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“Solidarity in a competing world —
fair use of resources”

Agricultural Commercialisation and Species Diversity of Urban Livestock in Bamako

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Abstract

This paper studies agricultural commercialisation and production patterns of urban and peri-urban livestock-owning households in Bamako, capital of Mali. Since almost forty percent of the country is already urbanized and livestock in Bamako alone represents 28% of the domestic national stock, it is of great interest to study urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) as a food insecurity and poverty alleviator. Research was conducted from 11/2015 to 01/2016 in the framework of the BMBF-funded project UrbanFood^P and with support of the “Institut d'Economie Rurale du Mali”. A total of 198 semi-structured questionnaires were completed in livestock-keeping UPA households. Their location matched population densities and was randomly fixed *ex-ante*, with 30 points in urban and 30 points in peri-urban areas.

Farmers have on average 12 years of experience in livestock management. Poultry and sheep, present in 74 % and 72 % of households, respectively, are by far the most popular species. In contrast, cattle and goats are owned by only a quarter of interviewed households. Most households manage two species (29 %), but this is barely above the 27 % of farms that keep only one species, which is sheep for more than half the cases.

In terms of market orientation, most households do not sell any livestock, and if they do, they sell small numbers. For instance, 48% of households sold a ruminant in the last year. More importantly, 83 % of those ruminants' sellers sold less than 10 heads, resulting in a median of 3 ruminants sold per year. For poultry, 39% of households sold chicken (either exotic or local breed), but 81% thereof sold less than 100 birds per year (median 10). Commercialisation of animal produces is also limited. Out of the farmers who keep track of their hens, only 14 % sell the eggs. Additionally, zero goat owners marketed milk, even though one liter can be sold for 1000 Francs CFA (€ 1.52) in comparison to 400 FCFA (€ 0.60) for cow milk. Thus, there is a considerable potential for cash earning through UPA livestock activities in Bamako, which is yet not very much exploited.

Keywords: Commercialisation, food security, species diversity, urban livestock, West Africa