

## The Story of Hor Sophal – Starting Off A Chicken Business



Sophal demonstrating the machines used for chicken pellet production

Hor Sophal is 38 years old and married. He has three children and lives in Spork Reach village, Andaung Snay Commune, Rolea B'ier district, Kampong Chhnang province. His main income is from a small restaurant that he runs with his wife. However, chicken rearing is slowly becoming a significant additional source of income for him.

Sophal benefitted from technical advice on chicken rearing and the provision of machines for chicken pellet-making by the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and GERES. While chicken is susceptible to high temperatures and production of eggs can diminish in very hot conditions, they provide proteins at much lower emission levels than other animal protein sources such as beef, cattle or pork.

Interviewer: Sophal, how were you involved in the project?

Sophal: I was selected as one of the ten households that received training on chicken rearing and feed production. These farmers formed a small chicken farmer association. In addition, I received two machines that are used for chicken pellet production, that enables me to make two different pellet sizes (see photo).

I: Could you explain how the collaboration between the members of the chicken farmer association takes place?

S: Yes, of course. In the beginning, I was selected by the association members to be the custodian of the two machines due to the central location of my house. And also, because I have access to sufficient electricity, which many others do not have. At first, the association members had planned to deliver the pellet ingredients themselves (corn, rice, flower) and use the two machines free of charge. But then, they found it easier, to leave the pellet-making to me and rather buy the ready-made pellets from me at a price of 1800 Riel/kg. The machines will be given to the association after the end of project, they are not mine.

I: Is this cheaper than the price at the local market? And how did you set the price?

S: Yes, the market price is at 2500 Riel/kg. However, the production size is still small and as of now, I only supply the association members and a few others. Per day, I make roughly 20 kg for my own chicken and 5kg for buyers. If there is higher demand, I could go up to a maximum capacity of maybe 100 kg. The price depends on the costs of the inputs, which is around 1500 Riel/kg. We need to be cheaper than the price at the local market. The price was set in discussion with the other members of the group. Also, the cost of electricity is included in the price.

I: What do you do with the profit?



Bags of chicken feed with different pellet sizes that Sophal produces

S: Well, first of all, those are not big amounts. I will keep it to pay for repairs of the machines. I keep the books for the association for my fellow members to check. So far, there have been no repair costs. The motors usually last for many years without any problems.

I: What are your future plans in view of your chicken farm?

With regard to the feed processing, I plan to continue and make bigger bags. I also want to sell more chicks and provide advice to other farmers. For that purpose, I have invested in a hatching last December (info: financed by a commercial loan of 500 USD, 12% interest rate, 6 months repayment period).



Sophal's new hatching machine (left); his main chicken cage (right)

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