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ESAP recommendations series No. 2

**Policy and research recommendations;
and final declarations of the 15th Annual
Conference of the Ethiopian Society of Animal
Production (ESAP)**



ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION

4-6 October 2007

EIAR, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Executive summary

This report on the 15th Ethiopian Society of Animal Production Annual Conference held from October 4-6, 2007 provides a summary of the major issues discussed at the forum, the resolutions arrived at during deliberations, and the research and policy recommendations that resulted.

This document was prepared in accordance with the following procedures. First, a handout for questions, comments and answers was prepared prior to the conference to accurately collect feedback from conference participants and speakers. The handout was distributed to audience member who raised questions, provided comments or offered responses during the plenary, brownbag and business sessions of the conference. Second, rapporteurs used these handouts along with presentation materials from each session to produce detailed reports of the conference. This procedure ensured that the questions, comments, and ideas of both contributors and speakers were accurately captured during the conference.

General observations

The 15th Annual Conference of the Ethiopian Society of Animal Production was entitled "Pastoral livestock systems: Opportunities and challenges as a livelihood strategy" and was held at the Hiruy Hall of Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) on October 4-6, 2007. Approximately 500 people attended the event including members of ESAP, Government officials, NGO community members, members of the wider research community, and invited guests.

The plenary session was moderated by Mr. Tezera Getahun, Vice President of ESAP. Dr. Tadelle Dessie, President of ESAP gave the welcome address to participants, followed by Dr. Solomon Assefa, Director General of EIAR and guest of honor who gave the opening speech. Dr. Solomon's speech stressed the importance of ESAP and similar professional associations in light of the opportunities and challenges posed by the economic growth trends

ESAP further recommends that policy and research efforts in the coming year target the following.

- To find ways of addressing camel diseases in pastoral areas
- To conduct a thorough study on pastoral livestock production and market supply systems in Ethiopia
- To coordinate effort among the different stakeholders involved including Government, NGOs, CSOs and communities to promote conflict resolution and peace building
- To ensure that any development interventions pursued in pastoral areas be based on indigenous knowledge

ESAP 15th annual conference closing remarks

The closing speech was made by W/o Mebrat Alem, Department head, Animal and fisheries Resource Development of MoARD

The chairman thanked the ESAP members, the ESAP executive committee and the conference participants for their active participation in the 15th Annual Conference of ESAP from October 4-6 2007.

emerging in Ethiopia's new millennium.

The conference continued with Dr. Hank Fitzhugh, Chief of Party for SPS LMM) launching the SEGA website and three handbooks on various aspects of livestock written in Amharic for farmers and extensions workers by ESAP members and sponsored by SPS LMM

The remainder of day one and half of day two were devoted to presentations to the conference's plenary. Livestock researchers and development practitioners presented papers and fielded questions related to pastoralism, followed by general discussions among conference participants. Day two and half of day three saw the presentation of technical papers on two topics particularly critical to pastoral livelihoods: Feed and animal nutrition, and animal production. The lunch hours (12:00-2:00) during these proceedings were used to host three brown bag sessions on related issues, while the final half of day three was reserved for the ESAP business session.

The conference was highlighted by a presentation and discussion of breeding policies for the different livestock classes of Ethiopia. The document was prepared by professionals from EIAR and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and sponsored by ESAP.

The conference was also host to a special awards ceremony and reception on day one during which medals and certificates were awarded to different organizations and individuals who contributed to research and development in Ethiopia's livestock sector. In addition, the conference entertained posters and pamphlets from different NGOs on matters relating to livestock and pastoral livelihoods.

In summary, the conference was a lively event throughout which the number and enthusiasm of participants remained constant. Importantly, the conference was also one of the few such gatherings that attracted NGO involvement and collaboration with Government and the wider research community.

Outstanding issues discussed

One of the critical issues discussed during the conference was whether pastoralism should continue as a livelihood means given increased pressure from growth in both human and livestock populations. Participants engaged in heated debate both in favour of and against pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood option in Ethiopia. Many participants admitted that there is change occurring in the sector that has resulted in some degree of livelihood diversification. Increasingly, there is evidence to suggest that pastoralists are engaged in activities other than keeping livestock, for example, crop farming in some areas. However, participants did agree that the agro climatic zones that host pastoralists in Ethiopia are generally not suitable for sustainable shifts from livestock keeping into other livelihood options.

The issue of livestock marketing was also a subject of thorough discussion during the conference. While some participants argued that the supply of livestock in Ethiopia's markets was falling short of demand, other participants, particularly the pastoralists who attended the conference, argued that there was insufficient demand for their livestock in the marketplace. These conflicting arguments suggest the need to further study and identify the livestock supply and demand conditions and market constraints in Ethiopia, particularly in light of the extensive livestock resources that Ethiopia holds claim to and the lucrative market opportunities existing both locally and in export markets.

Participants indicated that recent studies of these issues have either not covered the topic intensively, focused their analysis too narrowly, relied on secondary data too extensively, or produced conflicting conclusions. The effect of this is that decision-makers, entrepreneurs, traders, and other stakeholders have received conflicting recommendations and advice. Participants thus agreed that these issues call for a concerted effort by professionals and other stakeholders to undertake a thorough study regarding the existing pastoral livestock production and marketing system—one that goes beyond the study of export abattoirs and live animal exporters to consider

the whole market value chain from pastoralist to terminal markets to domestic and foreign consumers.

Another message coming from participants—particularly from points made by pastoralists who attended one of the brown bag session—was the importance of coordinating efforts to resolve conflicts and promote peaceful cooperation among different stakeholders including Government, NGOs, civil society organizations (CSOs), and pastoralist communities. Participants emphasized the vital importance of experience sharing and the use of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to promote this agenda.

Yet another message articulated by participants was the need for breeding policies and breeding regulations. At present, there is no legal framework in Ethiopia to regulate cross-breeding, or to regulate the importation and distribution of exotic genetic materials. In an increasingly globalized market, the absence of breeding policies and regulations—as well as the absence of a gene bank for animal genetic resource conservation—could put indigenous breeds at risk and endanger the future of future generations of livestock in Ethiopia and the rest of the world.

In recognition of this situation, MoARD marshalled resources from itself, EIAR, and ESAP to set up a task force charged with drafting a breeding policy and regulations. The draft policy and regulations were presented at the conference and subject to extensive discussion.

Recommendations for ESAP to accomplish

ESAP recommends that its activities in the coming year target the following.

- To design ways to strengthen publication, quality and wider distribution of EJAP
- To organize its meeting in different parts of the country
- To serve as a common denominator in bringing the different organizations and institutions and serve as a gateway.