

## ***Dynamics of formal rules and informal norms in the broiler poultry sector in Sri Lanka***

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Broiler meat significantly contributes to food and nutrition in Sri Lankan households, offering an affordable protein source compared to higher-end meats such as beef, pork, and mutton. The growth of the commercial broiler industry has expanded the production and distribution network (PDN), introducing more actors. While there is a set of formal rules imposed by the government that the officials are hands-on in enforcing, the study set out to determine if actors follow informal norms other than formal rules and evaluate the impact that this may have on applying formal rules, specifically regulating implementing biosecurity practices. Participants of this study were divided into three types; Farm Managers, Factory/ Processing Plant Managers, and Farm/Factory/Processing Plant Labourers from three scales of operation; Mega, Large, and Small/Medium. This study collected secondary and primary data through ethnographic methods such as semi-structured interviews and field observations. A total of 19 in-depth interviews at 10 broiler farm sites were conducted. Thematic analysis was conducted on MAXQDA software to analyse the collected data. Results indicate that a combination of formal rules and informal norms governs the poultry industry in Sri Lanka. Formal rules refer to laws and policies established by governmental or private entities that dictate the management practices of the industry. Informal norms are unwritten and implicit behavioral expectations not codified into formal rules. This study found that formal rules lack integration and are not consistently applied across the broiler PDN. Informal norms affect the implementation of formal rules in many ways. Norms determine the degree to which formal rules are followed; whether they're followed to the letter or disregarded altogether. To what extent rules or prescribed practices are followed determines the risk of disease outbreak and product quality. In conclusion, the large-scale farmers who represent most of the broiler farm population often lack the ability or interest to maintain proper biosecurity measures, resulting in poor-quality poultry products. This can be a constraint when entering potential export markets and competing with imported broiler meat products.

**Keywords:** Rules, Norms, Broiler, Biosecurity, Livestock, Poultry

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