



Steven, a young helper, was proud to have responsibility for helping to care for the chickens.

# SHERRIDON POULTRY PROJECT

LOCATION: Sherridon, Manitoba

OBJECTIVE: Raise chickens to provide meat for Elders and community families.

Sherridon has approximately 80 residents, most of whom are Aboriginal people. The community is accessible by gravel road, located about 156 km north of The Pas. Economic activity in the community is mainly limited to hunting, fishing and a few small businesses, and many community members live on a fixed income. Aside from the small local general store, the nearest major grocery store is in Flin Flon – a difficult two hour drive or \$200 taxi trip. To improve local food security the community has started a number of wild-harvesting initiatives.

## Successes

- A 576 square-foot chicken coop was built to raise 250 chickens. All lumber was sourced from a local sawmill and savings on shipping allowed for an additional 100 square-foot storage shed.
- Youth volunteers and community members processed 223 chickens (91% success rate) and distributed 1,611 lbs of meat to six elders and six additional families.
- Community experience raising, slaughtering and preparing chickens increased significantly. Community food champions and other interested community members cared for the chickens; youth volunteers helped slaughter, de-feather, clean, pack and distribute the chickens.
- The project met the needs of community Elders.

## Challenges

- Sharing the work load of processing the chickens was a struggle despite many residents having familiarity with processing wild birds. This was resolved through the purchase of a chicken plucking machine acquired through additional funding.
- The use of a large chicken coop had never been done in the north. Heating costs and ventilation were not fully considered in planning; lack of air movement in the coop may have contributed to deaths during hot summer months. Air flow improvements are planned and the community has decided to raise only 200 birds in 2015.

## Next steps

- Post public notices about the poultry project activities to encourage community participation.
- Share experiences of accessing resources, garnering community support and celebrating projects with other communities.
- Explore sale of chickens to sustain the project and support neighbouring communities to start their own coops. As sharing of food is a traditional practice, the sale of chickens and eggs is limited.

## Organizations involved

Additional planning and support was provided by Food Matters Manitoba and a traditional food distribution project provided processing and freezer space. Food projects continue to be supported by a few key community members and outside organizations including the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative.

I feel better knowing I raised them myself. It's good food.  
– Participant