



The Political Economy of Livestock Policy Among the Somalis

How can the Somalis, despite the on-going conflicts in the Horn of Africa, make full use of their competitive advantage as skilled livestock producers in an ecosystem that is close to lucrative markets and has several good ports for reaching them?

Land and water issues are critical to the livestock production system but the Somali polities have too little ability to project their authority into the rural areas to address them effectively at the moment. It would be valuable for Somali policy-makers to participate in IGAD-LPI sponsored technical discussions of these issues, however, both to educate themselves for the future and for them to represent Somali perspectives to the other countries in the region. The TFG is the only one of the three political entities in the former Somalia that is internationally recognized. Thus formal discussions at the diplomatic level are precluded. All the political systems in the area have shown considerable flexibility on technical discussions and cooperation, however [FN: 93]. The effectiveness of the environmentally-motivated ban on the export of charcoal from the ports of Berbera and Bosaso does show that even these weak systems have the ability to act when there is broad consensus on a problem and the decision can be enforced in the ports, where the authorities are strongest.

Ethiopian barriers to *cross-border livestock trade* reduce herder incomes, even if ultimately they are ineffective. A change in the tenor of international relations in the Horn of Africa and a realization that trade policies do not have to be zero-sum games would be necessary before progress could be made on this problem. There are scenarios to the grand political game in the Horn that might make this possible in the future, so continued education and discussion of

this matter through IGAD-LPI sponsored forums is worthwhile.

All parties are agreed that the most important policy issue facing Somali livestock producers and traders are the *animal health and certification* issues that restrict exports into the Middle East. A disease certification process for live animal exports that is internationally convincing requires investment in an expanded and significantly restructured set of animal health systems. Traders are willing to pay for at least some of this, but have wanted advance assurances of profit and fear government misappropriation of the funds to other purposes, most especially to the youth in the militias/ armies. Some progress has been made by organizing the traders into national associations and more is possible through negotiations. Traders in Somaliland and Puntland will now be more motivated by competition from Djibouti. Nonetheless, a fully satisfactory solution to this problem area is likely to require some 'pump-priming' by donors. There are several competing initiatives underway to solve the animal health certification and export trade problems and it is unclear which one(s) will succeed in the long run. Most of these initiatives and their associated processes are highly political and the various livestock authorities must be the primary actors in the needed international discussions. Nonetheless, IGAD-LPI can create a foundation for such negotiations by creating region-wide forums in which analysis of the technical issues can be presented, discussed, and negotiated.

Related to the animal health issues are those of *veterinary pharmaceuticals*. There are serious problems with poor quality products being sold throughout the region and good quality ones being unavailable in too many areas. The best solution to poor quality pharmaceuticals



would be a regulatory one, but this would require cooperative action throughout the IGAD region. Short of regulation, it may be possible to educate both pharmaceutical vendors who are permanent in a locality and the herder who patronizes them that long-term trading partners can come to recognize and reward quality, consistency and reliability. IGAD-LPI could play a part both in facilitating the educational thrust and promoting regional negotiations on regulation, as this would not be controversial between member states.

Overall, donors, Somali authorities, and trader associations are already working on the policy issues on which progress is possible at present. The role that *IGAD-LPI* can most usefully play is to create regional forums in which these issues can be addressed across borders by technical staff, traders and herders.

In the long run this can create the shared knowledge and perspectives that will be foundational to hoped-for international negotiations in the future. IGAD-LPI provides one of the few venues where Somali livestock production issues can be addressed across the boundaries of the six political entities that divide its ecosystem.

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