pound broiler can be produced with about 9 pounds of balanced feed. Similarly, a dozen eggs require only 6 to 7 pounds of feed, from hens laying at the rate of 150 eggs per year. Third, broiler production need not be seasonal. This has the important advantage of spreading labor requirements and income flows

(9) We recognize that chickens are raised in limited numbers throughout West Pakistan. (Estimated population is about 7 million birds.) However, production efficiency is low, and the purpose of this discussion is to assess costs and benefits of improved methods of production. For a summary statement on how increased poultry production has aided Lebanon's development, see, Foreign Agriculture, June 10, 1963, pages 7-8.