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"Competition for Resources in a Changing World:
New Drive for Rural Development"

Gender and Forage Resource Use in the Transitional Zone of Ghana

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Abstract

Small ruminants are kept as an adjunct to crop farming in the transitional zone of Ghana. Not much has been done to catalogue the forage resources of this zone and their extent of utilisation by men and women farmers, for gender specific interventions. This study, conducted in the Ejura-Sekyedumasi District of Ghana, bridges this information gap. Items eaten by small ruminants were elicited from 22 men and 19 women by the freelisting method. Data analysis was with Anthropac and SPSS software. Smith's salience index was calculated for each item. The 175 items mentioned included 37 wild trees and shrubs, 37 natural grasses and forbs, 19 cultivated trees and shrubs, 28 crops, 38 crop residues and 12 crop by-products. Pairwise ranking of all feed categories based on the most used by stock was done using a men and a women focus groups. Again, eighteen men and twelve women listed feeds they usually fed to small ruminants. Wild browse species constituted 22 % and 18.5 % respectively of what men and women used. The most salient was *Margaritania discoidea* for men (0.398) and women (0.278), followed by *Pterocarpus erinaceus* with 0.256 for men and 0.210 for women. Both men and women ranked natural pasture species first on a scale of 8, constituting 22.2 % of what women fed but none by men. Cultivated tree species accounted for 18.2 % and 18.5 % respectively of what men and women fed. The most salient was *Ficus* spp for men (0.209) and women (0.309). Crop residue accounted for 27.3 % and 11.3 % of what men and women fed respectively. The most common, banana leaves, had a salience of 0.254 for men and 0.138 for women. Cassava peels were the most salient crop by-product for men (0.361) and women (0.646). Though 28 crops were listed as feed, and 13.6 % and 11.1 % of what men and women fed respectively were crops, pairwise comparison by both groups ranked crops last. The most salient feed was maize grains for men (0.749) and women (0.657). Farmers fed maize grains to tame stock. It was concluded that women would rely more on feeds obtained near the homestead.

Keywords: Feed, freelisting, gender, salience, small ruminants, transition zone

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