



LIVESTOCK - A RESOURCE NEGLECTED IN POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPERS

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) originally endorsed the preparation and implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) by borrower countries seeking to benefit from the enhanced HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative. The PRSP model, although originally conceived in the context of the HIPC debt relief initiative, is now the centrepiece for policy dialogue in all countries receiving concessional lending flows from the World Bank and IMF.

The PRSP was conceived to enhance the interaction between donors and recipient countries and to lead to greater effectiveness in poverty reduction. Though it is an initiative of the International Financial Institutions, the objective is to encourage a consultative process by which national governments take charge and secure overall ownership of the poverty reduction strategy, prioritise the most effective policy interventions and make the best use of all resources (domestic and external) in pursuit of the objective of poverty reduction.

The financial benefits to any country that completes the PRSP process are considerable and, as a consequence, a large number of indebted countries have already prepared an interim PRSP (I-PRSP). The requirement that the national governments consult widely has been something of a stumbling-block in many countries and participation has been ensured with variable success.

● The Role of Livestock

Approximately one-quarter of the global poor, of whom 2.8 billion live on less than US\$2 per day, are livestock keepers. A key feature of livestock-keeping is the variety of ways it supports the livelihood strategies of the poor. Livestock can provide a steady stream of food and revenues, help to raise whole farm productivity and are often the only

livelihood option available to the landless as they allow the exploitation of common-property resources for private gain. In addition, at the smallholder level, livestock are often the only means of asset accumulation and risk diversification that can prevent a slide into abject poverty by rural poor in marginal areas. There is thus a strong argument for ensuring that livestock is effectively represented in PRSP documents.

● PRSP Analysis

A total of 61 countries are eligible for HIPC status. However, of these, 12 do not seem to have entered the PRSP process. The remaining 49 countries have submitted Papers of highly variable length and quality. Relatively few seem to have been written in the language of the country in question and later translated, which strongly suggests that external consultants have been heavily involved in the drafting process. PRSPs widely apply the rhetoric of participation and country ownership but sub-national priorities are reflected in relatively few cases.

Many of the poorer countries depend on livestock to a considerable extent, an extent that is hardly reflected in the PRSP documents. Even though the role of agriculture is widely acknowledged in the PRSPs, this does not automatically include an assessment of the livestock sector; even a country with a relatively small share of agriculture in domestic GDP might have a considerable share of the agricultural GDP coming from livestock. There is very little connection between the importance of livestock for a given economy and the significance attributed to it in the PRSP. Pastoral countries, where livestock is the mainstay of the subsistence of the majority of the population, such as Niger or Tajikistan, only refer to livestock in passing. Some countries, such as Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, completely ignore it. No single country gives full credits to the role of livestock



and develops adequate strategies for exploiting its potential for poverty alleviation. The countries that come closest to meeting this target are probably Mozambique and Mauritania, which stress the importance of livestock throughout their PRSPs and in particular seem to grasp its role in securing livelihoods.

• Conclusions

Some broad conclusions can be drawn from the general review of all available PRSPs and the in-depth review of the PRSPs of five selected countries^{*}.

- livestock is generally under-represented in the PRSP process and output documents
- the broad sectoral priorities outlined in the majority of the PRSPs appear largely inadequate in the specific socio-economic context of the country in question
- the neglect of the livestock sector is part of a generally unsatisfying discussion of natural resource issues
- greater attention is given to commercial operations than to the livestock species and structures relevant to the poor
- the Joint Staff Assessment[†] procedure *does not* lead to any increased representation of livestock in PRSPs
- recommendations are extremely general ('veterinary services should be improved') and are thus unlikely to lead to improved outcomes
- the current format of the PRSP process does not provide a realistic picture of the situation of poor livestock producers
- despite the apparent participatory and consultative nature of the process, recommendations are usually central and top-down suggesting that local

opinion may be sought but is usually not incorporated into final documents

• Recommendations

The task that emerges very clearly both from the overall study and the case studies is to give livestock a higher profile in the PRSPs. Even the data presented in the PRSPs often show that livestock has a greater importance in the economy than the responses outlined in the document suggest. The situation can be summarised as follows:

1. The profile of livestock should be raised in conjunction with that of other sectors of importance to poor people.
2. A strategy for the livestock sector should be based on a detailed empirical analysis of recent data and reflect livestock issues relevant to the poor.

Policy Brief based on:

A study of the role of livestock in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, PPLPI Working Paper No. 1, Roger Blench, Robert Chapman and Tom Slaymaker.

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http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/projects/en/pplpi/project_docs.html

^{*} those are Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Niger, and Pakistan

[†] Joint Staff Assessments (JSA) evaluate the soundness of PRSPs and I-PRSPs and thereby assist the Boards of the World Bank and IMF in judging whether an I-PRSP or PRSP provides a sound basis on which to proceed with assistance and debt relief.