

## GROWTH PERFORMANCE OF TURKEYS UNDER FIELD CONDITION

K.Shibi Thomas, T.Lurthu Reetha and M.Babu

Veterinary University Training and Research Centre (VUTRC), Tiruchirapalli

Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS)

Received 22-10-2013 Accepted 15-3-2014

Corresponding Author : shibisaran@gmail.com

The modern domesticated turkey descends from the wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) which was domesticated years before in Mexico. Turkey, native of North America, is an important poultry species reared for meat production. Turkey is easy to rise with similar management as chicken and can also be reared in free-range system (Khaddakar, 2001). Turkey farming is an evolving sector which is playing a significant role in augmenting the economic and nutritional status of the farming community. They are reared for meat among the domestic poultry species (Rajendran *et al.*, 2012). Turkeys are better foragers than chickens, and can digest fibre better than chicken. Turkeys are able to derive more energy from low energy diets as compared to chicken and turkeys diets need to have a narrower energy to protein ratio (Tyagi, 2001). The present study was conducted to study the growth performance of poults (Broad Breasted White Turkey) maintained in a semi-intensive manner in a turkey farm at Egrimangalam, Tiruchirapalli District.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Two hundred Broad breasted white turkey poults were taken for this study. The turkey farm selected for this study was maintained in a semi-intensive system. The turkey poults were reared up to six weeks of age in intensive system (closed confined house) with 95°F temperature. After six weeks the birds were allowed to forage for few hours in an open yard during the day time and then housed for rest of the day. The birds were kept in shelter with a floor space of 0.22 m<sup>2</sup> and 0.45 m<sup>2</sup> in open yard. Turkey poults were given starter feed with 23 per cent crude protein and 2750 kcal ME/kg upto eight weeks of age and grower feed with 17 per cent protein and 2720 kcal ME/kg from third month of age till marketing. The turkeys were provided with sparse cultivated grass and cut legumes like Lucerne, Desmanthus, Stylo, Co-4, Subabul, Agathi and green varieties *ad lib*. The body weight of the turkey birds were weighed every month in electronic weighing balance upto eight months of age.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean body weight recorded was 0.250±0.06Kg during the first month, 0.456±0.18kg during the second month, 1.508±0.45kg during the third month, 3.107±0.69kg during fourth month, 4.514±0.64kg during fifth month, 6.080±0.89kg at the end of sixth month, 7.527±0.75kg at the end of seventh month, and 9.013±0.98kg at the end of eighth month of age. This observation is in agreement with Karki and Sah (2004) who have observed the mean body weight of 0.376±22.07kg in poults during the first month of age and the body weight increased with advancement of age and reached 8.4±0.429 kg at eighth month of age. In this study there was a steady increase in body weight up to eight months of age. The livability up to eight months of age was 100 per cent.

### REFERENCES :

- Khaddakar, N. 2001. Popularization and promotion of Turkey farming in India. Modern turkey production and management. Turkey research unit, Central Avian Research Institute, Izatnager.
- Karki, M. and Sah, D. 2004. 6th National Workshop on Livestock and Fishery Research in Nepal, July 1-2.
- Rajendran, R., Kumaravelu, N., Pandian, C., Premavalli, K. and Babu, M. 2012. Indian Vet. J. 89(8):107-108
- Tyagi, P.K.2001. The nutritional requirement of commercial turkeys. Modern turkey production and management. Turkey research unit, Central Avian Research Institute, Izatnager. □