



ESAP Newsletter

Issue No. 18, 2008

Ethiopian Society of Animal Production

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CASES OF DISCONNECT OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

By Workneh Ayalew

This article was prepared for another forum, but I found the message to be as valid and relevant to the theme of this issue of the ESAP Newsletter: Livestock Research, Education and Extension in Ethiopia. It reflects on three telling cases that I experienced as a



new graduate from the then Alemaya College of Agriculture some 24 years ago. Lots of changes have occurred in Ethiopia's University education, research and extension system since then, yet the lessons are still relevant. During those days new graduates were highly sought after in various fields of agriculture unlike today where new graduates have more daunting tasks of proving themselves competent in an increasingly competitive work environment. The article tries to draw attention to one point: how prepared and equipped are new graduates to become agricultural academicians, researchers, extensionists, and development agents to meet challenges of the real world?

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EDITORIAL

The issue of Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral livelihood is over-shadowed by a vicious cycle of poverty, increasing population and environmental degradation. One of the reasons for maintaining the traditional Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral livelihood is to keep options open for future generations. Moreover, its maintenance through education and research will bring considerable and sustainable benefits to local communities.

The recently established 'Institute of Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral studies (IPAS)' under the Haramaya University is a good start. The inauguration took place in January 2008 at Ethiopian institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR). The agricultural science community especially those who are working on the pastoral and agro pastoral livelihood expect more from this institute in sustaining the livelihoods of millions.

ESAP Newsletter team took initiation to write something on Livestock Agriculture, research and education in our country on this issue, with expectation from IPAS on some sort of analysis on the past and predictions for the future pastoral and agro pastoral livelihood; but it looks like the timing is so early for IPAS after January's inauguration, which probably followed by office setup and building the critical manpower it needs, that they were unable to meet the deadline to submit. Well we expect to read under different medias and of course on the future issues of ESAP Newsletter.

NEW FOCUS IN LIVESTOCK RESEARCH!

By *Tadelle Dessie*

Agriculture claims major share of the GDP and still remains a mainstay of significant proportion of our population. In contrast, the sector has not yet moved enough to change the livelihood of the rural and pastoral communities.

In earlier days agricultural research was devoted to searching for solutions to problems which are seen important from researchers' point of view. Accordingly, solution seeking attempts were mainly taken as mere responsibility of the professionals. Farmers were considered as passive recipients of technologies developed on the research stations. In contrast, technologies originated from research stations usually failed to meet farmers' selection criteria; hence adoption rate became very low. This was the turning point to today's participatory research. Shaping the research process and output to serve the needs of ultimate beneficiaries has been a long standing desire and challenge of various national and international research institutions. In response to these needs, wealth of approaches were used to participate stakeholders at different stages with different levels. The idea behind participating relevant bodies in the research system is that both the beneficiaries and other actors in the process would contribute to bring about a technology that is appropriate and matching to the needs of the end users. It also forms important part of the learning process for all the actors involved towards understanding one another and appreciating one another's problems and wishes. From such perspective farmers' participation in the research process has evolved from mechanical (provision of land/animals) to collegial (where the farmer himself/herself works with the research from planning to evaluation).

Today and increasingly in the future, world wide agricultural production is increasingly practiced in a systems relationship to optimize the entire production chain (primary production system, post harvest, transport, marketing, value adding) for which the livestock agriculture in Ethiopia is not an exception. This implies the integrated utilization of the principles of genetics/breeding, nutrition, physiology, forage management, product handling technology, economics of pro-

duction and marketing to ensure sustainable primary and secondary production enterprises over time.

Many livestock systems are changing rapidly to the better or worse. Human population is growing with the corresponding increase in urbanization coupled with economic growth. This has led to a rapid increase in demand for different livestock and livestock products. This increased demand lead to a new set of market requirements, particularly for product quality and safety. Livestock production systems should respond to factors that cause change, such as rising mar-



ket demand, growing population pressure, and emerging disease threats, to name but three. The threats and opportunities brought about by these changes are best understood in a systems context.

Within this systems-change and demand-led context, research needs to be responsive to what is changing. Feeds and nutrition, genetics and breeding, health and environmental management options for contrasting systems should be assessed and specific opportunities for new scientific tools and approaches examined.

As with animal health, the challenge in animal production is to mix new technologies with sound decision making and practical implementation through institutions that can develop strategies for the co-

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ETHIOPIAN AGRICULTURE PORTAL (EAP)

Ermias Sehai and Fanos Mekonnen

Relavant and current knowledge is key to growth in any economic sector including agriculture. Effective dissemination of knowledge and information to those who need it thus becomes an important endeavor for those involved in the profession through different technology media and means.

The *Ethiopian Agriculture Portal* (www.eap.gov.et), which we hope will be a gateway to research and development resources on Ethiopian agriculture, was developed by Improving Productivity and Market Success (IPMS) of Ethiopian Farmers on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD). The primary owners, operators, and guardians of the system are Ethiopian agricultural practitioners and their partners. The portal is located at the headquarters of MoARD and mirror sites are planned to be located in the four Regional Bureaus of Agriculture & Rural Development (Amhara, Oromia, SNNPRS, and Tigray); the four Regional Agricultural Research Institutes (ARARI, OARI, SARI, and TARI); the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, and Zonal Offices of agriculture & Rural Development.

EAP is a web-based document repository, where documents on Ethiopian Agriculture development, research, and education are found. It makes access to information easier because it brings together information from diverse national and international sources under one gateway in a simple and yet logically structured user interface. Many of the national documents that are being uploaded to the portal are documents that were heretofore only available in hardcopy format and in very limited circulation. The intended audiences of EAP are Ethiopian agricultural service providers at all levels; policy makers, experts in the extension system, researchers, agricultural students, NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and other stakeholders in Ethiopian agriculture with access to web-based resources.

EAP is designed in a way that anyone with knowledge of basic computer skills can participate in the entry of useful documents. Most documents on the portal are in PDF (portable document format). PDF documents

are easier to download and are readable using the free Acrobat Reader software. They also tend to have smaller size than other format. Content for the portal is selected and uploaded by content managers selected by area of specialty. The content managers populate EAP with useful, relevant and timely documents as determined by an overall editorial guideline. The EAP user interface attempts to include a diversified set of agricultural topics. At this time emphasis is given to specific topics in priority agricultural commodities in livestock, crops, and natural forest products -- including; production, marketing, business services and capacity building. It is also designed to accommodate general topics in agricultural extension; natural resource Management, and marketing.

To find out how you can contribute content to the portal, please contact us at eap@moard.gov.et or ipms@cgiar.org

Picture of the Month



LIVESTOCK: MAINSTAY OF LIVELIHOOD AND DECORATION OF THE SPARKLING ATTRACTION, 'Evangadi Dance' IN SOUTH OMO, SNNPRS

Tsedeke Kocho Areka Agricultural Research Center (SARI) E-mail: tsedekek@yahoo.com

South Omo is among the potential livestock reservoir zones in the SNNPRS, home to 891,963 cattle, 621,262 sheep, 1,011,044 goats, 11,512 horses, 7,313, donkeys, 2,199 mules, 404,963 chicken and 72,826 bee-hives (CSA, 2006). Livestock is the main source of livelihoods and also provides cultural and social functions. The economic mainstay of pastoralists that make the larger proportion of the rural population is the agropastoralism and pastoralism farming practice. Across all parts of South Omo zone, as is the case in most pastoral areas, livestock are mixed types: Cattle are mainly the shining-white Boran types: Sheep are dominantly the Somali breeds while goats encompass the Somali, Arsi-Bale and the Woyto-Guji types. The main aspiration of sharing this observation to the ESAP partner and professional family is to envisage the huge livestock asset and stimulate collaborative research and development initiatives that enhance the benefits of livestock to the resource-poor and vulnerable pastoral community in the zone and other similar agroecologies of the country.

Seasonal shortage of feed and water; devastating disease and parasite outbreaks; backward management



practices; poor infrastructures and market access; lack of production inputs and technological options; and inadequate supportive institutional arrangements are the major impediments hindering the livestock pro-

duction in the zone. Cattle skin is extensively scratched tattered with sharp objects and fired for the purpose of identification, decoration and ethno-veterinary treatments. Such practice can represent potential threats on the health of the animal by predisposing them to microbial infections and on the quality of skins implying an important economic losses through possible factors such as animal deaths, medication costs and post harvest losses. It is therefore high time to understand the prevailing practices and then sort the rough from the smooth so that making improvement interventions would be possible. Some worthwhile areas of intervention that could realize the utilization of the huge livestock asset and extensive immense lands and rangelands in the zone are:

Establishing local animal breed evaluation and multiplication center: Livestock types in this area existed through hardship of environmental calamity and management challenges for so many years, possibly because of unique adaptive and productive traits. The trypanotolerant Sheko cattle breed, distributed in the neighbor Bench Maji zone of the SNNPR could be a good example. And generating information on productive and adaptive status of the livestock resources in these areas could provide valuable tool for the characterization, utilization, conservation and improvement of the indigenous animal genetic resources. Thus, the breed evaluation and multiplication center in these potential livestock reservoir parts of the region could support the breed characterization efforts and also provide best performing replacement stocks both in the pastoral and crop-livestock mixed farming areas of the region.

Collaborative partnership and innovative interventions: production inputs and innovative technological options to improve the livestock productivity are apparently inaccessible. The Southern Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) has a mandate to generate and disseminate technological and methodological options in the region. SARI has four research centers and many sub-centers.

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CASES OF DISCONNECT...

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What are the expectations of the working environment?

I believe the work environment always expects new graduates and their mentors to have a better understanding of the technical and institutional opportunities as well as constraints of agricultural development, a better appreciation of major development issues and a better academic insight to the makings of rural life in Ethiopia. I also believe these limitations are further complicated by:

- (Technically) the know-it-all mentality of the new graduates and society on problems of Ethiopia's agriculture. This is unfortunate to the active role that agricultural research and extension should play in rural development.
- The increasingly passive and indifferent attitudes of graduates and academics towards government policies, and the more importantly the inadequacy of efforts to bridge this;
- The apparent logical disconnect between current agricultural University training, research and extension, and consequently the heavy dependence of graduates on (western) textbooks and less on outcomes of appropriate research (domestic or otherwise).

Interestingly these points are also true today to some extent as they were a few decades ago. Let me elaborate this by citing three cases of surprising professional challenges that I went through soon after my graduation:

1. In 1984 I found myself in a team of (junior) experts assigned to draft a package of livestock services to deliver to farming families resettled from drought-stricken villages to apparently fertile but uninhabited areas. While appreciating the plight of settlers in their old drought-stricken habitats, neither me nor my team mates understood the essential processes for them to settle in the new environment and what it meant to them and the new environment. The textbooks I knew did not help to solve my queries; there was no official guidelines to drive this

process. The research system did not help either. Somehow the team managed to do the job, but sadly our recommendations did not work, as the resettlement scheme was not a success. None of us were held accountable for those actions we took except to our conscience. Today we seem to be better prepared to handle such crisis-proportion interventions, and yet I am not sure whether we took stock of lessons learnt from previous related interventions, and to what extent such relevant issues are taken up by agricultural training and research systems.

2. About the same time, I was also assigned to propose a livestock trek route modernization scheme to revamp live animal export and channelling of good quality beef animals from pastoral areas to the central market by the government-owned marketing company. Quite frankly I did not know that meat animals were being trekked such long distances to get to markets. I did not know that land is a strongly contested asset everywhere. I found that the legal and institutional issues for such an arrangement were very complex to handle. The agricultural research system was not actively working in these areas during those days. Somehow I and other members of the team proposed a rushed scheme. As it turned out later, none of the proposed interventions worked out well, and the issue was left to the government-owned company to sort out. Subsequently the company was privatised. The key lesson here was that my undergraduate training equipped me well with tools of how the Texas or Australian ranches operate large beef industries but very little on the realities of the domestic meat industry. I did not have any orientation on local institutional arrangements in resources use.
3. The team I worked with was tasked to implement a government decision that goats and camels were the prime culprits for the drought in 1984 in pastoral areas of southern Ethiopia and hence their numbers should be drastically reduced. From my academic perspective these species were just parts of the ecosystem and that the drought cycle was a natural phenomenon triggered by resource misuse and climatic change. Drought cycles were not unknown even then, but the scale of the current

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CASES OF DISCONNECT...

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problem was unprecedented. The research system was as surprised and unprepared as we were to systematically respond to this professional challenge. Every major player appeared to be out of touch of rural realities. Well after some serious soul-searching an idea emerged that it is human beings but not the animals that are the real culprits. There was a lot of heated debate around the issue within the team and some officials, but that debate did not reach out for stakeholders in the research and academic system. What was worrisome then was not how policy decisions were made then but the fact that researchers and academicians were not given opportunities to contribute to the discourse let alone help in the decision making. To date there are encouraging developments that researchers and academics are being called in for professional input in critical policy decisions such as this particular case and other similar issues. However, the University education still appears to be poorly connected to research and extension.

In retrospect, I reflect on the following causes of those serious development problems:

1. Misapprehension of the realities of Ethiopia's agriculture, its key constraints, realistic approaches to meet these challenges, and the erroneous notion that knowledge in the standard textbooks can provide most if not all of the solutions. True they can provide the ideas and techniques for solving the problems, but not necessarily the solutions.
2. Misapprehension of the key role of agricultural research as driver of change and economic development; and the low regard for indigenous knowledge and skills as basis for modernization in all fields of agriculture. This relates to the erroneous notion that tradition and indigenous knowledge are backward and stagnant and that they have to give way to modernity in rather radical ways;

3. Low knowledge base and available trained manpower, that many of us were assigned to senior responsibilities, well before we have had time to settle in the work environment;
4. Very limited first-hand experience in farming (how many of us are engaged in farming our selves, at least to demonstrate that learned societies could make good farmers?). I still feel like we were not couched to be farmers ourselves, but guides and teachers of others to do so, which is a paradox even today.

These problems are not insurmountable. Just a few suggestions:

1. Universities need to provide a repository of up-to-date research information on Ethiopia's agriculture from relevant research findings in the published and grey literature (in printed and electronic formats) so that their curriculum also takes advantage of these.
2. Universities, research institutions and development practitioners should support the development of professional associations and societies as forums of professional discourse.
3. Forge partnerships between Universities and their alumni, through collaborative research, graduate training and invited seminars.

Times have changed since our graduation from Alemaya, and we need these partnerships and more so now when the Ethiopian Government is investing enormously in the expansion of University education throughout the country.

ANNOUNCEMENT!

We have moved to
www.esap-eth.org

¹ This is an abridged version of another article presented at the 20th anniversary of the graduation of 26th batch Alumni of the then Alemaya College of Agriculture, Addis Ababa University, then Alemaya University of Agriculture and now Haremaya University, in July 2004.

NEW FOCUS . . .*Continued from page 2*

evolution of livestock genetics and livestock systems and to manage the delivery of the appropriate genetic change. For this to succeed, both a supportive policy environment and strategic public-sector interventions are essential. In marginal systems, livestock are very dependent on their environment for survival. Interventions that enable an improved understanding of the dynamics and management options of biodiversity and natural vegetation to ensure sustainability are important.

Such systems approach should be regarded as full and equal to the traditional disciplines of animal production. Since this is a relatively new discipline, special

efforts will be needed to develop this discipline as a science. While we concentrate on developing this approach, the areas of focus for research in animal agriculture should take into account the global changes occurring at an alarming rate. We need to be particularly attentive on the following short to medium term focus areas that include:

1. Increasing the market competitiveness of livestock products
2. Better policy interventions for meeting local and international market specifications and opportunities
3. Enhanced quality and reduced losses in livestock products
4. Competitive and sustainable livestock production

UPCOMING EVENTS

By Alemayehu Mengistu: alemayehumengistu@yahoo.com

Dear ESAP newsletter readers, this is a reminder for those who are aware and information for those who are not; I thought worth sharing the schedules of a few international and regional livestock related events for your consumption that will take place up to the end of year 2008.

1. Research Programme on Sustainable Use of Dry land biodiversity (RPSUD)

7th Regional Workshop on Coping with Climate Change
14- 8th July 2008 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The paper should address any of the following four areas:

- a) Conservation strategies in the changing global climate regimes
- b) Challenges to climate change adaptation in the dry lands
- c) Indigenous knowledge in the development of modern approaches to climate change adaptation
- d) Dryland biodiversity as carbon sinks

Please submit your abstract on one A4 page by 30th April, 2008 to: CPO Ethiopia Email: fworkeye@rpsud.org, feavenw@ibc-et.org or Dr. Tamrat Bekele Email: tbekele@rpsud.org.

2. International Exhibition for Animal Husbandry and Breeding

24-26 April, 2008, Moscow Russia
Information: WWW.agrofam.org / messe@dlg-agriservice.com

3. International Animal Husbandry Exhibition

11-14 November, 2008, Hanover, Germany
Information: WWW.dlg.org / messe@dlg-agriservice.de

4. 10th World Congress on Environmental Management

30 May-1 June, 2008, India
Information: WWW.wef.org.uk,
WWW.wefcg.net/form17.htm,
mkr@iodonline.com

5. 3rd International conference on ICT for Development Education and Training.

1-4th September 2008, France
Information: WWW.elearning-africa.com /
info@elearning-africa.com

LIVESTOCK: MAINSTAY OF . . .

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Jinka Agricultural Research Center is one of the centers to cater the agro-pastoral and pastoral parts of the region. Livestock research under SARI centers including Jinka commenced in recent years. SARI and currently it's underdeveloped in terms of the required research capacity (financial, human, facilities etc).

The livestock development endeavors were characterized by inconsistency and unorganized efforts among the stakeholder institutions. Capacity building on innovative institutions that generate and disseminate technological options requires a strong coordination, commitment, collaboration and investment from the various local, national, regional and international partner institutions.

Infrastructure and incentive market development: Pastoralists sale their animals in the local markets under no standard price setting in place, supportive infrastructures and market and price information. They are often 'recipient' of the prices set by the traders. Due to long distances from terminal markets and agro-processing firms, producers are forced to supply to small local markets and traders. This means that a substantial portion of consumer's price goes to traders and transporters. This could have a deleterious effect on livestock productivity and thereby on supply to the market. A standard marketing system based on standard criteria could help pastoralists supply the market with more animals so that the pressure on available rangeland and water resources optimized, contribut-

ing to the sustainable natural resources management. Such marketing system could also stimulate improved livestock and natural resource management practices.

Supporting and encouraging private investment and agro-processing in strategic rural sites: In recent years, private investment in livestock sector, virtually the export abattoirs and tanneries is growing. Perhaps, due to the accessibility of infrastructures (electricity, telecommunication, water) and transportation (road, rail, air, and shipping), majority of the abattoirs and tanneries are located in urban and peri-urban centers. An alternative expansion of these sites in strategic rural locations like Jinka contributes to the development of local infrastructure, creation of employment opportunities, provision of inputs, live animals, animal products and by-products with reasonable prices; and reduce the effects of long animal transportation that include mortality, stress and subsequent poor slaughter outputs. These enhance improved production and resource managements at the resource-reservoir localities. Ultimately, these could grant a worthwhile return of investment and also ameliorate the rural livelihoods and national economy.

References

Central Statistical Agency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. 2006. Agricultural sample survey, 2006/07 (1999 E.C). Report on Livestock and livestock characteristics (private peasant holdings). Statistical Bulletin 388. Volume II (February 2006), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Are you thinking of investing on Livestock Farm, Well think hard and see the projected population and food demand for the next 20 years in Addis Ababa town Alone!

No.	Years	Population (000)	Cereals (Tons)	Meat (Tons)	Milk (Tons)
1	2000	2,395	5,613,750	523,950	115,568,400
2	2010	3,328	7,488,000	698,880	154,152,960
3	2020	4,246	9,553,500	891,660	196,674,720
4	2030	5,080	11,445,750	1,068,270	235,629,840

Source: Wolday Amaha & Kifle Eshete, Food supply & distribution systems in A.A. (2002)

COMMENTS FROM READERS

Dear ESAP Newsletter committee

I would like to comment on the ESAP committee work plan for 2007/2008:

When attending the 15th annual conference, I have seen a good pace of our experts towards the development of breeding policy for our livestock resources. I would like also to appreciate ESAP's progress towards the development of its organizational working environment, which is very important to the development of livestock sub-sector, – it was so fantastic. However I fear that little attention was given to the dairy sub sector. Now again immediately after downloading the PDF files sent from your office, I went through it and came-up to the annual work plan for 2007/2008 which I would like to comment upon. On the annual plan and on the breeding policy document presented on the conference, I see little mention of 'dairy'. What happened to our dairy professionals, did they stop working? Or does it mean that Ethiopian dairying has been fully exploited? Or we are at top level, both on population and productivity, as compared to the African or E. African countries (Tanzania, Kenya...) or we are having enough milk to the rapidly growing urban population? Does it mean that alarmingly increasing imported dairy products are affordable by most Ethiopians? I am not clear with what is going on!!! Please forward my complaints to all members of the planning committee.

Sintayehu Y. from Awassa

Dear Sintayehu Y.,

We have gone through carefully your comment on the last ESAP newsletter. Your concern, as is the case with most professionals in the area, is pertinent and timely. We really appreciate.

Contribution of professionals like you to improve the dairy sector thereby optimizes all the benefits for all the concerned that can be tapped from the sector is of paramount importance. ESAP, among other activities, creates a forum that enables professionals externalize, share, synthesize and fine tune their visions and views so that dreams can come true towards lifting the livestock productivity to its level best.

ESAP is making an attempt to the best of its current technical as well as material capacities in contributing to the effort in addressing livestock related constraints.

Two Amharic manuals are instances worth mentioning: One on Dairy farming (which was not published due to some technical problems), and another one on milk processing, quality and handling (ESAP received first draft and sent to editors) are under way. We hope to launch both on the upcoming ESAP conference.....

And finally, we should say that the executive committee of ESAP hopes and of course appreciates hearing real concerns from professionals like you.