

COMMUNITY LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

A CASE OF KATHEKANI KENYA

By

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*Mission statement: To build the skills
of poor people in developing
countries enabling them to improve
the quality of their lives and that of
future generations*

Background information of Kathekani

- Dryland farming area
- Bimodal rainfall (around 600mm/annum)
- Dominant vegetation-commiphora and *acacia* species
- Population- 17,300 people (3000 HH)
- Occupation- agropastoralists
- Livestock reared-cattle, sheep,goats and chicken
- Area is tsetse infested
- Preferred livestock species are indigenous goats, the East African and the Galla

Cultural value of the goat

- Dowry payment
- Traditional rituals
- Traditional healers fees
- Social purposes
- Prestige

Objectives of the Initiatives

- Building of a strong local capacity to address livestock production constraints
- Improving household income through the sale of goats for slaughter and the breeding stock
- Exploiting the existing local goat gene pool to achieve higher productivity

Management systems of goat rearing

- Population of goats-60,000 and cattle 21,000
- Semi-intensive management systems
- Supplementation feeding-mineral supplements, on-farm byproducts, others
- Mineral supplements based on naturally occurring salt licks,
- Made into salt blocks and sold to farmers @ \$1/kg

Existing goat genetic resources

The East African goat

- Found all over EA
- Among the most successful in ASALs
- Colour ranges from pure white to pure black with various intermixes of roan and speckled brown
- Adults males attain up to 35kg and 25-30kg for females
- Attain sexual maturity at 5-6months
- Low growth rate, yearlings hardly achieve 20kg
- Have a high ability to survive
- Have high potential for selection

Galla goat

- Indigenous to northern Kenya
- Bucks have adult weight of 70 Kg and does 45-55kgs
- Kept for their higher milk yield
- Continues to gain weight upto 8 years of age
- Colour: White haired with black skin, nose, feet and under the tail
- Has strong dental system, rarely culled for this problem
- Remarkable power of compensatory growth after long dry season
- High wither weight and long bodies
- Females produce 20kgs of kids at weaning

Breeding program

- Communal group approach
- 9 groups each with 15 members
- Selection of best performing EA goat males and females
- Physical relocation of the males
- Financial contribution to purchase the group Galla buck
- Each group member takes custody of buck for one month
- Ensures that all farmers can access the buck
- Farmers attempt to control mating among goats
- Breeders association supports the initiative

Institutional support

- Agriculture & Rural Development Ministry
- Community Animal Health Workers
- Ethnoveterinary practitioners
- Traders
- ITDG-EA

SUSTAINABILITY

- Community Ownership
- Strengthened Institutions
- Communal approach

Outcome

- Higher sales of goats to traders and butchers
EA at a live weight of 25kg costs \$20, cross of 45kg \$67
- Improved livestock management practices
- Greater networking between community members and other stakeholders

Constraints

- Limited availability of pastures
- Lack of adequate resources
- Risk of uncontrolled mating
- Predation of animals by wildlife
- Lack of appropriate breeding policy
- Low level of literacy
- Lack of clear breeding goal by farmers

Lessons learnt

- Breeding programmes should be integrated(holistic)
- In-situ conservation can only be successful with direct benefits
- Organised community activities lead to faster realization of development

Conclusion

- Farmers are focused on short term and not long term benefits
- Sound Technical guidance is required
- A clear breeding policy is required

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