

# Strengthening livestock market flows and feeding practices for improved livelihoods in southern Zimbabwe



ICRISAT



Science with a Human Face

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## Rationale

Crop-livestock systems are the most common form of land use in Zimbabwe drylands. Cereal crops, sorghum and millet contribute to food security but have little potential for commercialization. Livestock are important as a source of income and insurance, especially in the drought prone areas.

However, with poorly developed livestock markets, farmers have little incentives to invest in livestock production and off-take therefore remains low.



## Key question

Would improved market participation provide the incentive for small-scale livestock producers to invest more in livestock production?

## The project

BMZ funded a 3 year study on dry season feeding of livestock in the semi-arid areas of Zimbabwe; contributing to ICRISAT's mandate in the semi-arid tropics, poverty alleviation and crop-livestock integration, in collaboration with AREX, DLPD, DMP and SNV.

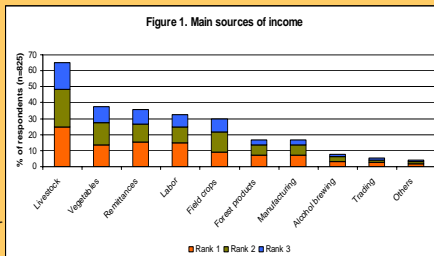


## Activities

- Baseline diagnosis of goat and cattle production through household surveys in 6 districts, stratified by market access.
- Evaluation of goat and cattle markets through key informant discussions with traders, processors and consumers.
- Multi-stakeholder workshops to identify, test and disseminate improved feeding technologies.

The results will contribute to a larger regional program on Livestock and Livelihoods in Southern Africa (ICART/CRARF).

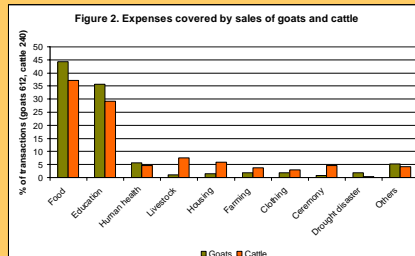
## Research highlights



### Importance of livestock for small-scale farmers

Farmers rank livestock as most important source of income.

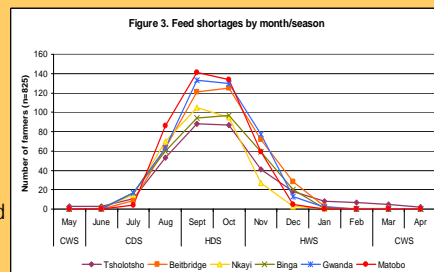
Depending on herd size most farmers keep cattle for draft power and goats for cash, meat and milk.



### Cash from livestock for better livelihoods

Sales from livestock are crucial for direct and indirect food security, education and health.

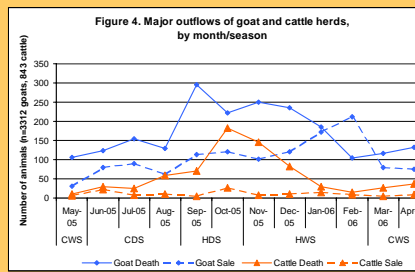
Goats empower vulnerable households (HIV/AIDS, gender, poor).



### Key constraint: feed shortages

Farmers start feeling feed shortages in July, with a peak in September/October.

Districts differ in the beginning and intensity of feed shortages and require targeted interventions.



### Key challenge: reducing mortality

Interventions that reduce mortality during dry seasons will increase animals available for slaughter and sale – increased benefits.

## Way forward

The entry point for reduced livestock mortality is to promote improved feeding management. Better developed livestock markets will provide the necessary incentive for farmers to invest in feed resources.

An innovative approach will focus on commercializing farmers for technology development. Facilitating farmer-trader linkages will help to define intervention priorities and enhance knowledge transfer.



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