

# FARM AFRICA'S DAIRY GOAT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. ETHIOPIA

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## The Project

The central objective of FARM AFRICA'S Dairy Goat Development Programme is to increase rural incomes and the stability of those incomes in the highlands of Ethiopia by improving the productivity of goats managed by women in the areas of poor arable crop production and high population pressure. It aims to achieve this by the introduction of new management systems and improved access to veterinary services for existing breeds; by the provision of credit to purchase goats; and by the introduction of Anglo-Nubian genetic material to improve goat productivity. Since goats are traditionally managed by women in Ethiopia, it is through womens' goat groups that this project operates.

FARM AFRICA has been implementing this dairy goat development project since 1988 jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Alemaya University of Agriculture (AUA), Awassa College of Agriculture (ACA) and several NGOs. The project works with nearly 1,000 families in the densely populated highlands of Eastern Hararge, North Omo and South Shoa. Local goats are provided on credit together with a package of forage and health improvements to poor women with no goats of their own. Support is provided to the women groups either through the extension services of the MoA or through collaboration with an NGO whose staff are trained by FARM AFRICA to provide such services.

ODA is now the key financing agency for the project, which started in September 1988. ODA provides 100% of the project cost through its country programme. It is currently spending approximately £275,000 per year on the project and has contributed £880,000 in total, to date. ODA is, currently, committed to financing this project up to 1995.

## The Evaluation

The evaluation was undertaken by an inter-disciplinary team consisting of a livestock specialist, a Social Development Adviser and an economist.

## Overall Success Rating

The project has, to date, been *partially successful*. Although a considerable amount has been achieved in difficult circumstances, the project has proceeded more slowly than was originally planned. Some of the reasons for the delays in project implementation were, however, beyond the project's control. By 1992 (after three years), the project had

organised credit for the supply of about 1,400 local breed goats (compared to a target of 3,000) to over 1,000 women in 46 Peasant Associations (PAs).

The results so far of importing Anglo-Nubian (AN) milking goats for cross-breeding with local goats are encouraging. The experimental nature of the introduction, however, must be recognised at this stage, and it is too early to draw firm conclusions about the success or otherwise of the project. Purebred and crossbred AN goats will require more intensive management, healthcare and feeding than local goats, and will be more suited to highland sites without major challenge from tick-borne disease and trypanosomiasis, and with potential for fodder production.

## The Main Findings

- The identification and design of the project was carried out by FARM AFRICA, and included consultation with the project's potential collaborators. FARM AFRICA rightly judged it necessary to develop a complex multi-component project, including direct support to the distribution of goats and more general aspects of goat development and research in Ethiopia. Assumptions, however, about the rate of progress in achieving the project's objectives, made at the time of the original design and appraisal of the project, have proved to be too optimistic.
- With hindsight, it would have been preferable to have phased project activities over a longer period, and to have improved the organisational structure and contractual relationships with collaborators (over whom the project had little control).
- Implementation of village level activities has been complicated by the difficult security situation in some parts of the country, the political and social policies adopted by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE), technical problems at the crossbred breeding stations and the selection of widely dispersed sites, through a variety of collaborating NGOs with varying priorities and approaches. While this approach provided relatively quick access to a wide range of sites and many participant women, it proved difficult and costly to coordinate.
- The project's initial organisational structure and staffing was unable to provide sufficiently intensive support to these sites. Collaborating NGOs did not always have the budget, resources, or commitment, to follow guidelines for the project's various components. The approaches and competencies of the NGO extension services, and the capacity of local MoA offices have been varied. The project has had to develop more intensive field support and monitoring than planned at many of its sites.
- The link between the women's groups and goat production, (the latter taking place at the level of individuals and households), has not been carefully and explicitly made. The purpose of the groups in relation to the production of milk goats, still needs to be clarified, not least to avoid the possibility that the project's social objectives are in conflict with its technical objectives of - supporting dairy goat production.

- The potential impact of goat development on the environment has been a long-held concern in Ethiopia. In practice, most flocks have adopted close control of grazing, often by tethering, for reasons of labour availability, security, and avoidance of crop damage. Fodder production on field bunds and boundaries can also be integrated with soil conservation measures. On balance, environmental impact is likely to be benign or beneficial.
- It is currently planned to hand over, eventually, the management of the project to the MoA. The Ministry is currently being radically reorganised with the intention of strengthening regional and local offices. Simultaneously, the role and authority of the central MoA in Addis Ababa is being reduced. The consequential staff changes and alterations of responsibilities have caused considerable dislocation within the MoA. Whether the MoA can become an effective institution at the local, regional and national level remains to be seen.

## Lessons

- The time and resources required to implement successfully dairy goat development projects which involve the introduction of a new breed of goat are both likely to be considerable. While some donors may be reluctant to make commitments to such long-term projects, it is important to reduce otherwise potentially unrealistic expectations amongst donors and other stakeholders in the project about the time and resources required to achieve success.
- Thorough project identification design and appraisal required for complex projects of this sort can be a costly exercise, particularly for small NGOs. Support by donors in this process could greatly enhance the likelihood of project success.
- If a project is to be implemented by partners, such as NGOs or Government Departments that are outside the project's direct control, it is essential that the project management team clearly establishes at the outset whether that partner has the professional, technical, managerial and financial resources to honour its commitments.
- Dairy Goat breeding stations managed by Government or non-profit making organisations such as universities, may not have sufficient financial incentive to breed goats in the most efficient and effective way possible. Privately managed stations may be a more successful means of breeding goats as inputs for projects of this type.