

LIVESTOCK TRADE IN AFRICA AND IN SUDAN IN PARTICULAR

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SUMMARY

African continent is the largest earth's continents. It covers an area of 11.7 million square miles which is equivalent to 22% of the total world land area. The continent's human population is 642 million people which is equivalent to 12% of total world population. It falls between longitude 15 W and 60 E and latitude 31 N and 31 S. It is characterized by different climatic zones, extending from a dry desert in the north, semi desert, and savannah in the middle and equatoria with heavy rains in the southern part of the continent.

Traditionally, the vast majority of Africans are farmers and herders who raise crops and livestock for subsistence. Livestock is evenly distributed in all over the continent. However, cattle are mainly concentrated in the savannah belt; while sheep, goats and camels are present in the northern and northwestern areas and areas of low and moderate rain fall in East Africa.

United Nations in 1994 recognized the list of the Least Developed Countries, which includes 48 countries. These countries are mainly from Africa and Asia. Thirtytwo (66%) out of this number are from African continent. These are countries that are suffering from long-term handicaps to growth (WHO, 1998).

A few African countries develop long-distance trade with industrialized countries. African states, import major part of their food from outside the continent despite the continent is very rich in livestock and other relevant natural resources. With exception of some countries, most of African countries are still suffering from poor livestock trade infrastructures and existence of many technical barriers. Generally, overall trade is limited by transportation and communication difficulties in currency and other incompatibilities.

The number of livestock in 35 countries was estimated to be: 217888 million head of cattle, 233161 million sheep, 203978 million goats and 14588 million camels (FAO, 1998). Countries of East Africa are the leading ones in cattle, sheep, and camels. This consolidates the fact that East and the Southern Africa possess the largest percentage of livestock in Africa. Most of this livestock (85-90%) is owned by the traditional sector in these countries. This abnormal condition makes the economical utilization of this huge number an uneasy process.

From statistics, Africa contributes 10.3% to world imports in cattle. However Africa, is also considered as an exporter of cattle and in this respect it contributes about 10.2%. regarding trade in sheep and goats, Africa contributes 14.04% and 31% to world imports and exports respectively.

Organization of African Unity (OAU) is the most efficient and active political organization in the region. OAU Member countries are not utilizing this organization as a reliable economical tool. Arab League, having almost nine African countries as active members, is not trying to link them through economical ties. The same fact could be attributed to the links between the *IGADD* country members.

COMESA, is implementing a free trade area and hence removing all the internal trade tariffs and barriers. This regional organization offers its members the following benefits:

- A wider , harmonized and more competitive markets
- Greater industrial productivity and competitiveness.
- Increased agricultural production and food security.
- A more rational exploitation of natural resources.
- More harmonized monetary, banking, and financial policies.
- More reliable transport and communication infrastructures

For Africa to establish strong trade links between the member countries in the continent, and hence to be qualified to increase livestock trade between them and the entire world, it should fulfill some conditions. These conditions are mainly focused on technical sanitary measures, eliminating all technical and tariff barriers to trade and establishing export import infrastructures.

Extracted from FAO statistical reports, cattle, sheep, and goats are the most significant species involved in trade. Mediterranean, West and Central Coastal and South Africa are importers from Europe, South America and Australia, the Sahel and Namibia respectively. East Africa is exporting to Gulf countries.

Dairy products rank highest on the list of imports. Most African countries import dairy products except South Africa.

Foreign trade problems are determined by many authors and categorized in the following:

- Poor infrastructures
- High taxes imposed by national governments.
- Absence and lack of clear import/export policies.
- Sanitary barriers.
- Absence of animal health regulations and if present they are inappropriate.

Sudan is the largest country in Africa with an area of 2.5 sq. km. Nine countries are bordering it: Egypt and Libya in the North, Chad, and CAR in the West, DRC, Uganda and Kenya in the South and Ethiopia and Eritrea in the East. Sudan has a maritime border with Middle East countries through Saudi Arabia.

Sudan has diversified climatic zones. It ranges from classical Sahara in the north, the western Savannah, central plains, and southern equatorial belt. The climatic diversification governs the distribution of livestock in the country. Camels and small ruminants in the north, while cattle, small ruminants, and wildlife exist in the central and southern regions. This wide range of ecological zones enables the country to rear one of the largest and species diverse livestock populations in Africa (FAO, 1997, Report No. 79/OJODBPSUD).

Livestock play a major role in provision of food for Sudanese people and sustain 40% of the population who normally involved in livestock rearing. Almost 85% of the livestock is owned by the pastoralists and herders in the traditional sector.

Livestock in Sudan is solely depending on natural pasture, which is evenly distributed in all over the country with specific concentration in the Savannah belt in the central and Southern part of the country. However, along the White, Blue, and River Nile, intensive livestock production is practiced.

Livestock trade is directly associated with removal of all the sanitary barriers. Thus improving animal health and upgrading of veterinary services is the most important package to be delivered for livestock sector.

Sheep constitutes the major part of livestock trade (Table 2). Recently, the country shifted towards increasing meat export (Tables, 3 and 5). Livestock ranks second to agricultural commodity export (Table 4).

The National Comprehensive strategy concerning livestock is based on the following principles:

- To increase the livestock numbers three times.
- To boost the export 20 times.
- Control the diseases and improvement of veterinary services.
- Improvement of research and increase of vaccine production.
- Upgrade veterinary profession.

Improvement of Animal Health and Disease Control Strategy in Sudan:

- Protection of the national herd from the negative impact of diseases.
- Removal of the socioeconomic implications of the diseases on the livestock owners.
- Reduction of mortality rate and increase of production.
- Increasing off-take and hence increasing national earnings from livestock trade.

There are some constraints, which are handicapping the livestock trade. They are mainly:

- Traditional type of animal husbandry.
- The number brought to the markets is very limited.
- Seasonality of livestock marketing.
- Livestock owners and their traditional vision on livestock marketing.
- Security instability.
- Transport.
- Taxes and customs.
- Lack of institutional coordination.
- Shortage of feed materials.

Sudan, being an active and potential member, it committed itself to its principles of inter-African cooperation. One of the main objectives of cooperation is facilitation of free exchange of disease-free goods between the member countries. In addition to this Sudan is complying with OIE regulations in

which transparency in disease declaration is a main motto. Based on this, disease reporting is day-to-day activity. Smooth flow of information from field to central office is the normal practice of the veterinary services in Sudan.

The following proposals are capable to improve livestock trade between African member countries:

1. Facilitation of disease information exchange between member countries.
2. Encouragement of bilateral agreement between member countries in order to boost trade.
3. Consolidation of bilateral technical cooperation between member countries.
4. Helping member countries to complete establishment of their national data and information network as an initial step towards connection to regional and hence international network.
5. Veterinary measures must be aimed at improving animal disease control and reducing losses. Veterinary administration should work hard and be prudent to achieve: avoidance of introduction of any pathogen not known previously to exist in the country. In addition to avoid any unnecessary hindrance to trade by harmonizing health requirements in order to encourage inter African trade.
6. Veterinarians working in animal disease control and health should be exposed to intensive training in risk evaluation and assessment.
7. Animal health measures imposed by any country on imported goods of animal origin should be based on OIE International Animal Health Code.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

Based on previous facts, Africa is very rich in its natural resources. African countries are unable to utilize the potentials due to existence of a lot of constraints. To increase inter-African trade these constraints should be removed.

Sudan, during the past five years, through active cooperation with other African countries through OAU/IBAR, started a very optimistic plan for improvement of field veterinary services. PARC provided a splendid base for upgraded veterinary services in the country. Other international organizations namely FAO, OIE, and IAEA contributed significantly to the implementation of the above mentioned and other similar projects.

PACE, as a regional project is capable to improve the veterinary service infrastructure. Based on its objectives it can easily provide the means that would be utilized in strengthening bilateral cooperation between member countries.

1. Inter-African trade should be encouraged and facilitated. Encouragement through increased production and facilitation through establishment of regional trade organizations and harmonization of regulations.
2. African countries should impose some tax reform policies to reduce livestock prices and furnish competitive commodities in regional and international markets.
3. Veterinary services in the African countries should target towards disease control, reducing losses and implementing international sanitary standards.
4. Countries should be always encouraged to practice " risk analysis, management and communication" to avoid any chances of introduction of emerging diseases. These measures should be based on technical justifications.
5. African countries should invest on establishment of veterinary import/export infrastructures in order to develop confidence and trust in their sanitary measures.
6. Multilateral and bilateral health agreements between African countries should be encouraged and facilitated by regional and international organizations.