



Tropentag, October 6-8, 2009, Hamburg

“Biophysical and Socio-economic Frame Conditions
for the Sustainable Management
of Natural Resources”

Farmer Innovation and Market-oriented Livestock Production in Ethiopia — Key to Sustainable Natural Resources Management

AZAGE TEGEGNE, GEBREMEDHIN WOLDEWAHID, ZEWDU AYELE, KAHSAY BERHE

International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Ethiopia

Abstract

Developing countries have been trying to develop feed resources for livestock production through numerous natural resource management projects, with the hope that these feed resources would be utilised by livestock in a sustainable manner. However, lessons have shown that such a technology push approach alone resulted neither in improved livestock production nor in sustained natural resources management. Recognition of farmer innovation, community participation and mobilisation with a focus on a market-oriented livestock production are key elements for generating demand for and uptake of technologies and sustainable management of the natural resource base. The interventions should address constraints of a particular commodity along the value chain with innovation systems perspective. Technological interventions coupled with appropriate organisational and institutional arrangements are critical factors for successful fodder development to optimise livestock dependent income. This approach was tested by the Improving Productivity and Market Success (IPMS) project in two ecologically contrasting districts in Ethiopia; Atsbi district in Tigray Region in the highlands of northern Ethiopia and Mieso district in Oromiya Region in the lowlands of eastern Ethiopia. The targeted livestock species for market-orientation were sheep production in Atsbi and cattle and goat production in Mieso. Systematic and step-wise procedures were employed to assess the production system and the implement the interventions in the value chain of market oriented livestock production. The main activities were identification of pilot intervention sites, documentation of farmer innovations, targeting the interventions, community mobilisation and participation, capacity building through visits and training and constant demonstration and follow up, as well as linking livestock keepers to credit facilities and markets. Targeted technological interventions included natural pasture improvement, backyard forage introduction and development, integration of forage legumes into cereal production systems and various forms of utilisation of feed resources for livestock production. The paper explains the approaches, methods and processes used to introduce various feed technologies and describes the link between feed resources development and market-oriented livestock production for sustainable management of the natural resource base. The lessons learned provide valuable information for scaling up to other areas with similar potential for market-oriented livestock development.

Keywords: Ethiopia, feed resources, livestock, market-oriented, natural resources management