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

Cow and Camel Milk Production and Marketing in Agro-Pastoral and Mixed Crop-Livestock Systems in Ethiopia

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Mieso district, 300 km south east of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Participatory rural appraisal (PRA), focus group discussions, formal survey and monitoring were used to characterise the traditional milk production and marketing system and to identify constraints and opportunities for development. A total of 120 farmers / agro-pastoralists from five rural Kebeles (Dire-kalu, Welda-jejeba, Hunde-misoma, Gena, and Huse-mendera) were involved. Milk marketing was monitored in Mieso and Asebot towns. Indigenous breeds of cattle, camels and goats are used for milk production, and natural pasture and crop residues (sorghum and maize stover) are important feed resources. Mineral soil salt (haya) is used by about 40% of the respondents. Average cow milk yield per head/day in the wet and the dry seasons was estimated at 3.26 ± 0.07 and 1.63 ± 0.04 liters, respectively, while the respective values for camel were 7.12 ± 0.33 and 3.85 ± 0.20 liters. Average milk produced per household per day in the wet and the dry season was 4.80 ± 0.22 and 2.37 ± 0.11 liters for cows and 13.19 ± 0.95 and 7.63 ± 0.82 liters for camels. Milk and milk product sale is a major sources of income for 96% of the respondents. The amount of cow and camel milk supplied to the market decreases during the dry season by 39% and 28%, respectively. The amount of cow and camel milk sold per day was higher in Mieso (496.6 ± 19.12 liters) than in Asebot market (187.89 ± 19.12 liters). Milk is sold by women organised in traditional milk associations (locally called Faraqa Annanni) or on individual basis. Distance to markets and availability of Faraqa Annanni were important factors on decision to participate in milk marketing. Feed scarcity, water shortage, security problem, and limited access to veterinary services were the major problems identified by 41%, 30%, 14.5% and 8% of the respondents, respectively. Mortality rate due to diseases was identified as a major cause of loss in cattle (65% of respondents) and camels (67%). Feed resources development, animal health care, strengthening the traditional milk marketing groups and capacity development in all aspects of milk production and marketing will enhance market participation of farmers and agro-pastoralists.

Keywords: Agro-pastoral, camel, cow, crop-livestock, Ethiopia