Introduction

FARM-Africa is a British NGO (non-governmental organization) established in 1985 with the goal of reducing poverty in Africa by enabling marginal African farmers and herders to make sustainable improvements to their well-being through more effective management of their human and natural resources.

The Dairy Goat Development Project, often referred to as DGDP, was first launched by FARM-Africa in September, 1988 after the identification of the importance of goats in mixed farming systems of the high and mid-altitude areas of the country. The pilot project was initiated in Eastern Hararghe in what is known as the Oromia region. Three years later it was expanded into the Southern region. In all, DGDP operated in 7 districts for 9 years. It was phased out in June, 1997 and the new Goat Project (GP) took over approximately 1 year later in August, 1998. Goat Project is engaged in 3 Regions [Oromia, SNNPR and Amhara, covering 14 woredas (districts)].

Objectives

The objective of FARM-Africa’s Goat Project was to improve family welfare in small scale mixed farming systems by improving the productivity of goats managed by women through increased income and milk consumption. The project worked with the poorest, most deprived and economically weak farmers in the communities. It encouraged women to voluntarily and actively become involved in a goat improvement program, because small stock, including goats, are traditionally kept by women. The project began with encouraging women to enter into the practice of growing livestock fodder. This was then followed by the distribution of local goats to those identified as poor by the community. Local goats were provided on credit. Through time and with further extension and animal health education, group members were encouraged to use exotic goat breeds to improve their stock.

Project Components Included:

- establishment of women’s group
- forage/feed development
- distribution of local goats on credit and implementation of a veterinary program, including the supply of drugs and training of farmers to dispense drugs and services
- credit and savings group formation within the group, and group leadership and numeracy training
- training of development agents and specialized staff
- crossbreeding of exotic goats with local breeds for distribution
- support to goat breeders
- buck station establishment
- family planning and nutrition
Project Approach

The project aimed at benefiting individual poor farmers by reaching them through a group approach. The group extension approach was chosen because of its various advantages and the long, traditional existence of farmer groups in Ethiopian communities. Ethiopian women form groups to exchange labor support on farming plots in times of need and to mobilize savings and credit for self-help and for private, social and ceremonial functions. The dairy goat project has experienced advantages using the group approach, which included better credit repayment arrangements, easier means for managing training and better goat control and management of buck stations.

To avoid redundancy of manpower and extension work undertakings, project work was extended through Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) or NGO development workers located at the sites. The project advised and provided resources that supported the smooth running of the activities. Only site project coordinators were placed to facilitate inputs from FARM-Africa and to liaise with collaborating partners.

Community Participation

DGDP had an element of community participation, in that through all its steps of development work, it tried as much as possible to include all stakeholders. This included the district level MOA staff, grass roots level development workers, peasant association leaders, farmers themselves and where possible, community elders, as well. After the identification of the community, members were encouraged to participate in all aspects and at all levels of project implementation. Dates were arranged with the peasant associations (PA) to discuss the dairy goat group development.

In the peasant association, discussion of the project took place with smaller groups. The project purpose was discussed, and then another date was arranged to forward names of women that were poor and needed to participate in the project. The dairy goat development path was explained to both the identified women and their husbands. The selection of voluntary women to participate in the project program was handled in an open discussion with the women and PA committee, closely supervised by MOA and(or) collaborating NGO involved in the project in the particular area. This was then followed by formation of groups.

Groups were formed and governed by a constitution and by-laws drafted by the participating community itself. The drafted constitution and by-laws are straightforward and simple, containing the criteria and conditions for election, by members, of the executive committee that leads a given group.

Supply of Inputs

Inputs contained in the project for distribution to farmers were local goats, crossbred goats, exotic goats, veterinary drugs and forage seeds. Right from the inception of the project free handouts were avoided.

Distribution of Local Goats

Two female goats were allocated to each member of the goat groups on credit. Goat purchasing took place in the local market, ideally in the presence of the recipient, the development agent, a representative of the group and a veterinarian where possible. If there was not a convenient market, local prices were too high, or there was a preference for a certain type of goat, purchasing from more distant markets was considered. If transporting several women to market was impractical,
the women selected one or two representatives to purchase on their behalf. An insurance premium and interest was paid for the goats received by member recipients. The credit repayment schedule depended on the group’s decision and income. The group itself managed the credit repayment. Participants could repay in kind or cash and decided to whom of the women who had not yet received goats the weaned kid should be given. Credit terms were formulated to suit each area. In the east, which has a relatively extensive cash economy, payment in cash was adopted, whereas in the south, where cash is often scarce, the repayment was agreed to be in kind.

**Repayment in Kind**

Repayment in kind is virtually inflation proof. Closer ties are formed within the community when one woman directly helps another. Repayment in kind was found to be easier to manage by the community itself, without having bank accounts and complicated book keeping.

**Crossbred Goats Distribution**

Crossbred offspring of Somali × Anglo Nubian goats were allocated to those members deemed outstanding in credit and goat management. The requirements for receiving a crossbred goat were adequate forage establishment in the field and around the house or compound, successful rearing of the local goats and their offspring that were given on credit and at least 50% repayment of the previous credit. Males in excess of the breeding requirements of the participants were sold to interested women in the groups for short term fattening. Repayment in the case of the crossbreds has always been in kind and was handled by the groups.

**Acquiring Crossbred Goats Through Buck Stations**

Buck stations in the community were initially established using Anglo-Nubian bucks, but currently Toggenburg bucks are used as well. The purpose was to reach a wider area and more farmers with crossbred goats in a less expensive manner and in a shorter time frame. The buck stations were organized in the following ways.

- The buck could be loaned to the group or placed with an individual selected by the group to look after under various arrangements.
- A buck would be kept at a given group’s station on a rotational basis for 18 months and then passed on to another group’s buck station.
- The selected buck handler should be responsible, have some forage, be a good livestock keeper and be in a fairly central location in relation to other member of the group.
- The buck handler receives materials for construction of a suitable pen from the group, as well as labor assistance during peak periods in crop production.

In the beginning, farmers were hesitant to pay in cash for mating service from the buck station. Because the idea was new, the benefits were not yet highly realized and cash for such a purpose was hard to come by. During the third phase, the project stepped in to help by offering the buck handlers 10 birr for every successful crossbreed kid born. More crossbred offspring were recorded from buck stations as a result of this approach.

**Private Breeders**

Privately operated commercial livestock farms are nonexistent in the country except for the very few small-scale dairy cattle farmers scattered around Addis Ababa. Initially, DGDP had to rely
on government institution farms (Awassa College of Agriculture and Alemaya University of Agriculture) to breed and multiply the imported Anglo-Nubians. The plan was too optimistic and crossbreds were not produced as originally anticipated. Following the economic policy change that occurred within the country, the project began to look at small private farmers as alternative goat breeders/producers. Under contractual agreements and on credit, emerging small private farmers were then encouraged to produce goats by providing each with four female and one male Anglo-Nubian goats to serve as starter flocks. Most of these private producers were individuals running medium scale livestock enterprises who took up goat production as a sideline operation. There were also a few smallholder farms with relatively better land holdings than their neighbors who were encouraged to become producers. Except for a very few, most of these producers did not operate successfully.

**Veterinary Drug Supply**

A component of the DGDP was the strengthening of community based animal health services. This included training of community veterinary agents (CVA) or paravets and equipping them with kits holding basic veterinary drugs and equipment (anthelmintic and acaricide, wound dressing and other items like hoof trimmers, castrators and thermometer). The kits were given to the CVA in each group. The CVA were expected to charge for all services they provided to members, adding a markup of about 20 to 30%. Replenishment of veterinary drugs for the CVA were made by the project at cost. However cost recovery was often incomplete. The main reason was that farmers were not prompt in settling their service charges with the CVA. Moreover, in times of drought, farmers were not able to afford to pay for drugs. These deficits were frequently met by the project and it is difficult to say the system operated smoothly.

**Private Veterinary Drug Shops**

A link foreseen as essential in the community-based veterinary health delivery system was access to a reliable drug supply. This was viewed as necessary so that there would be an established setting for the continuation of drug supplies following termination of project support. In the framework that existed, government veterinary services were an unreliable source of supply. Encouraging private supplies was regarded as an option. Towards the final period of the third phase of DGDP, an attempt was made to identify and facilitate loans to individuals who would establish privately operated drug shops near project sites.

**Forage Distribution**

Forage seeds were distributed free to farmers during the project period. Purchasing of fodder seed for planting was not strongly appreciated by farmers. Because these are areas supporting some of the highest rural densities in Ethiopia and with the largest mass of degraded land, the government has been distributing forage seeds and cuttings free to farmers to promote soil conservation measures. Moreover, farmers tend to get seed and cuttings from their own forage strips or from neighbors when desiring to reestablish or expand their improved forage holdings. Leucaena, sesbania, pigeon pea, tree lucerne phalaris, alfalfa and desmodim seeds were continuously distributed by the project to be grown under different strategies (backyard pasture, forage strips and under sowing).
Sources of Project Inputs for Distribution to Farmers

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local goats</td>
<td>Local market, repayment from members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossbred goats</td>
<td>Alema University of Agriculture (AUA), Awassa College of Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ACA), private producers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exotic breeds</td>
<td>UK, ACA, AUA, private producers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterinary drugs</td>
<td>Local private suppliers and importation and equipment</td>
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</tbody>
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Project Outputs Achieved

| Local goats         | 6,500                                                     |
| Anglo Nubian crossbred | 950                                                    |
| Buck station established | 27                                                    |
| Private producers established | 10                                                     |
| Drug shop established | 2                                                     |
| No. of women who planted forage | 2,000                                    |
| Paravets             | 220                                                     |

Issues

A shortage of improved stock hindered the fulfillment of farmer demand. The project was not able to have the required number of improved stock from AUA, ACA and private producers for distribution. When project support ended, it was observed that credit groups in some project sites could not maintain proper functioning while at the same time benefiting members and making them pay their loans.

Successes

The women’s groups have proved themselves to be more effective than external agents in the disbursement of credit to appropriate families, the accurate maintenance of records and collection of repayments. The women were not only helped in having milking crossbred animals and increased milk supply, but gained by having better food security and assets accrued through owning local goats. Families who did not own a single goat before the project now own flocks. When the famine broke in April, 1997, beneficiaries were able to sell goats and buy grain to feed their families longer than those who had no goats. Families have also benefited from the sales by becoming owners of heifers bullocks, donkeys and some even acquiring land.

The extension work has been a success in bringing attitudinal changes across governmental agencies, credit institutions and partner NGO’s as well. These successes are difficult to quantify but are broad indicators of project success.

- The women’s groups have given women a voice in community affairs.
- Women trained as community-based animal health care workers coupled with their responsibilities in keeping breeding animals has demonstrated their capacity to perform outside the traditional sphere of “women’s work”.
- The ability to serve their communities has produced a sense of pride in the women and their accomplishments have earned them the respect of village men.
• The involvement of the community at all stages of project activities helped in making the credit scheme operation known by a wider segment of the community.
• The effort of bringing veterinary service to the doorsteps of farmers to some extent has filled the gap where government services could not reach.
• Farmers have continued maintaining their improved forage strip and plots, some even expanding them.

Lessons Learned

• The project should not only target increasing the milk supply to the household. Where goat milk is not appreciated, the extension work should continue on improving the livelihood of the community through stocking with local goats.
• There is a need to look for alternative sources of improved breeding stock. The breed of choice should not be restricted to Anglo-Nubians.
• Reliance on the supply of improved stock should be more widespread by having more buck stations and private producers while still maintaining linkages with AUA and ACA.
• Emphasis needs to be made on having more buck stations than trying to produce crossbreds at breeding stations and then attempting to distribute them.
• Private producers should be encouraged to specialize in the production of either pure stock or crossbreeds, and not both, because most of these breeders do not have land holdings adequate to justify the two operations together.
• The project has to continue to supply exotic stock until the capacities of producers (private producers and institutions) in the multiplication and production of improved stock becomes self-reliant. Incentives initiated during the second phase of paying per kid born should continue to be paid to buck handlers.
• While the target group of the project remains to be poor women, to some extent progressive and well-to-do farmers should be included in order to provide impetus to some project activities.
• A revolving loan fund needs to be injected by the project into the credit and saving scheme of the women groups. This would allow women to have access to a more meaningful loan from their associations.
• Efforts should be made to integrate the groups into existing institutional credit facilities as early as possible for a lasting and continuing involvement of the poor.
The Opportunities and Challenges of Enhancing Goat Production in East Africa

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