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Survey on small-scale urban and peri-urban livestock systems in Angiang province

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1. Introduction

The growth in the human population in Vietnam and the decreased land holdings, shrinking agricultural land and increasing demand for food are some of the serious issues faced by the country. In addition, the increase in incomes and the government's policy to increase consumption of meat, eggs and milk, have boosted the demand for such products (Mulyono, 1998). According to Ishagi et al. (2002) rapid urbanization increases market demand for livestock products.

Other researchers also found that urban and peri-urban agriculture and livestock keeping was primarily part of a survival strategy among the low-income bracket, but also contributed to the income of the middle class, it was also still critical to the food security of many urban households in many developing countries (DFID, 2002).

Most of the people in cities and peri-urban areas practice urban agriculture because it provides food for their families and for income generation and poverty alleviation. It is attractive because of proximity to the markets, for waste management and production of organic fertilizer (i.e. people take manure from the cattle barn or poultry house in the town and send it to their farm in the rural area) and as a means of converting by-products, which are often readily available and inexpensive in urban areas (e.g. brewers spent grain, bran, seek cakes, low-quality roughage), into high-quality proteins/food (milk, meat and eggs) (FAO, 2001).

Livestock rearing also provides a meaningful occupation throughout the year, both full-time and part-time at the location itself, and provides assured income and ensures better utilization of human resources. It provides employment, especially self-employment to a substantial proportion of the rural and urban population, many of whom are women, who generally play a major role in the care and management of livestock.

Livestock raising has often been part and parcel of urban agriculture, presenting its own specific problems and opportunities. Until recently, it was often regarded as problematic, backward and a sign of poverty. As with all branches of urban agriculture, however, livestock keeping now seems to be recognized for the positive role that it can play in urban living conditions across the world (FAO, 2001). Indeed livestock production has a variable and controversial, but often essential, role to play in and for cities. It occurs on a small scale, with both small and large animals (FAO, 2001).

Like other forms of urban agriculture, urban livestock production is widely debated today. Although animals can create problems such as odours, diseases and pollution, they can provide food with high protein content, jobs, or function as a source of income. They can also help to reduce the volume of organic waste and can be part of social networks that are only clear to those who are involved in them (FAO, 2001).

What are urban and peri-urban livestock systems?

FAO, 2001 defined urban and peri-urban livestock systems in many different ways and at many different levels in terms of population densities and histories, local stakeholders, animal species, etc: *"An urban livestock system is characterized by a large variation of livestock system that occur in and around densely populated areas and that strongly interact with the surrounding wealthy, as well as poor, human communities in different ways, at several levels of system-hierarchy and with nearby and distant rural areas"* and they also described descriptions and characteristics of urban livestock systems:

- Peri-urban producers have grazing land, located mainly on the outskirts of the town.
- The urban interface is characterized by strong urban influences; easy access to markets, services and other inputs, ready supplies of labour, but relative shortage of land and risk from population and urban growth.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this study were to survey the general livestock production in two urban areas of Angiang province, to identify the reciprocal influence between livestock production and people and the environment of the urban areas and to evaluate the effects of seasonal flooding and avian influenza on urban livestock production.