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ASN:573

**PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF OSTRICH FARMING
IN SARAWAK
- A SPECIAL FOCUS ON OSTRICH FARMING IN SIBU REGION**

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OCTOBER 2000

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ABSTRACT

Compared with other livestock farming, ostrich farming is a new industry especially in Sarawak. Not much is known yet about these birds because they are foreign birds. Since these birds are foreign birds, a lot need to be learnt by the farmers particularly their adaptation, foods, diseases and also the methods or technique of rearing these birds.

Thus, the main objective of this study is to determine the problems and difficulties faced by farmers, its potential growth, consumer's awareness and acceptance of ostrich product and to propose some recommendations.

The result of the analysis shows that the majority of the respondents, who were both male and female of various ages, with various level of income and various level of education, knew about ostrich and its product. The main source of information was from television. The respondents also knew the quality of the ostrich product and were ready to purchase it if it was readily available in market depending on the respondents' affordability.

The findings also reveal what the government and its agency, the private sectors, the farmers and the public at large should do to enhance the development of ostrich farming. Some of the views discovered during the analysis of the data were used as recommendations in this study.

Chapter 1.

1. Introduction.

1.1 History of the Ostrich

Ostriches originate from Africa. They are big, flightless birds that stand eight feet tall, weighing up to 160 kg and are capable of running as fast as to outrun their predators. Ostriches can withstand extreme climatic condition and can live even with very little food and water. These birds are able to build immunities to protect themselves against diseases, parasites and pestilence. Like any other birds ostriches also lay eggs. Ostriches protect their hatchlings from scavengers and other predatory animals, not forgetting man. Although ostriches are flightless, their wings are fully developed and are used in courtship and play. They are characterized by flat keels, and belong to the ratite bird family.

There are mainly three types of ostriches namely the Red Neck from East Africa, the Blue Neck, a Hybrid Bred from South Africa and strain of African Black developed in Israel.

The first domestication of ostrich on commercial scale occurred in Cape Colony, now known as the Republic of South Africa. Since then ostrich farming grew to a larger scale during 1870's.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 The Development of Ostrich Farming.

According to John Adams and Brian J Revell, (1997) the ostrich has been regarded as a single product animal at various time in the past, with the focus of the market interest passing through several phases from feather to hides and then meat. It is only recently that the multi-product nature of the ostrich has begun to become an economic necessity

2.2 The Ostrich Product

2.2.1 The Ostrich Meat

The decline in red meat (beef and mutton) consumption in affluent parts of the world is largely due to dietary concern that excessive consumption of animal fat is not conducive to good health, as well as the lack of product versatility to meet modern lifestyles which poultry meat possesses. {John Adam and Brian J Revell, (1997)}

While the issue of fats in red meat is somewhat contentious, the benefit of meats from other species such as ostrich has been promoted on the basis of its lower fat contents. The ostrich meat is a promising substitute for red meat in that it produces similar protein level to beef and mutton. A claim also is made