



## Key Issues for Livestock and Pastoralism in Sudan

Livestock have great social and economic importance for the Sudanese poor, but there has been little progress in recent decades incorporating livestock into pro-poor development policies and projects. Obstacles to development of the livestock sector in Sudan include the persistence of armed conflict and a political economy that privileges oil and agricultural crop production. Nonetheless, current peace agreements and ongoing peace processes present opportunities to integrate livestock into meaningful pro-poor initiatives.

### ● The Livestock Sector

The main livestock in Sudan are cattle, sheep, goats, camels, donkeys, horses, and poultry. Livestock are vital to the welfare of large numbers of poor Sudanese by serving as a source of food, store of wealth, source of revenue, mode of transport, and aide to crop farming. Livestock are also central to the identities and beliefs of many Sudanese tribes.

A majority of Sudan's households keep livestock, with perhaps one third to one-half of all households reliant upon livestock for their livelihood. Most livestock producers are transhumants or sedentary farmers who maintain herds but also engage in crop production and/or wage labour. Many urban dwellers maintain livestock including donkeys or horses for transport and small ruminants and chickens for personal consumption or sale. There is a small private sector in poultry and cattle production. Livestock and livestock products generally meet domestic demand and supply an export market focused on Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries.

### ● The Political Economy of Sudan

Ever since colonial times, national

development programs in Sudan have favoured the horizontal expansion of crop production at the expense of livestock production and pastoral livelihoods. Since Independence in 1956, Sudanese governments have attracted international investors and assistance for development initiatives that seized pastureland for new farms, harmed pastoral livelihoods, and contributed to conflicts between sedentary farmers and migratory livestock keepers. More recently, oil exploration and extraction have disrupted pastoral livelihoods and diminished the importance of livestock production for the national economy.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) restructured political power and revenue sharing in Sudan. The CPA created a Government of National Unity (GONU) dominated by the National Congress Party (NCP) in partnership with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which leads an autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS). Implementation of the CPA has been problematic, however, due to disputes over oil revenue, boundary issues, and security problems; tensions are likely to increase in anticipation of a 2009 national election and a 2011 vote on southern secession. Two other peace agreements were signed in 2006: the Darfur Peace Agreement has so far failed and conflict persists, but the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement is moving forward despite obstacles.

Despite the persistence of conflict and insecurity, new policies and institutions are being created in Sudan that will impact livestock and livelihoods for decades to come. Political power shifts create openings for participatory processes that could formulate policies that are equitable and just. In addition, oil-fuelled economic growth can support the modernization and growth of key institutions and fund much needed improvements in transportation, marketing, and communication infrastructure.



## • Key Issues

Land tenure: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement created land commissions to arbitrate land conflicts, assess compensation, and develop new land policies and laws. These commissions have the potential to safeguard the rights and interests of poor livestock owners, although powerful political and economic actors, including oil interests, may influence the commissions in such a way that the outcomes are not pro-poor. It would be beneficial if the land commissions were to allow for the creation of land management systems that are flexible enough to account for the evolution of customary law and temporal and spatial variations in fodder production.

Green Alert Program: The National Congress Party introduced this new four-year development program in July 2006. It is focused on increasing crop production and will probably lead to further marginalization of poor livestock keepers in Sudan. It also promotes the settlement of migratory pastoralists, which could have negative outcomes for nomadic populations, and revives the controversial Jonglei Canal project in Southern Sudan, which could significantly disrupt pastoral livelihoods. International organizations and donors should carefully consider the likely impacts of this program on the Sudanese poor before agreeing to support it.

Marketing system: The livestock commodity chain in Sudan is dominated by brokers and wealthy exporters, to the detriment of primary producers. Current efforts to improve the marketing system would well pay greater attention to ways to safeguard and improve the livelihoods of poor livestock owners. A livestock market information system and improved communication networks to provide rural populations with information about livestock prices at secondary and terminal markets would be beneficial to the poor. The actual effects on poor livestock producers of a proposed open auction system are unclear and might be studied before extending it to Sudan's main livestock markets.

Disease control: Livestock disease control in Sudan has focused on economically-significant diseases of international significance such as rinderpest and avian flu, but greater consideration for animal health interventions to assist poor livestock keepers is warranted. Expert opinions on the likely long-term effects of the current free vaccine program vary widely. Before continuing the program it would be beneficial to seek out these opinions, and engaging poor livestock owners in the discussions.

## Regional Issues

- **Darfur:** The persistence of conflict effectively prevents meaningful pro-poor policy interventions in many areas of Darfur, although veterinary services in displaced persons camps are feasible and needed.
- **Southern Sudan:** Peace presents many opportunities for livestock keepers in Southern Sudan, but implementation of the CPA has been slow and the persistence of insecurity threatens pastoral livelihoods. There is a marked lack of coordination in livestock marketing efforts in the Southern Sudan; therefore GOSS may wish to consider one agency to oversee the livestock marketing system and coordinate the efforts of governments, producers and traders to improve livestock production and exports.
- **Eastern Sudan:** The peace agreement concluded in October 2006 could pave the way for meaningful pro-poor livestock policy initiatives in Eastern Sudan, such as clarification of land tenure, but it also must overcome significant obstacles including exclusion of some rebel groups and ongoing cattle- and sheep-raiding along the border with Ethiopia.

### **Policy Brief based on:**

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