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“Development on the margin”

Goat Production System and Opportunities for Market Orientation in Southern Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to describe goat production and marketing systems, determine production potentials and opportunities for market-orientation in southern Ethiopia. The study area was stratified into Moist Kola (lowland), Moist Weyina Dega (midland) and Dega (highland) agro-ecologies. Flock monitoring was carried out from September 2006 to March 2007. Three primary, one secondary and one terminal markets were studied at Dale, Tula and Hawasa, respectively using Rapid Marketing Appraisal (RMA) technique. The average family size was 7.5 ± 0.25 per household and about 75% of the male and 50% of the female headed households were literate. The overall mean goat holding per household was 5.98 and varied among agro-ecologies. Mean weaning age (WA), age at first mating (AFM), age at first kidding (AFK), kidding interval (KI), and litter size were 5.2, 9.7, 14.9, 8.6 months and 1.62, respectively. WA in Moist Dega (6.47 ± 0.45) was longer ($p < 0.05$) than in Moist Weyina Dega and Moist Kola. KI was 8.56, 7.27 and 8.57 months in Moist Dega, Moist Weyina Dega and Moist Kola, respectively. Mean litter size for Moist Kola (2.07) was higher ($p < 0.05$) than in Moist Dega and Moist Weyina Dega. Goats in Moist Kola had longer ($p < 0.05$) lifetime kidding of 16.27 years than those in the other two sites. The major feed sources were shrubs and trees in Moist Kola, while crop by products, crop residues, enset (false banana) and fruit trees, vegetables and chat leftovers were the main feed sources for tethered and herded goats of Moist Weyina Dega and Dega. Shortage of feed, diseases and marketing are the major constraints affecting goat production. The increasing local and export demand for goat meat, the experiences of flock holders to carry out small scale goat fattening activities, fast growing goat meat butcheries and demand for goat market, the conduciveness of the agro-ecologies and sufficient family labour are some of the opportunities to develop a market-oriented goat production in the area.

Keywords: Ethiopia, goat, market orientation, production