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Routine livestock data collection in Tanzania

The Tanzania Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development (MLFD) 'has the mandate of overall management and development of livestock and fisheries resources for sustainable achievement of [...] the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, Improved Livelihood of Livestock and Fisheries Dependent Communities, Food Safety & Security without compromising Animal Welfare and Environmental Conservation' (www.mifugo.go.tz).

Reliable livestock data and statistics are critical for MLFD's mandate, and generated by a variety of sources, including administrative records, surveys and censuses:

- (i) Administrative records livestock data are collected by Local Governments in all Districts of the country on a continuous basis.
- (ii) Agricultural surveys are administered every year or few years to a nationally representative sample of households on a multiplicity of their characteristics, and include some livestock-related questions. They are usually conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).
- (iii) Agricultural Sample Censuses are conducted about every five years and collect a limited set of information from a large sample of households - 5.9 million households were interviewed for the 2007/2008 Census. The latest livestock Census in Tanzania was carried out in 1984. Censuses provide the gold standard data against which administrative records data and *ad hoc* surveys can be corrected and judged. They are usually carried out jointly by MLFD, NBS and other Agricultural Lead Ministries.

Because censuses and surveys data are not available on a continuous basis and data are disseminated with some delay (the final reports of 2007/2008 Agricultural Sample Census have not been released as of February 2011), MLFD primarily use administrative records livestock data for its daily activities, as well as for annual planning and budgeting.

The collection of administrative records livestock data

In Tanzania, staff from the 127 Districts or Local Government Authorities (LGA) are responsible for the routine collection of livestock-related data.

In particular, Livestock/Veterinary Officers or Agriculture (Crop) Officers employed by LGAs provide livestock extension services to rural households at village level, and are expected to also collect some livestock-related data. Their activities are directed and supervised by a District Agriculture and Livestock/Veterinary Development Officer (DALDO).

At village level livestock data are collected according to a format detailed by LGAs - i.e. there is no a unique format used throughout the country - as data are primarily collected to meet the data needs of District Authorities.

Livestock/Veterinary Officers or Agriculture (Crop) Officers Village extension officers deliver the data they collect to the Ward Extension Officer, who compiles and assembles data from the various villages and sends them to the District on a monthly basis (the Ward is an administrative sub-division between the villages and the District). Districts assemble and analyze the data for planning, monitoring and evaluation and, in turn, share it with the Regional Governments (there are 26 Regions in Tanzania).

Some Districts send monthly reports on livestock to MLFD, though they are not mandated to do so. For the other Districts, when needed, it's

MLFD who requires the data either to LGAs or to the Regions.

What livestock data are routinely collected?

The livestock-related data which are usually collected by LGAs comprise information on water availability and grazing conditions as well as detailed information on some livestock domains. In general, available District data cover the following:

- Water and pasture conditions;
- Outbreaks of animal diseases;
- Animal quarantine and other restrictions;
- Vaccinations carried out;
- Tick control;
- Artificial insemination;
- Meat inspection services;
- Livestock movements;
- Production of milk, meat and eggs;
- Livestock markets (animal sold and prices);
- Production of hides and skins;
- Infrastructure availability (e.g. dip tanks, market infrastructure, slaughter slabs, etc);
- Staff disposition and equipments available.

On the quality and use of livestock data

The collected livestock data, which are jointly used with data from other sources, provide an invaluable source of information for MLFD to formulate policies and implement sector projects and programmes. However, the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of data are often inadequate, because of limited resources, staff and technical capacity both at local and national level, as well as because of the lack of formal linkages between LGAs and MLFD.

Agriculture/Livestock Officers at village level are responsible for many activities, including data collection for which there's little facilitation – e.g. no questionnaire and stationeries provided by the LGAs; when training is given, it's only on technical related matters – so that District data are often based on extrapolation from old data.

The Statistics Unit at MLFD is manned by three qualified individuals of which one is currently on study leave for two years (October 2010 - October 2012). So far MLFD has not been equipped with an appropriate software for storing and analysis of data.

In addition, because routine livestock data are not easily combined with socio-economic data, it is difficult for MLFD to formulate policies and implement projects and programmes that contribute both to livestock sector growth and accelerated poverty reduction, which are major objectives of the 2010-2015 National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction.

More and better livestock data

The National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction recognizes that 'incentives for the production of robust data, their analysis, interpretation sensitization and communication, dissemination and utilisation are still relatively weak'.

The Statistical Master Plan 2009-2014 aims to 'strengthen the National Statistical System in Tanzania so as to enable it to produce quality statistics for decision makers in an objective, timely and cost effective manner'. It recognizes that collaboration and co-ordination mechanisms between Statistical Institutions and Government Ministries / Agencies is a pre-condition for the effective improvement of data and statistics, including those related to livestock.

The Livestock Data Innovation Project aims to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between major livestock data stakeholders in Tanzania, such as NBS, MLFD, the Ministry of Industry, Trade & Marketing, and other public and private sector actors. The ultimate objective is to support the implementation of the National Statistical Master Plan and contribute to improve the quantity / quality of livestock data and statistics available for designing public and private livestock sector investments.

For further information please visit:

www.africalivestock.data.org

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