



Tropentag, September 11-13, 2024, hybrid conference

“Exploring opportunities ...
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

Challenges of camel milk production and marketing in pastoral setting of Oromia region, Ethiopia

REGINA ROESSLER¹, BEKELE MEGERSA², NEBYOU MOJE HAWAS²

¹*University of Kassel, Animal Husbandry in the Tropics and Subtropics, Germany*

²*Addis Ababa University, College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture, Dept. of Vet Microbiology, Immunology and Public Health, Ethiopia*

Abstract

In Ethiopia, arid and semi-arid lowlands are predominantly inhabited by agro-/pastoralists. The agro-/pastoral production systems are crucial for the livelihoods of over 12 million Ethiopians and contribute significantly to the national GDP through livestock rearing. Due to recurrent droughts, traditional cattle pastoralists have recently shifted their livestock to include camels because they are more drought-tolerant than cattle. Hitherto, there are limited or no published research on camel milk production/marketing and their potential role to sustainably manage degrading natural resources in Borana and Fentale areas located in two zones of Oromia regional state. In 2023, a baseline study was realised in Borana and Fentale areas with the objective to examine the major challenges of camel milk production and marketing and to identify associated pathways for future research in these areas. Camel herders were approached in individual interviews in Borana (n=30) and Fentale (n=23) areas in addition to three focus group discussions using structured questionnaires. Nine expert interviews and two feedback workshops were also conducted. According to the results, the main constraints affecting camel milk production were feed shortage due to expansion of cropland (Borana) and cutting of trees for feeding camels (Fentale), long distance to water sources (Fentale), diseases due to inadequate animal health services, shortage of camel vaccines and migration to tsetse fly infested areas (Borana), security problems due to armed conflicts (Fentale) and camel calf mortality. Furthermore, there was no well-developed and organised camel milk market in the two study areas, with shortage of permanent and protected marketplaces, shortage of cooling and processing facilities, inadequate transportation means, spoilage of milk (especially Borana), fluctuating prices (Borana), low demand for camel milk (Borana) and lack of milk testing. The channel of marketing is majorly to collectors, only a minor share directly sells to final consumers (especially Fentale) or dairy cooperatives. Hence, research is needed to solve feed problems of camels through improved feeding management and protection of fodder trees, improving health care and breeding management, establishing accessible veterinary care services for migrating camel herds, improving milk hygienic practices, developing organised markets chains and infrastructure, and establishing dairy cooperatives.

Keywords: Camels, Ethiopia, milk production, milk value chain