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Promotion of Traditional Animal Traction Practices among the Shangaan People of Mozambique for Poverty Alleviation

ROMUALD RUTAZIHANA, JACOB WANYAMA, EMMA BRADLEY

Vetaid Mozambique, Gaza Food Security Project, Mozambique

Abstract

The Shangaan people are agro-pastoralists who live in the south of Mozambique. The Shangaan who originated from near the central Africa came into the present day Gaza Province of the Republic of Mozambique from further south as they fled the Zulu wars. Traditionally the Shangaan people till their land along the Limpopo valley, keep livestock and fish for their livelihoods. Livestock kept include cattle, sheep and goats, pigs and chicken. Like most rural poor populations in developing countries, the Shangaan community use their animals for their transport and land tilling needs. The Shangaan have therefore developed a rich knowledge on how to keep, handle and use their animals for power. Animals used for draught power include cattle and donkeys. However, over the years, the Shangaan people have encountered a series of disasters that have affected the conservation and use of their traditional knowledge. The liberation war from the Portuguese, the civil conflict which started immediately after their country got independence, floods and frequent droughts, resulted in displacement and loss of the draught animals, as well traditional knowledge. With the signing of peace accord in 1992 and the subsequent accelerated development effort in their region, the Shangaan agro-pastoralists are, not only having to rebuild their herds, but also their knowledge on how to handle and use their animals their power needs. To promote this knowledge and practice, VETAID Mozambique conducted a survey on the traditional techniques of animal traction in the north of Gaza Province. The objective was to evaluate the traditional techniques in the region and design a programme to integrate these techniques with appropriate modern techniques for the food security of these people. This paper presents the results of this survey how by use of Endogenous Livestock Development approach VETAID Mozambique and its partners is promoting the use of animal draft power in a bit to ensure food security.

Keywords: Community-based Animal Traction Centres, Endogenous Livestock Development, Food Security, the Shangaan people, Traditional Animal Traction Practices, VETAID Mozambique