

## MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF SMALL POULTRY PRODUCERS

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**Abstract:** In Egypt, chickens dominate small poultry production systems, despite the fact that other poultry species play an important role in the economics and welfare of the Egyptian households. Backyard and extensive scavenging systems are the most common used systems by the small holder poultry in Egypt rural areas. Since Avian Influenza (AI) was first started in Egypt in February, 2006, the Egyptian government have made several controlling attempts to contain it, however, highly pathogenic avian influenza, (HPAI) occurs continuously especially in backyard poultry. Different production systems of *Baladi* (locally produced crossbred) chickens and ducks might contribute to HPAI spread. The AI outbreak has meant that the diet diversity of the poor has been compromised, due to unavailability and/ or rise in poultry products prices and the household income of a large part of the rural population has decreased severely. Backyard poultry makes an important contribution to poverty alleviation and should be considered in any strategy aimed at improving rural livelihoods. In this paper the management systems of smallholder poultry in three Egyptian governorates is presented with emphasis on bird types, flock sizes, housing, feeding, disease control and marketing. This assessment among few others was implemented to study village poultry production systems of *Baladi* chickens and ducks in Egypt through qualitative research, combined with blood sampling for molecular characterization in order to obtain results that would help to develop control policies that fit within the needs of the smallholder poultry sector.

**Key words:** *family poultry, Avian Influenza, village production systems, Baladi chickens and ducks*