# Pack 102, Item 2

Type: Drama

November 2015

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**Hard work breaks no bones: Decreasing guinea fowl mortality to increase success and boost income**

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**Notes to broadcaster:**

Nine of ten households in northern Ghana raise guinea fowl, and the birds help these households become food secure. Village and suburban families typically raise five guinea hens and one guinea cock. Poorer households sell their birds early (usually during festivities), but better-off households keep the birds until the end of the farming season in March, then harvest eggs until October or November, when they replace the birds with new stock.

Guinea fowls are productive and their meat is nutritious. It has more protein and less fat than chicken meat, and is low in cholesterol. Guinea fowl eggs have a thicker shell than hen’s eggs, are more resistant to shock, and can be kept longer and transported farther in good condition.

Farmers in northern Ghana often sell guinea fowl first to meet immediate needs such as farm inputs or food during the June to August lean season. Families also use guinea fowl ritually in funerals, courtships, sacrifices, and to settle disputes. There is a high demand for both meat and eggs.

Raising guinea fowl can be a profitable business, but farmers must know how to meet a number of challenges. This four-part drama focuses on the problems and solutions for keet mortality, one of the major challenges in raising guinea fowl. It is based on interviews with farmers who raise guinea fowl in the Upper East Region of northern Ghana.

You might choose to present this drama as part of your regular farming program, using voice actors to represent the speakers.

You could also use the drama as background material or as inspiration for creating your own programming on raising guinea fowl or similar topics in your country.

Talk to farmers and experts who are raising guinea fowl or are knowledgeable about the birds. You might ask them:

Is raising guinea fowl common in your area? If so, what challenges do farmers face?

Have some farmers devised solutions to these challenges that they could share on your program? What do extensionists and others say about these challenges?

Is raising guinea fowl a profitable business in your area? What are the economic prospects?

Have local farmers tried some of the solutions recommended in this drama? What has been their experience?

Estimated running time for each of the four episodes in the script: 10-12 minutes, with intro and outro music.

**EPISODE ONE**

PLAY SIG TUNE THEN FADE UNDER NARRATOR

**NARRATOR:** Hello listener, and welcome to the first episode of our four-episode drama, highlighting the causes of and solutions for high mortality rates in guinea fowl keets. This program aims to encourage rural communities, especially women, to raise guinea fowl to improve their income and the nutritional status of their households.

(PAUSE) A Nigerian writer once said, “Enjoy the world gently, for, if the world is spoilt, no one’s father can repair it.” If we spoil the world, even the concerted effort of all our great-great-grandfathers can’t repair it.

In our drama, wemeettwo industrious women, Pogsaa and Kening, who aresuccessfully raising guinea fowl. With them is a guinea fowl farmer called Joe. Anxious to succeed, they seek a veterinary doctor’s sound professional counsel.

The first scene highlights the causes of high keet mortality, one of the major problems with raising guinea fowl. The scene then shows how to best remedy the situation.

So please stay tuned to hear our enlightening and motivating success story on how to raise guinea fowl without tears.

**FX:** BRING UP MUSIC FOR 30 SECONDS THEN FADE OUT

KNOCKING GENTLY AT A DOOR, WITH VOICE ACCOMPANIMENT: “Knocking”

**VETERINARY DR:** (ANSWERING WITHIN, OFF-MIC) Come in, please!

**FX:** OPENING AND SHUTTING DOOR

**VET DR:** Ah, it’s you, my good Social Welfare Officer! And I suppose these are the guinea fowl farmers you talked about bringing along to speak with me.

**SOC WELF OFF:** Yes, doctor, and true to my word, I’ve brought them.

**VET DR:** (LIGHT-HEARTEDLY) Neighbours, you’re most warmly welcome! It is neighbours like you that give my office meaning. Take seats.

**THE THREE:** Thank you, doctor, for your kind words.

**SOC WELF OFF:**  These are the two industrious ladies who are raising guinea fowl in our community. Their hard work has sent their names far beyond our local area. Today, they are eager to hear whatever technical advice you have for them. This is Pogsaa; this is Kening. The gentleman with them is Joe, who has also raised guinea fowl.

**VET DR:** Our industrious ladies and gentleman, I’m overwhelmed by your effort of raising guinea fowl despite the challenges involved. Our neighbour, the Social Welfare Officer, told me about your intended visit to seek my input.

**THE THREE:** So it is, doctor.

**VET DR:** I shall share with you all the time-tested veterinary practices which have been found to boost guinea fowl production.

**THE THREE:**  That’s wonderful, doctor.

**VET DR:**  You might have noticed that raising guinea fowl is very challenging, requiring a lot of tact, patience, and dedication.

**POGSAA:** We have.

**VET DR:**  But it’s very rewarding in the end if you work hard to cope with the challenges.

**POGSAA:**  That’s right, doctor. For example, we’ve noticed that the mortality rate of keets is very high, and requires careful attention and handling.

**VET DR:** Precisely. Talking about high keet mortality rates, let’s start with hatching. How do you go about that?

**POGSAA:** I don’t allow guinea hens to hatch their own eggs. I find an ordinary hen to hatch and mother the brood.

**VET DR:** What about you, Kening?

**KENING:** I also use sitting hens to hatch my guinea eggs. If I want guinea chicks, I replace the eggs of a sitting hen with guinea fowl eggs. The hen then hatches and mothers the keets.

**JOE:** I do the same, doctor.

**VET DR:** Do you have any specific reasons for using a hen to hatch the eggs?

**POGSAA:** Well, that has been the tradition over time. We’re simply following inherited practice.

**VET DR:**  That’s okay, but we should understand why we do what we do!(LAUGHTER FROM ALL)

The fact is that if a guinea hen is allowed to hatch its own eggs, this is the first major cause of high keet mortality. Can you guess why?

**ALL THREE:**  Noooo!!

**VET DR:**  Simply put, the guinea fowl is wild by nature. If allowed to hatch its eggs, it disappears with the chicks into the bush soon after hatching them. But the farmer can confine a hen with a brood to tame the keets.

**KENING:** (SURPRISED) What does the guinea hen do with the chicks?

**VET DR:** A guinea hen doesn’t gather its chicks around itself as a substitute mother hen does. If she takes her chicks out, she is likely to bring back only a few—if she does return at all.

While the guinea hen is wandering about with them in the bush, the keets get frightened at the slightest noise and run into the bush. This makes them vulnerable to predators. Also, the guinea hen does not brood its chicks. When it rains, the guinea hen runs away from them.

**ALL THREE:** (LAUGHTER) Oooooh!

**VET DR:** Yes. Those keets that incidentally manage to follow their mother are welcomed. But many are abandoned to their fate. In contrast, mother hens do not run away from the keets when it rains. Hens either take them to a safe place for shelter, or shelter them under their wings.

**JOE:** Doctor, some of our people actually believe that the guinea hen hatches eggs better than the substitute mother hen, but they prevent the guinea hen from doing so because sitting on its eggs makes it aggressive. They think that, if it pecks someone, the peck could be as deadly as a snake bite.

**VET DR:** (AMUSED)I’ve heard that too, but of course it’s not true. Another problem is that a guinea hen doesn’t even teach its keet how to feed. In contrast, the hen teaches the keet how to forage for seeds, insects, and worms. When a hawk comes to attack a chick, you can see how the mother hen behaves. A guinea hen doesn’t show that kind of concern.

**POGSAA:** I understand. What of the notion that ducks and turkeys can hatch even better than hens? Doesn’t this make them better substitute mothers than hens?

**VET DR:**  Obviously, a duck or turkey can hatch more eggs at a sitting than a hen.

Unfortunately, as soon as a duck or turkey hatches a guinea chick, it immediately recognizes that the chick belongs to a different species and quickly pecks it to death. So which of the three would you prefer to hatch and mother your keet?

**POGSAA:** You’re right, doctor. You mentioned predators. That is certainly another worry.

**VET DR:**  (EMPHATICALLY) Yes! The hawk and the crow are terrible predators! Of the two, the crow is worse, which may come as a surprise. While the hawk swoops down to pick the keet outright, the crow lands gently and cunningly pretends to help feed the chicks. When the mother hen stops paying attention, the pretending predator picks one and flies off. In that way, a crow can finish a whole brood unnoticed.

Fortunately,there is a traditional way of managing this problem. The farmer sets a trap. If the farmer succeeds in killing a crow or a hawk, he or she hangs it at the place where he raises guinea fowl, and the predators get scared and never come back.

**POGSAA:** That’s interesting.

**VET DR:** One last point for the day. The mole is the guinea fowl farmer’s worst enemy. It kills a chick just to eat the brain. A single mole can kill many keets in just one night. As you know, moles mostly attack in the night and are therefore difficult to track. So if there are moles near where you raise keets or chickens, you will not succeed.

**SOC WELF OFF:** Thank you, doctor. This has certainly been a productive meeting. We have no words to thank you enough.

**VET DR:**  When we meet again, we will discuss other important issues like inbreeding, the importance of good housing and good ventilation, and the different types of poultry management systems.

**SFX:** PLAY MUSIC FOR 30 SECONDS, THEN FADE UNDER NARRATOR.

**NARRATOR:** This is the end of our first episode.We hope you remember the major causes of high keet mortality highlighted in the drama—and the solutions! Remember to tune in same time next week to hear about the problems of inbreeding and the solutions, the importance of good housing and good ventilation, and the different ways of managing poultry. Hearing this will help you make informed choices to keep your guinea fowl business booming. Thank you for your time. It’s me, \_\_\_\_\_, saying bye for now.

**SFX:** BRING UP MUSIC FOR 30 SECONDS AND FADE OUT.

**EPISODE TWO**

PLAY SIG TUNE, THEN FADE AND HOLD UNDER NARRATOR.

**NARRATOR:** You’re listening to (name of station). The time is \_\_\_\_\_.

Welcome to our usual program. Today, we present the second part of our four-part drama. Our second episode presents more of the challenges that guinea fowl farmers face, alongside recommended solutions. We will highlight the contribution of inbreeding to the high mortality rate of guinea fowl and to their low fertility rate. We will talk about other factors that cause low fertility. The program will discuss the importance of good housing and good ventilation, and the types of management systems commonly practiced. The characters in the drama are already familiar to you. Stay tuned. I’m \_\_\_\_\_, your host.

BRING UP MUSIC FOR 20 SECONDS, THEN FADE UNDER VOICES AND OUT

**VET. DR:** Ladies and gentleman, you’re once again welcome.

**ALL THREE:** Thank you.

**VET. DR:** Let’s start by talking about inbreeding. Most guinea fowl farmers are not familiar with it and don’t know how much it decreases production.

**POGSAA:** Yes, that’s a good starting point. What is inbreeding?

**VET. DR:**  Inbreeding is when guinea fowl mate with their own sisters and mothers. This weakens the guinea fowl’s resistance to disease. When there is low resistance to disease, what do you expect to be the outcome, Madam?

**POGSAA:**  Increased mortality.

**VET. DR:**  Precisely. And, naturally, unhealthy birds can’t mate well, and this results in low egg production and a low fertility rate. Furthermore, some diseases in one generation can get passed on to all successive generations. Others are contracted through infection from other birds or from the surrounding environment. Interestingly, while some effects of inbreeding like poor health are easy to see, others are invisible.

**KENING:** Which effects are visible and which are invisible?

**VET. DR:**  Low resistance to disease is invisible, while changes in growth rate or weight gain can be seen physically.

**KENING:** Yes, that’s clear to me.

**VET. DR:**  Weight gain is closely related to the nutritional value of feed. Usually, the richer the feed, the faster the weight gain. But with inbreeding, birds don’t gain weight no matter how rich the feed is.

Inbreeding also delays maturity. This means that hens do not lay until later in life, which shortens their productive period, a disadvantage for the farmer.

**POGSAA:**  I’m beginning to understand the problem more clearly.

**VET. DR:**  Let me give you an example: Usually, it takes a guinea fowl 16 to 18 weeks to mature. The birds begin to lay at 20 to 23 weeks. But inbreeding delays both the maturity and reproductive periods. Kening, I’ve seen your mouth twitching. It seems you have something to ask.

**KENING:** How many eggs should I expect a guinea fowl to lay in a year?

**VET. DR:** About one hundred and fifty eggs on average. But inbreeding

decreases that number. It reduces the size of the eggs, too, because the laying hen hasn’t grown to normal size. So inbreeding establishes a vicious cycle of small size, low resistance to disease, and low fertility. This all results in lower profit for the farmer.

**SOC WELF OFF:** What can we do to avoid inbreeding?

**VET. DR:** Simply get males from different stocks to mate with your guinea hens from time to time. Guinea fowl are very selective in breeding. They do not cross promiscuously. When new males are introduced, they form permanent partnerships with females. To prevent inbreeding, some farmers import their keets, especially from Belgium or the Netherlands.

Let me talk about another cause of infertility.

**SOC WELF OFF:**  Ok.

**VET. DR:** Another serious cause of low fertility in guinea fowl is poor nutrition. If feed is nutritionally balanced and contains all the essential minerals and vitamins, a guinea fowl can lay throughout the year. But when feed lacks vitamins, protein, and vital micronutrients, birds are infertile and the farmer can’t expect much gain.

**POGSAA:** Yes, this makes sense. All living species need good nutrition to grow well.

**VET. DR:** The environment is also a force to reckon with. In the savannah, guinea hens hardly lay in the dry season. Even if they do, the eggs are usually infertile.

**POGSAA:** Why?

**VET. DR:** The reason is simple. In the dry season, the birds do not get enough balanced food—like greens, insects, seeds, and worms—to feed on, or enough water to drink, like they do when the rains come. That is why they mostly lay in the rainy season. The causes of infertility are many.

**KENING:** We’re not tired of listening.

**VET. DR:** Have I mentioned disease as a cause of infertility?

**POGSAA:**  Not yet.

**VET. DR:**  Diseases kill birds, and to some extent cause infertility too. Protozoa, bacteria, virus, fungi, internal parasites like worms, poisoning of feed and water, chemicals used beyond recommended levels—these all kill.

But there are yet other causes of infertility.

**KENING:** Eei! Still more?

**VET. DR:** (HUMOUROUSLY) Eei, you exclaim? The causes of high mortality rates, infirmity, and infertility seem countless—but a good guinea fowl farmer needs to know them all.

**POGSAA:** We’re with you.

**VET. DR:** External parasites like lice, fleas, and ticks also cause disease in guinea fowls, and result in low egg production and infertility. For example, there are tiny red ticks that kill keets and make the adults unhealthy and unable to eat well. Unhealthy birds can’t lay well.

And some types of ticks kill both chicks and adults. These ticks are usually found on birds’ wings. Some hide in housing walls or cracks, and in wood during the day, but come out at night to feed on the birds.

**POGSAA:** I suppose this is why we guinea fowl farmers must clean and spray our coops, cages, and brooding facilities regularly. Will that help?

**VET. DR:** Sure. That is the way to go about it.

Let’s see whether we can remember some of the critical points raised so far. Ok? Kening.

**KENING:** We said that in our savannah environment in northern Ghana, guinea hens lay mostly in the wet season and scarcely in the dry season. If they lay at all in the dry season, the eggs are usually infertile.

**VET. DR:**  And the reason for that?

**KENING:** In the wet season, guinea fowl have access to lots of natural feeds like termites, greens, insects, and water.

**POGSAA:** And this nutritious feed makes their eggs more fertile.

**VET. DR:**  Correct. Joe, I haven’t heard your voice.

**JOE:** You said that inbreeding decreases growth and delays maturity and the reproductive period, resulting in diminishing returns for the farmer.

**VET. DR:** Great! Now let’s look at housing in the poultry management systems practiced in Ghana and elsewhere. There are intensive, semi-intensive, and extensive systems. The intensive system is where birds are confined in good poultry houses.

The extensive system, also known as free-range, is what most small-scale guinea fowl farmers use. There is no housing provided, and birds scavenge and sleep in bushes or on trees around houses.

In the semi-intensive system, birds have permanent housing at night, but forage for greens and insects in the surrounding environment during the day. Farmers give the birds supplementary feed and water. This approach is widely practiced by guinea fowl farmers in Ghana. Which of these approaches do you practice, Pogsaa?

**POGSAA:** The semi-intensive management system.

**VET. DR:**  Good. And you, Kening?

**KENING:** I also practice the semi-intensive system.

**VET. DR:**  Good. And is that your preferred choice?

**POGSAA:** I would have preferred the intensive system if I had the means.

**VET. DR:** God will provide.

**POGSAA & KENING:** (AMUSED) Thank you.

**VET. DR:** Because both of you practice the semi-intensive system, you should know how important housing is.

**POGSAA:** To some extent, yes. Housing offers the birds protection from rain, cold, and heat. It also protects them from predators like snakes, hawks, owls, dogs, cats, foxes, and thieves, and protects them from straying and from accidental injuries.

**VET.DR:** And from the many diseases that are carried by wild birds, wild animals, and microorganisms. You’re right. Continue.

**POGSAA:** Housing allows farmers to more easily handle larger numbers of birds and to ensure that they receive proper nutrition, clean water, and consistent care. Housing also makes it easier for farmers to collect, dispose, and re-use manure too.

**VET. DR:** Where you build housing is also important. You should build your housing on a well-drained site, preferably on higher ground. Why on higher ground, Kening?

**KENING:**  To prevent flooding.

**VET. DR:** Correct.Houses should also be close to a permanent source of drinking water. For feeders and water troughs, you can use tins, cans, earthenware pots, and metal or plastic containers. These must be secured so that they are not overturned and birds don’t drown. Charcoal pots, Awudu heaters, lanterns, or electric bulbs can provide light and heat as needed.

Now, if you were doing something different from these recommended practices, you should be able to turn things around. Good luck!

**ALL THREE:** Thank you most warmly, doctor.

**VET. DR:** I thank you too, and please remember that my doors are always open to you.

**ALL THREE:** Thank you.

**POGSAA:**  Before we go, doctor, let me take this opportunity to invite you to the crowning ceremony of the Queen Mother of our community, two days from now. I’m a member of the organizing committee. After the ceremony, you can visit my site. Nothing would please me more.

**VET. DR:** I will come.

**POGSAA:** Thank you.

**VET. DR:**  Thank you, too. Bye.

**ALL THREE:** Bye.

**EPISODE THREE**

PLAY SIG. TUNE

**FX:** PLAY CEREMONIAL MUSIC APPROPRIATE FOR THE CROWNING OF A QUEEN MOTHER FOR 20 SECONDS, THEN FADE UNDER NARRATOR

**NARRATOR:** This is Radio \_\_\_\_\_\_. Welcome to the third episode of our four-part drama on the problems of high keet mortality in raising guinea fowl—and the recommended solutions! This episode opens with a rural community crowning a Queen Mother. She promises to encourage community members to raise guinea fowl as her contribution to improving the economy and nutritional status of local families.

**SFX:** BRING UP MUSIC FOR 10 SECONDS THEN FADE OUT. CROWD APPLAUDS THE USHERING IN OF THE NEWLY CROWNED QUEEN MOTHER, WITH ULULATIONS FROM THE WOMEN.

**MC:** Chiefs, elders, assembly men and women, invited guests, brothers and sisters ... Our new Queen Mother greets everyone who has sacrificed their time to attend her crowning ceremony. The Queen Mother’s ceremonial name is Kandaaweri IV.

**SFX:**APPLAUSE / MURMURING

**MC:** Peace ho! The Queen has a word to share with us.

**CROWD:** APPLAUSE. SHOUTS OF “QUEEN MOTHER KANDAAWERI, MAY GOD BLESS YOU. SPEAK! WE ARE LISTENING!”

**QUEEN MOTHER:**  I have a friend who likes to say, “Open your eyes. The world is awake with wonders.” And now I am seeing things happily unfold before me today. And the events taking place before my eyes are holding me tongue-tied.

**CROWD:** You truly deserve the honour! Say more!

**QUEEN MOTHER:** If the spontaneous joy in the atmosphere here today reflects the support that awaits me in my new position as Queen Mother, I would say my agenda is more than half complete already. (SHORT PAUSE) Yet I fear …

**CROWD:**  What do you fear, Madam Kandaaweri? Have no fear. We are your pillars, solid pillars standing behind you!

**QUEEN MOTHER:** Then let me give you a glimpse of my agenda, my plan for improving life in the community.

**CROWD:** Do! Please do!

**QUEEN MOTHER:** My first move will be to spare no effort to encourage men to support their wives to raise guinea fowl for the benefit of all.

**WOMEN IN CROWD:** CHEER

**QUEEN MOTHER:** The fact is ... women are the mothers of the world. There is no doubt about that.

**WOMEN IN CROWD:**  More! Say all!

**QUEEN MOTHER:**  Look at it whatever way you wish, but the truth remains that in our unique role as mothers of the world, it is our duty to help feed the world well!

**FX:** APPLAUSE FROM THE CROWD

**CROWD:** True talk!

**QUEEN MOTHER:** The best way to help feed the world is to start raising guinea fowl, as I have seen women do in other parts of Mother Africa. Husbands among us here, do you agree to help your wives raise guinea fowl?

**LOUD RESPONSE:** Yeeeees!!!

**FX:** RESOUNDING APPLAUSE FROM THE CROWD

**QUEEN MOTHER:** (PAUSES AND WHISPERS TO HER AIDE**)** Am I on course?

**AIDE**: (WHISPERING BACK) Yes, Madam, you are. Keep on.

**QUEEN MOTHER:** Fellow women, and all our husbands gathered here, this is a big challenge. Let’s call it the challenge of the year. Should we?

**CROWD:**  ` We should!

**QUEEN MOTHER:**  I know raising guinea fowl is very challenging. But that shouldn’t discourage you. Nothing on earth has ever been presented on a silver platter. People have always had to toil for their food.

**CROWD:**  Good talk!

**QUEEN MOTHER:** Raising guinea fowl is one way to meet our obligation to national development, and I know we can and will do it!

**FX:** ULULATION FROM WOMEN

**QUEEN MOTHER:**  Let’s shout it out: We can do it!

**CROWD:** (SHOUTING) We can do it!

**QUEEN MOTHER:** And we will do it!

**CROWD:** (SHOUTING) We will do it!

**FX:** ULULATION FROM WOMEN

**QUEEN MOTHER:** Among us today is a veterinary doctor and old friend of guinea fowl producers. He has already helped two of our colleagues to make huge gains. He has promised to help anyone who wishes to start raising guinea fowl. Doctor Sindim, kindly step forward so all can see you.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:**  Here I am, the people’s man, called Doctor Sindim, your veterinary officer. What plan could be more humanitarian than your grand dream of helping to feed the world? May the harmony manifesting here be a lasting thing.

**CROWD:**  Amen!

**QUEEN MOTHER:**  Give him a big hand, please!

**FX:** APPLAUSE FROM THE CROWD

**QUEEN MOTHER:** Doctor Sindim, the rest of our time is yours.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** There’s a lot to share, so much that it could even confound the mouth itself.

**QUEEN MOTHER**: Then we’re all ears, anxious to hear you.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:**  By your resolve here to start raising guinea fowl, you can count yourselves among the category of people who make things happen, the actors, the nation builders!

**CROWD:**  Thanks be to God!

**QUEEN MOTHER:**  Amen!

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Among us here are two women and a gentleman who are making good progress in raising guinea fowl. They are Pogsaa, Kening, and Joe. Please, can we see the three of you? (AFTER A SHORT PAUSE) Good! Here they are.

**FX:** STANDING OVATION AND ULULATION

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Let us go to Madam Pogsaa’s residence to see things for ourselves. For seeing is believing. Seeing will act as a push to get everyone on board.

**THE CROWD:** True. Let’s go and see things for ourselves.

**QUEEN MOTHER:** Wonderful. I shall brave all challenges to begin raising guinea fowl myself, come what may. Give him a big hand!

**FX:** LOUD APPLAUSE FROM THE CROWD

**QUEEN MOTHER:** As Queen Mother, I have an obligation to lead the way. (JOKING) Madam Pogsaa, you are now our mentor. But rest assured that within three years’ time, I will have overtaken you in raising guinea fowl.

**FX:** LAUGHTER FROM THE CROWD

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Ok, let’s visit Pogsaa’s household to see the practical results of her hard work.

**SFX:** PLAY CEREMONIAL WOMEN’S SONG FOR 20 SECONDS TO END THE QUEEN MOTHER’S CROWNING CEREMONY, THEN FADE UNDER NARATOR.

**NARRATOR:** Well, listener, we’ve come to the end of the third episode of our drama. Thank you for listening. Tune in same time next week for the concluding episode of the series. Till then, it’s me, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, saying goodbye for now.

**SFX:** BRING UP CEREMONIAL MUSIC, THEN FADE OUT TO END THE EPISODE

**EPISODE FOUR**

SIG. TUNE

**NARRATOR:**  This isRadio \_\_\_\_\_, andthe time is \_\_\_\_\_. Welcome to the last episode of our serial drama on the causes and solutions for guinea fowl keet mortality. It’s me, \_\_\_\_\_, your usual host. Stay tuned.

**FX:** QUIRKING OF GUINEA FOWL

**POGSAA:** Queen Mother, our guest of honour the Veterinary Doctor, and fellow women, this is my home and these birds are the source of my economic well-being. The strange noise they are producing is called *quirking*. It’s what they do when intruders enter their environment.

**QUEEN MOTHER:** How alert they seem. It’s clear that they really see us as intruders.

**POGSAA:** They are wild creatures by nature. It’s only through constant training from day one that they become fairly domesticated.

**QUEEN MOTHER:** Amazing.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Madam Pogsaa, let us take this opportunity to get to know you. When did you start your guinea fowl project?

**POGSAA**: About thirteen years ago.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** In this community, raising guinea fowl was traditionally reserved for men. What motivated you to break new ground?

**POGSAA:** It’s an interesting question. I have five siblings, all girls. My parents said God had a reason for giving them only girls. Though my father was a traditionalist, he taught my siblings and I to do everything that boys were supposed to do for their parents. He believed that the only fixed gender role was the biological role of childbirth assigned by God, and that all other gender roles were decided by society, and therefore arbitrary. So, early in our lives, he taught us all to raise livestock. So now I raise goats and sheep as well, though raising guinea fowl is my main occupation.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** I see the source of your inspiration. Are you married?

**POGSAA:** Yes, married with five children. Two boys, three girls.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** How does your husband feel about you raising guinea fowl?

**POGSAA:** He knows how and why it all came about. Apart from that, he is a major beneficiary of my hard work and sweat. What I earn from raising animals has made me the mainstay of the house. We have one child in teacher’s training college. Recently, I sold ten guinea fowl to pay his fees. So raising guinea fowl is financially rewarding.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Does your husband help you in any way?

**POGSAA:**  No, my husband says he has no luck in keeping livestock, so I do everything myself. But I consult him for the sake of harmony in the home.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Apart from raising guinea fowl, do you do any additional work?

**POGSAA:**  Yes, I grow one acre of yellow maize to feed the guinea fowl and another acre of white maize to feed the family.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** That’s great. I see you’ve confined the keets within a locally-made brooder.

**POGSAA:** Yes.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Is this what you do every time you have keets?

**POGSAA:** Yes**,** I always confine them with a mother hen in a locally-crafted brooder for the entire brooding period, and feed them well.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** What experiences can you share about that?

**POGSAA:** Keets fear cold. So in the night, I confine them in the kitchen and place a coal pot with a charcoal fire about three metres away from them to give them warmth. I also cover them with cocoa sacks when the weather is chilly to prevent them from freezing to death. When the weather gets warm, I take the sack and coal pot fire away to prevent them from dying of the heat.

Excessive cold and excessive heat kill keets. They need constant monitoring. When the weather is chilly, they huddle together. When huddling, they sometimes lie on one another and have to be separated to prevent some from being pressed to death.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** You’re right. Extreme cold can freeze them to death. So is it with extreme heat. Fortunately, you’re managing that very well. One benefit of the local brooder is that it is well-ventilated. Good ventilation is essential to reduce keet mortality.

**POGSAA:** The brooder is big enough to hold up to 20 keet throughout the brooding period.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** There is another cause of death which many people are not aware of.

**POGSAA:** And what is that?

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** The stress of noise.

**QUEEN MOTHER:** Noise?

**FX:** LAUGHTER FROM THE CROWD

**QUEEN MOTHER**: Surprising! How does noise kill keets?

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** It sounds funny, but it is a reality. Noise makes them cuddle together from fright. The bigger ones jump on the weaker ones. Some die from suffocation and trampling. You see?

**CROWD:** Yes.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** So you see that brooding keets need full-time attention day and night. What do you feed them with?

**POGSAA:** I crush maize into grit at the mill and mix it with fish meal. I alternate this with termites. Fortunately, we have many termites in the bushes of our community.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** It is important to note that gritty feed kills keets. They are very delicate in the first six weeks of brooding. So it’s better to blend maize mill with fish powder or possibly rice bran rather than maize grit.

**POGSAA:** Ok. Well noted.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** There’s one other important note to make about feeding birds

termites, earthworms, and some insects. They can get infested with worms when feeding on these creatures, so it’s important to regularly deworm the birds, once a month during the rainy season.

You’re doing very well with the feeding, Pogsaa. But tell me, why would you recommend raising guinea fowl to your fellow women here?

**POGSAA:**  Of course, both the guineas and their eggs are ready money. [EMPHATICALLY]Hot spot cash! Every day, I earn not less than 20 Ghana Cedis from selling eggs alone. Not to mention the good flavour of the meat and eggs

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Don't your guinea fowl scatter their eggs about?

**POGSAA:** They lay in the booths that I provide—two females to one booth. The booths are right in my garden, allowing no intruders. I constantly train them to go into their coop at night. My guinea fowl can lay up to one hundred eggs each.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** That is a lot. Any more benefits?

**POGSAA:** They meet the nutritional needs of my family. I kill one for meat whenever I need it. Fortunately, my husband doesn’t expect me to cook it and then place the whole intact bird before him and be satisfied with only the head, feet, and gizzard as my share!

**FX:** LAUGHTERFROM WOMEN

**POGSAA:** Raising guinea fowl is a good occupation. It is a self-employed job. No fear of being dismissed by anybody.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** I thank you all for coming to see Pogsaa at her best. So far I have not heard a man's voice. Is there a man here who wants to comment on Pogsaa’s achievement?

**POGSAA:** There is a hand there.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Yes, what is your name?

**ABU:** Abu.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Abu, come forward and tell us your mind.

**ABU:**  In the past, our society was thoroughly traditional. In some cultures, women had little say, even on matters directly affecting them. Women and children were forbidden from eating eggs because it was feared that, because they were mostly at home, they would eat all the eggs in the coop. This would leave none for raising new birds.

**CROWD:** GIGGLES

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** What of raising guinea fowl?

**ABU:**  A woman was viewed as belonging to her husband. So even if she raised birds, her name was never mentioned. The output would belong to the husband. That was a barrier to raising guinea fowl. Also, rivalry among women in marriages with more than one wife discouraged women from raising guinea fowl.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** I presume you’re a married man.

**ABU:**  Yes, I am.

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Would you then, in support of the Queen Mother’s economic agenda, help your wife to start raising guinea fowl?

**ABU:** Why not? Women are our daughters, our sisters, our wives, and our mothers. To me, nothing is too good for them. So I promise before everyone here to enter into this venture with my wife. After all, she is my better half.

Every husband and wife has a social obligation to work together as a couple to raise their families without tears. Our people have a proverb that it is because of hot food that God gave everyone two jaws. (*Editor’s note: Traditionally, the two jaws represent a husband and wife. When hot food is put into the mouth, it is shifted from jaw to jaw until it cools, just like a husband and wife cooperate to meet the challenges of raising a family*.)

**SFX:** ULULATION FROM WOMEN

**DOCTOR SINDIM:** Well, I’d say the day has been well spent. All husbands here, endeavour to fulfill your pledge to Queen Mother Kandaaweri, that you’ll help your wives raise guinea fowl to help feed the world. Keep in mind, too, Abu’s proverb that it is because of hot food that God in his wisdom gave every one of us two jaws. I am at your service day and night. Thank you for this productive day.

**QUEEN MOTHER:** He deserves a big hand!

**FX:** RESOUNDING APPLAUSE FROM THE CROWD. CEREMONIAL MUSIC FOR 30 SECONDS THEN FADE UNDER NARRATOR

**NARRATOR:** Well, listeners, that brings us to the end of our drama on raising guinea fowl, with all its challenges and solutions. What is left now is action, the action expected from us all. The earlier the better, for they say that procrastination is the thief of time.

On this note it’s me, \_\_\_\_\_\_, your host bidding you goodbye and good luck. Till we meet again, thank you for your attention.

**FX:** BRING UP CEREMONIAL MUSIC FOR ONE MINUTE AND FADE OUT

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Reviewed by: Dr. Moses Gbordzi, Veterinary Services Dept., Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Bolgatanga, Upper East Region.

**Sources of information**

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Dr. Simdim D. Timothy, District Veterinary Officer, Sissala East District, Upper West Region, Ghana

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