

Gender impact on Sheep and Goat production in Botswana. A case of Gaborone region

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Abstract

A survey of 100 randomly selected farming households keeping livestock was conducted in ten randomly selected villages in the Gaborone agricultural region from October 1997 to February 1998. Data acquisition was done through questionnaire, interviews, and direct observation of the animals.

The total sheep population was 216 which consisted of 128 ewes and 88 males. Thirty-three (33) farmers (14 females and 19 males) had sheep with an average of 6.55 ± 4.22 sheep per household. The total goat population was 1577 which was made up of 874 does and 703 males. Eighty-four, (84) farmers (28 females and 56 males) owned goats with an average of 18.7 ± 11.83 goats per household. The animals were kept extensively by 98% of the farmers, 59% of the farmers fed crop residues to animals. The animals browsed and grazed with 12% of the farmers providing supplementary feeds. They were watered once a day by 94% of the farmers and twice a day by the rest, from boreholes, streams, dams, and taps. The animals were kept mostly for meat, milk, skins and manure. There was no significant difference ($P > 0.05$) between the male and female headed households in stock ownership and management practices. This relative gender equality in farming operations is due to extra assistance and subsidies granted to female farmers by Botswana government through Financial Assistance Policy (FAP).

1 Introduction

Animal agriculture plays a vital role in Botswana's economy since about 70% of the people depend on it for their livelihood. Sheep and goats are essential sources of meat, milk, manure, and skins. Ownership of livestock plays significant role in local social custom and status of individuals in the community. Most households in Botswana own some kind of livestock. AGANGA and MOGANETSI (1998) studied traditional goat production in Botswana, and found that the major constraint was non-availability of feeds which accounted for 85% of all the production constraints encountered by the goat farmers. PANIN and MAHABILE (1997) stated that small ruminants account for 15% of average rural household income. This study evaluates gender impact on sheep and goats' production in the Gaborone Agricultural region. This is important in targeting extension activities to deal with gender equality in provision of assistance to small stock farmers.

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2 Materials and Method

The data used in this study come from a random sample of one hundred livestock farmers in ten villages in Gaborone Agricultural region.

Structured questionnaire was used to obtain the data through personal interviews and direct observation of the livestock.

The interviews were conducted between October 1997 and February 1998. Information on various aspects of smallstock production i.e. herd sizes, sexes and distribution of livestock, disease control measures, labour involvement in animal farming etc. were documented. Information obtained from the respondent farmers were collated by comparing data for gender differences in male headed households with female respondent farmers using T - test (STEEL and TORRIE 1980).

3 Results and Discussion

The animals were kept extensively by 98% of the farmers ,59% of the farmers fed crop residues to the animals when available.

The animals browsed and grazed with 12% of the farmers providing supplementary feeds. They were watered once a day by 94% of the farmers and twice a day by the rest, from boreholes, streams, dams, and taps. The animals were kept mostly for meat and milk. There was no significant difference ($P>0.05$) between the male and female headed households in stock ownership and management practices. This relative gender equality in farming operations is due to extra assistance and subsidies granted to female farmers by Botswana government through Financial Assistance Policy (FAP).

Table 1: Sheep and goat herd size and composition in the surveyed areas

Parameters	Values	Gender of respondent farmer	
		Males	Females
Number of farmers having sheep	33	19	14
Total number of sheep	216	116	100
Average number of sheep	6.55±4.22	6.11±4.09	7.14±4.47
Total number of female sheep	126	70	56
Average number of female sheep	3.82±2.73	3.68±2.98	4.00±2.45
Total number of male sheep	90	46	44
Average number of male sheep	2.73±2.07	2.42±1.68	3.14±2.51
Number of farmers having goats	84	55	29
Total number of goats	1577	1050	527
Average number of goats	18.77±11.79	19.09±13.35	18.17±8.25
Total number of female goats	874	582	292
Average number of female goats	10.40±6.82	10.58±7.40	10.07±5.66
Total number of male goats	703	468	235
Average number of male goats	8.37±5.98	8.51±6.75	8.10±4.22

± SD - Standard deviation

3.1 Sheep and goat herd size and composition in the surveyed areas

Data obtained from the survey (table 1) showed that only 33 farmers were rearing sheep compared to 84 keeping goats out of the 100 respondent farmers. Sheep farming was not as popular as goat raising in the Gaborone region of Botswana. Female headed households had an average of 7.14 sheep compared to 6.11 in male headed households. Average number of goats per farming household was 18.77. There was no significant difference between male and female headed households in terms of small-stock numbers kept.

Table 2: Management practice (housing and health care)

Parameters	Values	Gender of respondent farmer	
		male %	female %
Management systems:			
- extensive	98	64.3	35.7
- semi-intensive	2	0	100
Houses for animals built by:			
- hired labour	47	63.8	36.2
- family labour	53	62.3	37.7
Animals herded by:			
- males	100	63	37
- females	0	0	0
vaccinations:			
- vet. Personnel	100	63	37
Hoof trimming:			
- done	29	41.4	58.6
- not done	71	71.8	28.2
Parasite control :			
- hired labour	55	61.8	38.2
- family labour	37	64.9	35.1
- not done	8	62.5	37.5

3.2 Management practice

Table 2 shows the management practices. 98 of the respondent farmers used extensive system of management for their sheep, and goats. Both male and female farmers relied on family labour and hired labour to construct their animal kraals. In the study area, only men herded the animals to the range for grazing. Female farmers utilize either their sons' labour or hired male attendants to herd their animals during grazing and watering. Watering of the animals is done by family labour 53% (34 males and 19 females), and 47% (29 males and 19 females) use hired labour.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

It can be concluded that there is no major difference in systems of keeping small ruminants between male headed household and female headed households in Gaborone region of Botswana. The government of Botswana through FAP specifically targeted women farmers therefore enhanced equality of male and female farmers in livestock ownership. The scheme to empower women farmers should be continued.

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6 References

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