

The duck industry in China

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The waterfowl production is flourishing in Asian countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, India and China.

As an annex to "The XVIII World Poultry Congress" held in Nagoya, Japan, September 1988, a symposium on "Waterfowl Production" was organised in Beijing and Shanghai by "The Chinese Association for Animal and Veterinary Sciences". During this symposium the opportunity was offered to visit some meat duck breeding and rearing operations in the North and Southern part of China.

In the Beijing area two "Peking duck" (meat breed) farms were visited, namely, the "Jing Xing Poultry and Water Products Farm" and the "Lian Hua Chi Duck Farm" both belonging to the "Beijing General Cooperation of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce".

The "Jing Xing Farm" has a water area of 3.3 hectares and applies a duck/fish integrated farming system. The farm produces 1.400 stud ducks, 150.000 fattened endproduct ducks as well as 30 tons of fish per year. The "Lian Hua Chi Farm" is specialized in producing commodity ducks with the use of nettings and forced feeding.

The integrated system, as compared with the non-integrated system, offers and above the fish production of 9 tons per hectare, the advantages of a higher fertility resulting in a higher number of ducklings produced per stud female duck (125 versus 120) and a lower mortality rate of the ducks during fattening (3 % versus 8 %).

The non-integrated system based on netting and forced feeding produces heavier ducks in a shorter period (3 kg in 50 days versus 2.8 kg in 56 days) at a lower food conversion rate.

In the Shanghai area a typical "duck village", composed of a number of waterside small farms dealing with egg laying (Khaki Campbell) or meat type (Peking duck) ducks, was visited. This area has a vast network of waterways providing a suitable environment for raising ducks in a traditional integration system with local rice culture. According to Liu Fuan (Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine, South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou), rice cultivation is the top agricultural priority in South China. The villagers of this region have conceived an integration system of duck production which increases rice yield. In this system the ducks perform the four essential functions, of intertillage, weeding, insect control and manuring, all of which are not easily or economically carried out by direct human labour. The availability of ducklings and the schedule of the rice culture determine in this integration system the possibility of raising 5 batches of meat ducks per year. At last a duck slaughterhouse adjacent to a duck feather factory, producing blankets and winter coats, was visited.

For an in depth information on duck raising practices in Asia we advice to consult the book "Duck Production, Science and World Practice", (1985), ed. J. Farrell and Paul Stapleton, University of New England, Armidale, Australia.

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