

Mythical 100

Chapter 100: Livelihood and Ingenious Craftsmanship

Xu Province's Tao Qianzhu continues to strongly support Liu Bei. Aside from borrowing and lending goods without expecting returns, he also sells large quantities at low prices. Honestly, Liu Bei's well-being is largely thanks to Xu Province. Otherwise, given Taishan's current development, life would be much tighter, especially with over 300,000 extra mouths to feed.

Chen Xi has already started organizing efforts to raise chickens and ducks, not only for meat but also to counter the biannual locust plagues. Starting with small-scale trials, once successful, they plan to distribute breeding stock widely. With roughly 200,000 households among the 800,000 people, providing 2 million chicks could make a significant impact on locust control. At least, that's the hope.

In Chen Xi's calculations, a million chicks would cost about 300,000 coins. Distributing them, even if it failed, wouldn't draw much attention. If successful, it could increase public satisfaction. Having more meat and being well-fed could also help people cultivate their energy, which is always a good thing in this era.

Chen Xi began by posting notices seeking experienced chicken breeders, asking them to start with a few hundred chicks. Surprisingly, chickens proved easy to raise. Upon reflection, Chen Xi realized that creatures had likely evolved over 400 years, increasing their energy levels even if their appearance remained unchanged.

With this unexpected success, Chen Xi felt more confident. Distributing ten chicks per household, calculating for four-person households, resulted in the entire population organizing into four-person units for easy accounting.

The real challenge was sourcing enough chicks. Chen Xi resorted to mass incubation methods like heated brick beds. Controlling the temperature and ensuring viable eggs weren't his problem—he trusted that among so many people, some would know how to manage it.

After tackling these tasks, Chen Xi realized why large-scale poultry farming wasn't common in ancient times—there simply weren't enough breeding stocks. Collecting a million hatching eggs wasn't an issue, but with each hen able to incubate only twenty eggs at a time, they needed countless strong hens. The sheer logistics were mind-boggling.

Chen Xi left the professional work to experts, though Liu Bei's reaction to his unusual knowledge of agriculture was bemused. For someone from a noble family, understanding such practical matters was unexpected, especially techniques with significant impacts on public welfare.

Ignoring his colleagues' curious looks, Chen Xi continued his plans. He was also intrigued by the possibility of extraordinary animals emerging from large populations, like Lu Bu and Zhao Yun among humans, or Red Hare and Night Luminous among horses. He wondered if similar phenomena could occur among chickens.

Imagining a super-chicken with energy levels akin to internal energy warriors amused Chen Xi. He distributed the chicks once they were larger than his fist, fully feathered, allowing people to keep or consume them as they saw fit. Knowing the locals, he was confident they wouldn't eat their hope for the future.

Extra roosters were assigned to a recruited chicken farming expert, now a servant of the Chen family. Chen Xi relocated him outside the city to raise the surplus poultry, with Taishan providing feed. All excess roosters would eventually become meals for the military, since Chen Xi still marveled at how the locals could identify hens from such small chicks, maintaining a 9:1 ratio.

Chen Xi's long-term projects in Taishan also began showing results. Though they hadn't achieved his goal of decorated white porcelain, some experimental pieces and colored glassware emerged. While their first clear glass cup was riddled with cracks, it was still functional, earning Liu Bei's admiration as a marvel of craftsmanship.

Given this, Chen Xi sealed the kiln, deeming the pieces as prototypes and reserving them for special purposes. He kept three sets for himself, leaving the rest for Liu Bei to distribute as he saw fit.

The pristine white porcelain and glassware became rare treasures, used for diplomatic gifts and fostering alliances. Liu Bei even gave Chen Xi the cracked but leak-proof glass cup, which Chen Xi accepted amid envious glances, planning to display rather than use it.

Liu Bei sent the finest set to Chang'an, with others going to Kong Rong and Tao Qian, keeping only practical gifts like grain for Gongsun Zan.

Curious about Hua Xiong's delayed return, Liu Bei trusted Chen Xi's judgment. He never doubted Hua Xiong's capability or his elite troops' resilience. With Chen Xi's foresight, Liu Bei remained patient, unaware that Hua Xiong was busy subduing bandits in Yongzhou.