

Exporting Chicken Peepers from Canada to Nepal to benefit Nepalese Farmers

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## **Product and Company Information**

Berry Hill has been a family owned business located in St. Thomas, Ontario for the past sixty years (Berry Hill, 2014). Berry Hill has been known for their different and unique country living products, with the mission; “To provide our costumers the best service and value possible, to treat our customers like friends and neighbors and build long term relationships that will stand the test of time, just like the products we sell” (Berry Hill, 2014). Ken Fox owns Berry Hill. Ken Fox grew up in St. Thomas, meaning he knows a wide variety of the St. Thomas community, all of which support his store. Berry Hill has a product called chicken peepers. Chicken peepers are my export idea for Nepal. Farmers in Nepal need a simple, cheap, yet efficient product that will help gain higher product yields and allow the farmer to be more successful.

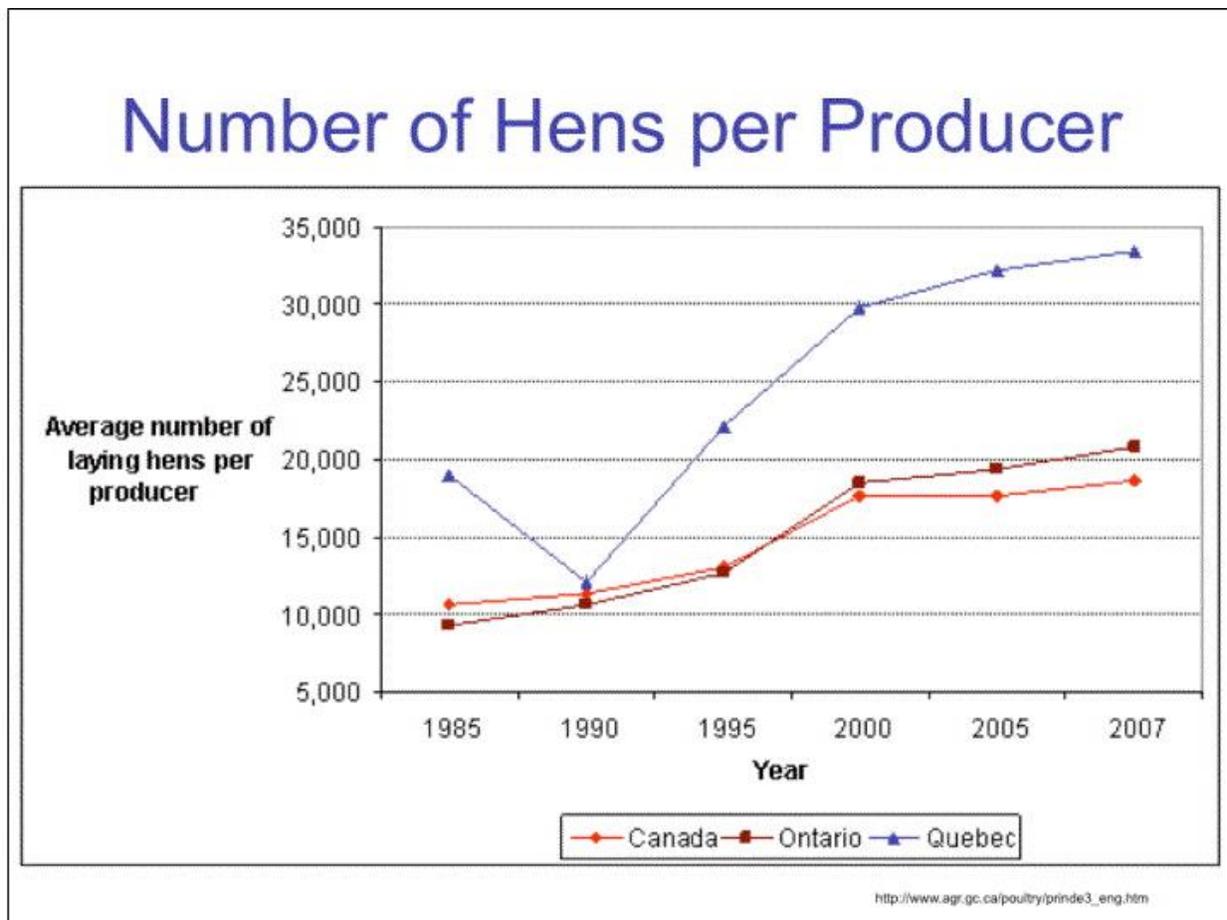
Chicken peepers are designed to attach onto the beak of the chicken, preventing them from seeing directly in front of them. This prevents cannibalism. Cannibalism is a prevalent problem in chicken and game bird flocks (MSU, 2014). It usually begins as simple pecking among the birds and escalates until it is out of control. There are many conditions that increase the likelihood that it will become a serious problem. The problem usually begins by innocent pecking during the establishment of a social order or by pulling of the feathers in certain cases. Some reasons for cannibalism are crowding of chickens, insufficient access to food and water for all birds and also if there are small or odd colored chicks within the flock (MSU, 2014). Chicken peepers are secured on by clips, which secure the peeper on the chicken on each side of the beak. The c-clips fit into small holes on both sides of the chicken peeper. Berry Hill is the only company in Canada that I could find chicken peepers. A company

called Murray McMurray Hatchery sells chicken peepers in the United States; however, there is no competition directly in Canada when buying this product. In discussion with Ken Fox on Sunday, November 9th, 2014 he stated, “Chicken peepers are a cost effective, low maintenance product that ensures the safety of poultry.” (Ken Fox, Pers. Com, November 9th, 2014). Farmers feel a great deal of satisfaction knowing their animals are safe; therefore, chicken peepers would ensure the chickens safety satisfying the farmers.

### **Benefits of Chicken Peepers to Farmers in Canada**

Chicken peepers are beneficial to poultry farmers in Canada because many farmers in Canada have a large amount of chickens on their farm. Flock sizes vary from twenty thousand to fifty thousand birds. For example, Figure 1 shows the numbers of laying hens per producer. The amount of hens vary from about ten thousand to thirty-five thousand, this is a substantial amount of hens. When having a large amount of birds farmers are faced with the risk of cannibalism within their flocks. If the farmer uses open chicken housing, they run the risk of cannibalism even more. When having such a large amount of chickens it would be difficult for farmers to make sure each chicken is safe and secure, chicken peepers would eliminate the stress on the farmer by ensuring each chicken in the flock is safe. Farmers with larger flocks could apply chicken peepers to their chickens in order to prevent feather pecking and cannibalism. This would ensure the farmer gains the highest product yields as possible for their flock and this would also ensure that the farmer’s chickens would be safe.

Figure 1



(Andy Robinson, 2014)

When saying this, there are also many small flock poultry farmers in Canada as well. However, small flocks still run the risk of having cannibalism be an issue. Cannibalism can occur during the establishment of a social order, and small poultry farms cannot afford to lose any chickens or product yields will decrease and the farmer could lose a substantial amount of money. Cannibalism does not only cause death, it can cause a tremendous amount of stress to the chickens from continuous pecking and harm towards one another. Farmers with small flocks

would simply apply the chicken peepers on each of the chickens at a young age, completely eliminating the risk of cannibalism from the start. Preventing the risk of cannibalism in Canada allows farmers to sustain the size of their original flock, gaining increased product yields.

Berry Hill sells chicken peepers for \$37.50 CDN and the c-clips are \$6.59 CDN for a package of one hundred (Berry Hill, 2014). Once purchasing the chicken peepers they can be washed and reused. They are easily attachable, and more importantly chicken peepers are affordable. Chicken peepers are a simple product, yet chicken peepers have many benefits to farmers. By only purchasing them once, and then being able to reuse them throughout a farmer's flock makes chicken peepers affordable for a farmer in both Canada and Nepal. Berry Hill ships world wide, which would allow chicken peepers to be a capable product to be exported to Nepal. For further information those in Canada and Nepal can contact Berry Hill by telephone at, 1-800-668-3072, by email at, [customerservice@berryhill.ca](mailto:customerservice@berryhill.ca) or by letter. Berry Hill's address is 75 Burwell Rd, St Thomas, ON, N5P3R5.

## **Introduction to Nepal**

Nepal is a country located in South Asia, in between China and India (National Geographic). The capital city of Nepal is Kathmandu. Nepal has a total area of 147,181 square kilometers with a population of approximately twenty-seven million people (National Geographic, 2014). The life expectancy throughout Nepal is fifty-nine years old, and the literacy rate is about forty-five percent of people. Most people in Nepal

speaking Nepali and English, and the religions throughout Nepal are Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim. Most Nepalese live in the central, hilly region, which embraces the Kathmandu Valley, and in the southern plain known as the Terai. Nepal possesses the greatest altitude variation on the Earth, from the lowlands near sea level to Mount Everest at 8,850 meters (29,035 feet) (National Geographic, 2014). Here is a map of Nepal:



(Map of Nepal, 1997)

## **Agriculture throughout Nepal**

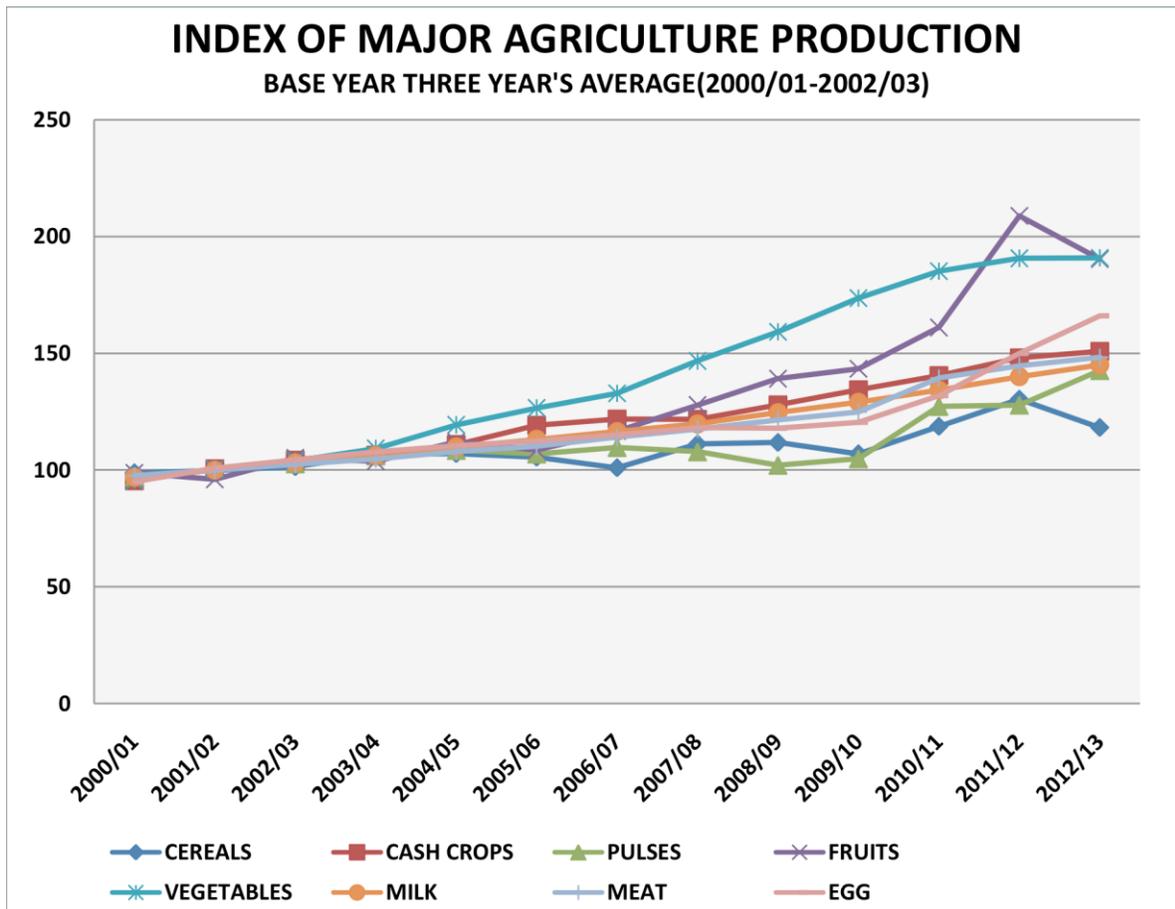
Agriculture in Nepal has long been based on subsistence farming, particularly in the hilly regions where peasants derive their living from fragmented plots of land cultivated in difficult conditions (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2014). Agriculture is the major sector of the Nepalese economy. Over eighty percent of people living in Nepal are involved in agriculture. Over thirty percent of Nepal's GDP comes from agriculture

(Basnet, 2014). The development of agriculture in Nepal is key for the development of the national economy (Basnet, 2014). Government efforts to boost the agricultural economy have focused on easing dependence on weather conditions, increasing productivity, and diversifying the range of crops for local consumption, export, and industrial inputs (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2014). Solutions have included the deployment of irrigation, chemical fertilizers, and improved seed varieties, together with credit provision, technical advice, and limited mechanization. This has had some effect. Land under irrigation increased from 6,200 hectares in 1956 to 583,000 hectares in 1990. The use of chemical fertilizers, introduced in the 1950s, climbed to about 47,000 metric tons by 1998. Still, the weather continues to determine good and bad years for the average farmer. On a national scale, while production of both food and cash crops grew annually by 2.4 percent from 1974 to 1989, population increased at a rate of 2.6 percent over the same period (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2014).

Nepal has a considerable livestock population of cattle, goats, and poultry, but the quality is poor and produces insufficient food for local needs (Misra, 2013). Numerous people are involved in the production, slaughtering, processing, and trading of livestock and livestock products. Over two million households own cattle, and over 1.4 million households raise chickens (Misra, 2013). Overall, about 48.5 percent of chicken eggs were produced in the Central region, of which 64.4 percent were produced in the Central Hills area. The other main chicken egg producing areas are the Central Terai, the Western Hills, and the Eastern Terai, which together produce about 35.4 percent of Nepal's chicken eggs (Francesco Goletti, Peter Gruhn, and Achyut Bhatta, 2001). Like egg production overall, the growth rate of chicken egg

production was highest in most of the major producing areas. Livestock is also an integral part of the agricultural production system in Nepal. Livestock is used for draft power in cultivation, and their dung is used to help enrich soil fertility (Francesco Goletti, Peter Gruhn, and Achyut Bhatta, 2001). Figure 2 illustrates the major agricultural productions throughout Nepal. Chicken eggs are classified as one of the major agriculture productions throughout Nepal. When saying this, chicken peepers could potentially allow egg productions in Nepal to increase to the top major production by allowing farmers to gain higher product yields. With increased flock sizes, or by simply maintaining the original flock size, farmers will have increased yields, increasing the overall chicken egg and meat productions in Nepal.

Figure 2



(Singha Durbar, 2013)

### **Benefits of Chicken Peepers to Farmers in Nepal**

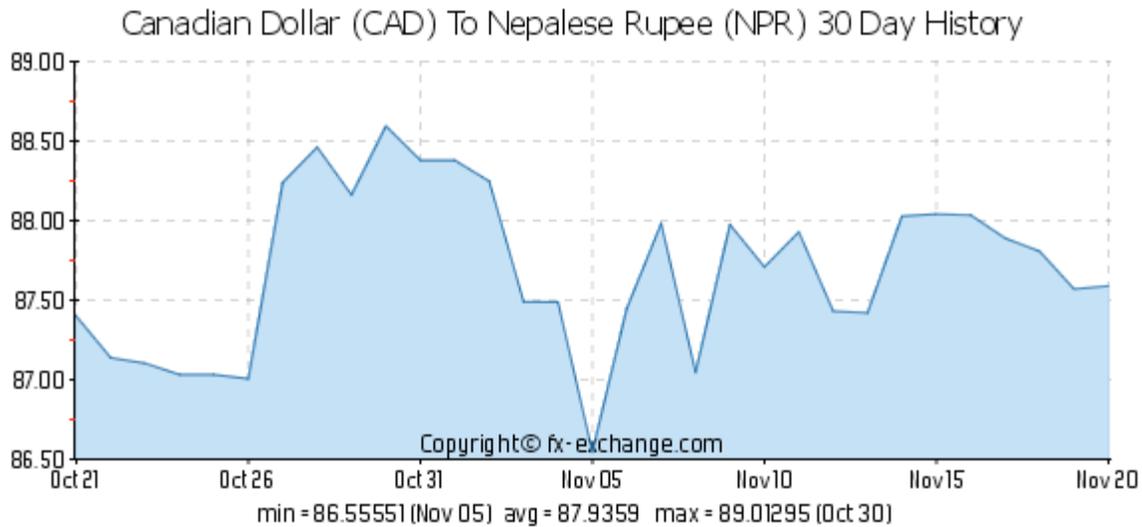
My export idea chicken peepers would interest many poultry farmers throughout Nepal. Chicken peepers are available for farmers that have either a large flock size, or for farmers with a smaller flock size. Farmers in Nepal need to protect their chickens, as they cannot easily afford to replace any. If farmers keep a sustainable flock, using chicken peepers, farmers will produce more eggs and or meat that will gain higher product yields for not only their family but potentially their community as well. People may assume that chicken peepers are only beneficial to those farmers with rather large flocks and it is evident that many farmers in Nepal do not host many chickens due to financial reasons. Chicken peepers would be beneficial to these farmers because it is crucial to protect the chickens they do have in order to make as much profit as possible off the amount of chickens they are personally able to sustain. Many farmers throughout Nepal use open chicken housing, meaning all the chickens are housed in one central area. Chicken peepers would be beneficial in order to protect all the chickens within the housing area, eliminating the risk of cannibalism. Recently I emailed a poultry farmer in Nepal from Pokhara. This farmer owns a family firm based in Begnas Taal, Sisuwa, Pokhara. The firm is called Nepal Poultry Farms. Nepal Poultry Farms has developed the poultry industry to a very high standard (Nepal Poultry Farms, 2014). It is now

considered the major producer of Broilers and Layers day-old chicks, pork, lamb and fish of the best quality free from diseases in Nepal. Quality control is effected by highly qualified personnel who have undergone training in the United Kingdom and developed countries. The owner of Nepal Poultry Farms said on his website, “Our mission is to offer our clients with high quality Commercial Broilers, Lamb, Pork & Fish as well as Commercial Layers all over Nepal and our vision is to become the biggest and most credible supplier all over Nepal.”(Nepal Poultry Farms, 2014). I am still awaiting a response from the owner of Nepal Poultry Farms, however I would hope he believes that chicken peepers would in fact be beneficial to put on his chickens. Based on his website it is assumed he has a very large flock; therefore there would potentially be conflict within his flock when the chickens are discovering their social order. If this were a problem chicken peepers would eliminate this problem for the owner. He has many workers on his farm, as is it a rather large firm; therefore applying the chicken peepers could be done all in one day by workers on the farm. A single day job would cause this farmer less stress because he will then know his chickens are safe and he will be guaranteed to produce the highest product yields possible.

### **Chicken Peepers in Nepal**

Since Nepal is not located near an ocean port, chicken peepers would need to be shipped to either China or India and then further transported on land to Nepal. Nepal receives many of their products from China or India already since they do not have a possible way for products to be shipped directly to them. This means, transporting the

chicken peepers from either China or India would not be an issue. Since the chicken peepers are such a small product, and they take up very little space, they would be easy to pack onto a bus, or truck, that is heading to Nepal. Once in Nepal, the chicken peepers could be sold at local markets or shops, which are regularly visited by farmers. The people in Nepal selling the chicken peepers and c-clips would have no additional labor once receiving the product because the chicken peepers and c-clips come in bags; therefore, the Nepalese people selling the products would just have to bring the bags with them and set them out for farmers and local Nepalese people to see. Information in Nepal is widely spread by word of mouth, so it would just take one farmer to purchase chicken peepers and then spread their thoughts to other farmers in their area. Word travels around Nepal quickly, so within no time poultry farmers throughout Nepal would purchase the chicken peepers. Chicken peepers are \$37.50 CDN and the c-clips are \$6.59 CDN for a package of one hundred (Berry Hill, 2014). When converting this Canadian price to the Nepalese rupee chicken peepers would be 3,273.57 NPR and the c-clips would be 575.27 NPR (Canadian Dollar(CAD) To Nepalese Rupee(NPR) History, 2014). To give people an understanding of these prices, 37.50 Nepalese rupees is only \$0.43 CDN, meaning the currency between Canada and Nepal is very cheap. Here is a chart illustrating the Canadian Dollar to Nepalese Rupee over a thirty day period in 2014:



(Canadian Dollar(CAD) To Nepalese Rupee(NPR) History, 2014)

When looking at the graph it is evident that the currency does not greatly change between Canada and Nepal.

### **Other Competitive Products/Options**

Some people may question why buying chicken peepers is more beneficial than simply just clipping the beak of the chickens. The primary reason is that clipping the beak of chickens has many animal welfare concerns. Five animal welfare concerns regarding beak trimming have been addressed. The five concerns are: loss of normal beak function, short-term pain and temporary debilitation, tongue and nostril damage, neuromas and scar tissue, and long-term and phantom limb pain (Kuenzel, 2007). Studies have been reported showing that when beak trimming is performed at an early age, food intake is significantly reduced during the first several weeks after treatment.

This means the chicks are not receiving the proper nutrients they need in order to grow, due to the lack of eating. Beak trimming has been banned in many European countries due to these animal welfare concerns (Kuenzel, 2007). Chicken peepers do not affect the chicken's beak function, nor do they cause the chickens any pain or damage. Not to mention the fact that farmers in Nepal most likely do not have the proper tools and equipment to perform beak trimming in the first place. Chicken peepers do not require any tools or equipment therefore they are a reasonable product for farmers in Nepal to use. A further study has been done on the possibilities of adapting laying hens to cages by means of genetic selection (Muir, 1994). A strain of laying hens has been developed that shows much less feather pecking and cannibalism than a control strain. This experimental strain has no animal welfare concerns because due to the lack of feather pecking and cannibalism beak trimming is not required. The one major obstacle to overcome before genetic solutions can be made is determining which trait to select in order to truly improve animal well-being. There are at least three broad categories to consider: behavior, physiology, and production. Feather pecking and cannibalism are generally described as behavioral traits that are a disadvantage for the well-being and safety of layers. Therefore, further studies must go into the genetic makeup of chickens with the behavioral trait that leads to feather pecking and cannibalism in order to remove this trait completely (Muir, 1994). Although there are many studies underway in many different countries throughout the world about the animal welfare of beak trimming, and genetic solutions in order to prevent beak trimming completely; chicken peepers would be an easy option that would also eliminate beak trimming. When the chickens are wearing the peepers they cannot see directly in front of them, meaning they would not be able to peck other chickens due to the fact

they cannot see straight ahead. Chickens would have to turn their head to the side to see what is in front of them, meaning their beak would not be facing the chicken located in front of them so pecking would not happen reducing the risk of cannibalism. Further studies could be done on chicken peepers to ensure they are in the best interest of the chickens, meaning they have no harm to the chickens. When saying this, chickens wearing chicken peepers could maintain their regular diet and daily activities; the only aspect that would be affected is their behavior towards other chickens.

Berry Hill would be the perfect company to assist and export chicken peepers to Nepal. Berry Hill has previously provided donations to the organization known as “Just Cause”. Just Cause is founded by Michelle Massaro, a graduate of the University of Guelph in the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 2001, and she is currently a teacher at St. Joseph’s Catholic High School in St Thomas, Ontario (Massaro, 2014). Just Cause is a not-for-profit organization based in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. Just Cause works on education-based projects in Uganda that do not have adequate community or government support (Massaro, 2014). Michelle Massaro said, “We fundraise in Canada throughout the year and spend the summer months on the ground in Uganda directing 100% of our funds towards our education projects.” (Michelle Massaro, Pers. Com, November 17th, 2014). The chicken peepers from Berry Hill were donated with success to the Just Cause organization and brought over to Uganda by Michelle and her team. A chicken coop in Nanso, Uganda used the chicken peepers just over a year ago. Just Cause has a blog, and on the blog they stated, “A visit to the chicken coop confirmed that most of them are still alive and that they look healthy.” This is proving that the chicken peepers were beneficial to a farmer in Uganda for the time length of one year. Ken Fox

believes chicken peepers would be beneficial to farmers in Nepal for to this reason. Ken stated, “Expensive solutions to problems comes with expensive upkeep, skilled labor to maintenance proper functioning of equipment, means there are specific safety standards that must be met if Nepalese farmers are using large equipment. Therefore, a product like chicken peepers is small, cheap, reusable and safe for Nepalese farmers to use.” (Ken Fox, Pers. Com, November 9th, 2014). Many Nepalese farmers do not have the training in order to use large and heavy farm equipment like farmers in Canada have. Therefore, when choosing a product to export to Nepal you must take these aspects into consideration. This is why chicken peepers are a product that is reasonable for Nepalese farmers to use and would be a successful product in Nepal.

Word Count: 3265

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