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“Development on the margin”

SWOT Analysis of Smallholder Livestock Production from the Perspective of Meat Consumers in Colombia and Nicaragua

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Abstract

Global population growth, rising urbanisation, and income growth in developing countries lead to changes in peoples diets resulting in a rapidly increasing demand for meat. A higher demand on the one hand leads to opportunities for the livestock sector but on the other hand also puts stress on it. Environmental and public health issues force producers to adapt adequate production technologies and to guarantee a high product quality. This is an enormous challenge for smallholder livestock producers which are often lacking sufficient resources or knowledge and might limit their production capacity or market opportunities. In 2010, a semi-quantitative consumer study was conducted in Colombia and Nicaragua detecting consumer meat preferences, the state of knowledge about quality standards, and the attitude of the consumers towards smallholder livestock producers. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats existing for smallholder livestock producers were identified. Results show that in both countries, meat price still is of major importance for consumers – meat quality is less considered but growing in importance. Thus, consumers mainly choose their meat supplier regarding meat price. Nevertheless, fear of diseases transmitted via meat consumption is prevalent. The level of knowledge about meat origin is low in both countries. Concerning the fulfilment of quality standards by distributors, consumers seem to be better informed– but results show that in many cases their information is wrong. Strengths and opportunities of smallholder production are amongst others cheaper product prices, the image of utilising natural feeds or higher connectivity with the consumer. Weaknesses and threats are for example low product quality, lack of transparency, insufficient formal quality control, or limited access to credit and training. Assisting smallholder producers to focus on the strengths and opportunities and to reduce the weaknesses and threats could help to satisfy consumer preferences and respond to new market opportunities.

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, consumer information, Latin America, smallholder livestock production