



POLITICALLY FEASIBLE PRO-POOR LIVESTOCK POLICIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH AND ORISSA STATES, INDIA

The livestock sector has significant potential for improving the livelihoods of landless people and small and marginal farmers, who comprise the majority of India's rural poor. However, resource and institutional constraints prevent poor producers from realizing the full potential of the animals they possess. Developing effective pro-poor livestock policies requires consideration of the political context and attention to the specific characteristics of poor livestock producers.

● Policy Constraints

Livestock policy options are constrained by two factors. First, both the Indian central government and the state governments of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa are committed to neo-liberal policies. Although the retreat from statism is far from complete, policies inconsistent with liberalization, such as increasing state service provision, are unlikely to receive serious consideration. Second, the low level of organization by poor livestock producers has meant that livestock policy is shaped by the agendas of more organized groups. Without greater producer organization, it is unlikely that policies that impose costs on more organized interests, such as Hindu nationalists or state employees, will be implemented. Recent cases in which livestock producers have organized demonstrate that producer groups can influence the content and implementation of sector policy.

Prospects for organizations specific to the livestock sector are limited as long as livestock remains a secondary occupation or livelihood for most producers. However, external actors can support the development of broad-based organizations in which poor producers comprise a substantial share of the membership. These organizations can help livestock

producers develop the skills to advocate on their own behalf and serve as a base through which producers articulate their interests.

External actors also can support member-based dairy cooperatives and other producer associations when and where they emerge, and can support poor producers involved in mixed organizations. By facilitating information sharing and organizational development, outside actors can reduce the cost of organization. Additionally, these actors can monitor and support local organizations that exert control over important resources. The Panchayati Raj institutions and user groups have the potential to be inclusive and democratic despite evident failures. Critical attention to local organizations increases the likelihood that poor producers will be able to participate effectively.

● Producer Characteristics

The distribution of benefits from livestock policies is shaped by the characteristics of poor livestock producers. These producers tend to own little or no land and are often of low social status. Thus poor producers are unlikely to benefit from an intervention that requires land or financial resources. Smallholders and landless households differ from other households in the mix of animals they own and their means of supporting these animals. Poor livestock producers own fewer large ruminants (cows and buffaloes); they are more likely to possess small ruminants (goats and sheep) and backyard poultry. Additionally, poor producers depend more heavily on common property resources - village pastures, water tanks, and local forests - for feed and fodder. Measures that improve common resources or focus on small ruminants and free-range poultry are likely to benefit poor producers.



- **Access to Shared Resources**

The condition of common lands and forests has been declining for several decades. Many common lands and most of the forests are owned and controlled by state or national government, and forest ministries have sought to reduce the presence of livestock. In Andhra Pradesh, an effort by the Forest Department to restrict grazing, and the rapid mobilization of sheep and goat rearers' associations and their NGO allies, led to the creation of the AP Forestry Committee. Because livestock producers are represented, along with Forestry and Animal Husbandry officials, the committee provides a venue through which producers can advocate livestock-friendly forest policies. Actors can also seek to ensure that producers' needs are addressed in the many central and state government, NGO, and donor initiatives to improve conditions on common lands, in forests, and in watersheds.

- **Animal Health Sector Reforms**

Andhra Pradesh and Orissa are undertaking major reforms in this area. These reforms will subject health services to market forces. Both states have implemented user fees for breeding services. Orissa has imposed user charges for veterinary services and envisions the gradual privatization of health services. Orissa also plans to build the capacity of small holders, to promote linkages between grassroots organizations and the animal husbandry department, and to re-orient the directorate towards disease control, prevention and eradication, and sector development. Pro-poor initiatives within this framework would develop incentives for practitioners to provide preventive care and extension services. Geographic targeting may be necessary to ensure that producers in poor areas have access to health services and is the best use of residual state veterinary employees.

- **Dairy Sector**

Past dairy sector interventions have focused on productivity (breed improvement) and cooperative

marketing and processing. Cross-breeding improvement efforts have met with little success, and prospects for pro-poor breeding interventions appear low. Culling restrictions and low inputs of feed and fodder by poor producers pose daunting barriers. The cooperative dairy sector provides benefits to poor producers, but is limited by the extensive involvement of state governments in cooperatives. Recent reforms have exposed cooperatives to greater competition from private firms. Cooperative law reforms could make it possible for cooperatives to increase their autonomy. Pro-poor interventions in dairy include pressuring the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa to implement the new laws.

- **Small Ruminant Sector**

Sheep and goat rearing has persisted in a sometimes hostile policy environment. In Andhra Pradesh, policymakers have been fairly hostile to small ruminants, but producers are relatively well organized. The Orissa State Livestock Sector Policy acknowledges the importance of small and meat animals, but producers are less organized. Although informants indicate that access to shared resources and health services are major issues, lack of information limits the development of pro-poor policies. Research on the marketing commodity chain for these animals would be an important starting point.

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