Finding Pathways to Markets

Learning Objectives: Understanding
- The role of marketing in low-input and diversified systems
- The potential of niche marketing of local breeds
- The effect of marketing on female livestock keepers
- Effect of marketing on environment and culture
- Niche marketing of local breeds
- The role of marketing in more specialized systems
- The role of producer groups
- The role of local means of banking
- Cost-saving and labour-saving practices and ways of doing the work, which improves the bottom line of the enterprise

Marketing is an issue that is relatively less important to low-input and diversified livestock keepers than to the more cash-oriented, more specialized livestock keepers. However, the improvement of people's livelihoods will be very dependent on a system of markets where they can bring their animals – and the products thereof – to sell and buy. This can include both formal and informal marketing, and make use of different forms of monetary and non-monetary exchange (Fig. 11.1; Table 11.1).

There are many constraints to marketing, including distance from markets, communication, knowledge of prices, quality of the products, seasonality of the product supply etc. Where village markets occur, for example on particular days of a week or month, the distance of these markets from urban centres has an impact on the probability of traders coming to the markets. Similarly, an improved all-weather road network can make a significant difference.

Marketing in Low-input and Diversified Livestock Keeping

In most low-input and diversified systems, the livestock keepers raise their animals mainly or partly for subsistence: they or their families and neighbours consume much of the meat and milk produced, and may weave the wool into various handicrafts and garments for home use. Most also produce an unprocessed, low-value product (unsorted, unwashed fleeces,
hides; live animals and milk) for sale. These items compete with similar, often superior products from other breeds (white Merino wool) or locations (cashmere from China, imported milk from Europe). Few livestock-keeping groups try to exploit the specific characteristics of their breeds commercially. For this and other reasons, many of the local breeds are in decline (Mathias et al., 2010).

Most of the animals used in low-input and diversified systems are multi-purpose: they produce various other products and services — milk, tillage, dung and transport. In several cases, the animals are not the main source of income or livelihood for the livestock keepers; they may keep several animal species and grow crops. In this environment, the development of niche markets using the traits of local breeds is a viable option.

Poverty alleviation and economic development are usually the main motivation for development organizations to start such activities. Others aim to establish a profitable business. Additional motivations may be breed conservation, nature conservation and preserving a lifestyle.

**Niche marketing of local breeds**

Breed improvement and marketing programmes in the past century have concentrated on the ‘big five’ — cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and chickens — and breeding for production. Locally adapted breeds of these species and other, ‘minor’, species such as camels, donkeys and yaks have been regarded as unproductive and uneconomic, and received little attention.

**Fig. 11.1.** Local poultry being transported to the market in Guatemala. Chickens and eggs are commonly marketed livestock products which especially benefit women livestock keepers.
A small but growing number of initiatives have started to explore the special characteristics of locally adapted livestock for economic development. A recent book *Adding Value to Livestock Diversity* (LPP, LIFE Network, IUCN–WISP & FAO, 2010; Mathias et al., 2010 – see also Chapter 11, this volume) describes and analyses eight such cases – three each from Asia and Africa, and two from Latin America – where people in marginal areas produce and market specialty products from local breeds and minor species: Bactrian camels, dromedaries, goats and sheep. The raw products marketed included wool, cashmere, meat, hides and milk.

Most of the cases tried to market already existing products, either through labelling an existing product and selling it in an existing market (called ‘market penetration’ according to Ansoff, 1957) or through developing new markets (‘market development’). None of the cases started with the development of new products for existing markets (‘product development’), although some did so at later stages. Three diversified their product spectrum through developing new products for new markets (‘diversification’).

The ‘four Ps’ of fundamental issues that marketing initiatives need to address are Product, Price, Place and Promotion. In all cases, these issues were addressed and the livestock keepers benefited through higher, more stable prices, increased demand for the products of their local

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**Table 11.1.** Comparing objectives and recommendations for improved marketing in smallholder low-input and diversified livestock keeping (with more specialized animal husbandry).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improved marketing</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Informal markets</th>
<th>Formal markets</th>
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<td>Low-input and diversified smallholder systems</td>
<td>To feed family and local community</td>
<td>Barter and other forms of exchange</td>
<td>Develop niche markets of local breeds</td>
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<td>Improve social relationships</td>
<td>Sale at the doorstep</td>
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<td>To utilize local resources fully</td>
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<td>Recommendations for improvement</td>
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<td>More specialized smallholder systems</td>
<td>To maximize production volume</td>
<td>Support local innovation in production, storage and marketing</td>
<td>Improve product quality and volume</td>
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<td>Uniform quality</td>
<td>Improve product quality and volume</td>
<td>Improve communication about market opportunities</td>
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<td>To meet consumer desires</td>
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<td>Recommendations for improvement</td>
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<td>Develop niche markets for organic, or environmentally sound products</td>
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<td>Improve selling and buying cooperatives that provide uniform delivery through high and low seasons</td>
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breeds, a more reliable market or some combination of these items. These outcomes were reached through enhancing the quality or the amount of the raw material or creating a market for it. The livestock keepers also benefit in another, more intangible way. By becoming part of a value chain that increases their incomes without damaging the environment, they can gather government support. This is important in areas where governments tend to view livestock keepers, especially itinerant ones, as a problem or threat, and try to get them to change their lifestyles, settle in permanent locations and start growing crops.

**Type of interventions**

The projects for niche marketing of local breeds usually focus on four different types of interventions (Mathias et al., 2010).

**Animal production**

Many projects attempt to increase or improve production of the animals that produce the raw materials: by establishing breeding herds, increasing the number of animals with the desired traits, and improving animal management and health. However, in working with local breeds, the production of the raw material is usually not a major focus of the project.

In low-input and diversified livestock keeping the projects usually do not focus on modifying animal production to achieve specific production standards (such as organic production) or other production-related goals (e.g. environmental and breed conservation, or enhanced animal welfare standards), but such goals are often indirectly included.

**Processing**

Improving the processing of the raw materials is often a major focus in developing projects related to niche marketing of local breeds. This can include establishing factories, designing new products, introducing new techniques, and improving sorting and grading.

**Organizing**

Organizing groups of producers and processors is key in most marketing development projects. This might mean organizing community members in production cooperatives, employing them as staff, establishing formal companies or subcontracting work out to processors. Organizing efforts are not always successful, however.

**Building a value chain**

All of the cases included efforts to identify markets and build a value chain, linking producers with processors and markets.

**Target markets**

Most marketing development projects aim to target a specific market. In the case of niche marketing, this is often aimed at producing specialty products targeting environment-conscious consumers, tourists, fashion houses, hobbyists and barbecue party hosts in urban centres. Three of the seven projects export their products (sheep wool in India, cashmere in Kyrgyzstan, camel wool in Mongolia). None focuses primarily on local rural consumers.

**Marketing and women livestock keepers**

Marketing of products from local breeds and minor species offers benefits for women, especially if the products are fibre or milk based. Women are directly involved in all the cases in various activities: production, processing and marketing.

Women and men often play complementary roles in livestock raising: men typically manage the larger animals (cattle, camels), shear the wool and sell high-priced assets such as livestock. Women typically are responsible for smaller animals (sheep, goats) and calves, and handle activities such as spinning and weaving, and sell low-priced products such as milk and wool. This division of labour is most clearly shown in the Somalia case.

This distinction opens the possibility for value chains to empower women and
benefit them economically. Women in our cases earned income, learned skills, and gained power and respect in their societies. They also invested significant amounts of time and effort in work that can be tedious (spinning), physically demanding (hauling heavy milk cans) or hazardous (travelling long distances). They are forced to balance this work against other demands on their time, such as childcare, household work and managing livestock. Their other commitments may limit their incomes from the marketing activities. More women might benefit if equipment could be introduced to reduce drudgery – though the introducing machinery sometimes means a shift in tasks and benefits to men (Mathias et al., 2010).

When we think of ways to increase women's participation in livestock markets, we usually think of increasing their ability to sell animals or animal products. While this can be an important way to improve the welfare of women and their families, the issues raised in previous sections make it clear that, unless women are able to make decisions about which products and animals are sold and what is done with the proceeds of the sale, increasing market participation alone may not benefit women (Kristjanson et al., 2010).

The actors in livestock value chains include not only livestock producers but also input suppliers, traders, processors, wholesalers and retailers. Helping women gain access to labour, product and service markets all along the value chain, and improving their working conditions, are additional ways in which women can benefit from participation in livestock markets. While women may play many of these roles along the value chain in many regions, the literature mainly cites their roles as suppliers of livestock products, particularly milk products, and as processors of animal source foods, often street foods.

There appears to be more awareness of the importance of gender in market-related livestock projects than in projects focused on raising livestock productivity. Whether this awareness translates into effective livestock marketing strategies for women is unclear. A Heifer International report on activities in East Africa found that women provided more labour in dairy enterprises than men, but the level of women's control of the dairy income did not usually match their contribution. This was in spite of Heifer's finding of a strong correlation between women's control of dairy income and the productivity and success of dairy projects (Heifer International, 2008).

Women's groups initiated by development projects are widely used to support women pursuing urban agriculture; these groups provide women with micro-credit schemes and other forms of support for their dairying, poultry production, livestock marketing, and food transformation and sale (Niamir-Fuller, 1994; de Haan, 2001).

Joining such groups may be the only way for many poor women to obtain sufficient resources to start up and profitably operate a livestock-related enterprise (Fig. 11.2). Membership in such groups enables women more effectively to lobby government departments and other decision-making agencies affecting their livelihoods. Although the performance of such women's groups has been reported as variable, group membership gives many developing-country women the freedom to participate in livestock development activities, enabling them to protect their interests, to overcome legal hurdles facing them, and to access the training and equipment they need to increase their production and sale of safe livestock foods.

The scarce literature that exists on women and livestock markets indicates that developing country women participate in livestock value chains mainly as suppliers of dairy products and as producers and sellers of processed animal-source foods in informal markets. Although increasing the participation of women in livestock markets and value chains clearly has the potential to improve welfare, the increasing commercialization of livestock markets presents women with risks as well as rewards. The literature cites many cases where women's control over livestock enterprises and incomes is diminished rather than maintained or enhanced with increasing commercialization.
Women stand to benefit substantially from improvements in food safety, especially in informal markets, but are often inadvertently hurt by the unintended consequences of inappropriate policies and regulations. The conditions leading to these different outcomes need to be much better understood. While market-oriented livestock projects, perhaps more than productivity-focused projects, are increasingly recognizing the need to pay attention to gender, the challenge remains to identify strategies that help women enter into and benefit more from livestock markets (Kristjanson et al., 2010).

**Effects on environment**

Linking livestock keepers to a value chain may have adverse effects on the environment. This may occur if the owners begin to keep more animals than the environment can sustain. Adverse effects may also occur if the mobility of pastoralists is constrained.

In Somalia, a more flexible system has emerged, where the milk collectors – themselves community members – follow the herds during the migrations. This enables and encourages mobility. Even here, though, some herders have begun to keep their lactating camels near their huts where they can milk them easily, while sending non-lactating animals further afield.

Broader trends may mask or accentuate the environmental effects of a marketing project. In most countries, rapid urbanization, population growth, changing lifestyles, the conversion of land to other uses, the decline of mobile pastoralism and climate change are much larger influences on the environment than the creation of a value chain for a particular product. In Mauritania, for example, it is unclear whether the tendency for pastoralists to settle in one location is because of dairy’s milk purchases or part of...
a broader trend towards settlement and urbanization. While the causes for such changes lie outside its control, a marketing initiative can reinforce them, accept them as a fact of life or try to counteract them (Mathias et al., 2010).

Livestock marketing and culture

Marketing efforts related to local breeds can both undermine and reinforce local culture. For example, empowering women, trivializing traditional products in order to please tourists, opening contacts with a consumer society, or encouraging mobile herdsmen to settle in one place potentially can weaken the local culture. The outcome of such changes largely depends on how the society handles them. If empowering women leads to increased divorce rates as reported in the Mauritania case, the women will be better off only if the traditional or national laws do not outcast or disadvantage divorced women.

In other instances, the marketing efforts can reinforce the local culture, for example, by increasing the awareness and pride of local people and outsiders in their cultural values (including the local breeds), empowering local people to press for their interests, encouraging them to rediscover lost skills or reviving traditional handicrafts (Mathias et al., 2010).

In the marketing related to many low-input and diversified systems, the monetary market systems are often combined with culturally defined non-monetary forms of exchange. This is also known as reciprocity economy. One example is the Seventh Friday Fair in Sipe Sipe, Bolivia, where once a year farmers from highlands and valleys exchange their products and strengthen their social relations (Box 11.1).

Marketing and sustainability

How sustainable are the marketing initiatives related to local breeds? Four of the eight cases (Mathias et al., 2010) appear to be sustainable. In India, the wool enterprise has a profitable business model, a growing pool of suppliers and long-term relationships with its buyers. The poncho makers in Argentina appear to be serving a niche, though it is unclear how large its potential market is and whether it can grow significantly. In Mauritania, the Tiviski dairy is the market leader; it has a long history of creating innovative products and successfully competes with lower-priced rivals. The discovery that camel milk has therapeutic qualities is opening up a promising niche market of diabetic or health-conscious consumers. In Somalia, the women traders supply a rapidly growing urban market with a vital product (Mathias et al., 2010).

Box 11.1. Reciprocity economy in Seventh Friday Fair.

In the Andean marketplaces and smaller 'ferias', the Andean reciprocity economy and the monetary marketing realities are combined. Here you can find both monetary exchange as well as various forms of non-monetary exchange.

For example, on the seventh Friday after Easter, a fair takes place in the small town of Sipe Sipe near Cochabamba, Bolivia, during which farmers from different agricultural ecosystems exchange their recently harvested products. Farmers from the highlands bring various varieties of potatoes and other local tubers, like oca and papallata. Farmers from the valleys bring local varieties of maize. The abundant biodiversity is clearly reflected at this colourful fair, but there is much more to it. The fair is a clear example of the strength of the reciprocity economy.

In spite of centuries of Spanish colonization, and the total hegemony of the monetary market system today, this system of reciprocity economy has survived amongst indigenous groups in many parts of the Bolivian Andes. These socio-economic relations of production have allowed them to maintain their principles of community and solidarity, within a system of exploitation (Compas and Agruco, 2010).
That does not mean that these initiatives are secure. Foreigners' tastes for Indian handicrafts may change; a recession in Argentina may mean fewer tourists with less money to spend on ponchos; subsidized imports from the EU may ruin Mauritania's dairy sales; civil war may disrupt the Somali milk traders, or a reinvigorated government may introduce taxes or hygiene and veterinary controls, but these are risks similar to those faced by many businesses, and not just in the livestock sector or in the developing world.

The future of the other four enterprises is more doubtful. The Kyrgyzstan goats initiative shows promise: it is based on an existing resource and is not capital-intensive. However, it depends on transferring knowledge and skills, establishing a reliable value chain, and building strong local institutions. It is also sensitive to the world price for cashmere and the activities of Chinese traders in the country. Government support is needed to ensure that this chain can become better established.

In Mongolia, the camel wool initiative must make the difficult jump from a project-sponsored activity to a self-sustaining business venture. It is necessary to nurture local institutions that can coordinate the wool production and marketing. Without this, the enthusiasm of the donors and volunteers will eventually wane, and local people will be unable to take on their roles.

In South Africa, the goats enterprise must overcome governance problems and ensure a reliable supply of live animals so it can expand its operations. This will probably mean putting more emphasis on its commercial operations rather than its social responsibilities. This is a large project, so it is in the interests of the government, its main sponsor, to ensure that its money has been invested wisely.

The Criollo goats initiative in Argentina is too new to judge whether it will be a success. As the first application under the law that governs the country's Protected Designations of Origin, it is charting new territory. Much will depend on whether consumers can be persuaded to pay extra for a specialty product, whether the board that manages the designation of origin functions as hoped, and whether livestock keepers can benefit financially from the labelling. An additional risk is competition: if Argentina's many other meat producers see it as a successful marketing effort, they are likely to imitate it, driving down prices and eliminating any financial benefits for the Criollo goat keepers (Mathias et al., 2010).

### Marketing and wealth disparity

Some examples also show that increased marketing may also imply an increase in wealth disparity. Markets are often outside the span of control of the livestock keepers themselves, especially when the drivers of market demand are from outside the region. This is the case in the pastoralist marketing in the Somali region of Ethiopia (Box 11.2), which shows that the effect of improved marketing opportunities may increase wealth disparity between poorer and richer households (Akililu and Catley, 2010).

### Recommendations for supporting marketing in low-input and diversified livestock keeping

What elements are needed for a marketing initiative based on local breeds and minor species to be successful and sustainable? Here are some suggestions (Mathias et al., 2010):

- **Use existing resources.** The initiative should be based on existing resources: the livestock breed, natural resources, traditional knowledge and human resources, and use the environment in a sustainable way.
- **Identify a suitable entry point.** To conserve a breed or benefit livestock keepers, it may be better to focus on some aspect of the chain other than working directly with livestock keepers. For example, developing an urban-based processing industry to increase demand for the raw materials may be the best way to benefit livestock keepers (or conserve the breed).
Box 11.2. Increased pastoralist marketing opportunities in the Somali region of Ethiopia.

The Somali Region has a long history of livestock exports, especially live animals channelled into the cross-border trade to Somaliland and Puntland, and then onwards to the Middle East. Dating back to the 1920s or before, this trade is both robust and growing as demand for meat increases with urbanization, population growth and affluence in the Gulf. More recently, and with government support to formal meat exports, Borana pastoralist areas have been supplying increasing numbers of livestock to export abattoirs, but who benefits from these trends, specifically, in pastoralist areas?

The answer lies partly in an understanding of wealth stratification among pastoralists, and the differing strategies used by poorer and richer households to build and maintain financial capital, i.e. livestock. In general, poorer households must prioritize the building of herds if they are to acquire sufficient numbers of animals to withstand shocks and droughts. This strategy, despite its inherent economic logic, also limits the extent to which they can or should sell animals. In contrast, richer herders are the main suppliers for livestock export markets. These herders already have sufficient animals to better survive drought, and have excess animals to sell. Furthermore, as wealthier households benefit from sales they also have greater capacity to control key land and water resources, which, directly or indirectly, have negative impacts on poorer herders. This is most evident when hitherto communal resources are ‘privatized’.

The sum outcome is an increasing asset gap and a gradual redistribution of livestock from poor to rich. This trend explains why these pastoral areas can export increasing numbers of livestock, but are also characterized by increasing levels of destitution. The report estimates annual increases in the number of wealthy pastoral households of around 2.5% (in line with average population growth), but increases in poor households of 4.1% (Akilulu and Catley, 2010).

- **Start small.** The initiative should invest first in human capital and at a small scale, rather than in costly infrastructure. If the activity works, it should then seek more capital investment.

- **Do the research.** It should be based on a thorough understanding of the production system, the product and the market. That means studying the breed and its characteristics, the livestock keepers and their production system, the range of potential products, and the potential customers for the products.

- **Identify special characteristics of the breed.** The initiative should seek ways to market products that reflect these characteristics: by creating new products, refining existing traditional products, or finding new markets for existing products.

- **Find a viable business model.** The initiative should generate income for all actors in the value chain.

- **Focus on quality.** It should emphasize the need to maintain quality. A specialty product can command higher prices only if it is superior to alternative products.

- **Build capacity.** It should stimulate the creation of strong local institutions and train people in technical and management skills.

- **Don’t depend too much on outsiders.** The initiative may require significant support from outsiders over the medium term, but should not depend on expertise or funding from outsiders over the long term.

- **Ensure long-term demand.** The product chosen should be one where demand is likely to grow over the long term.

- **Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.** The initiative should be based on a range of products and markets: that way, it is not a disaster if one product fails to sell or one customer refuses to buy.

**Marketing in More Specialized Livestock Keeping**

Many interventions in more specialized smallholder livestock keeping are aimed at increasing their production as well as improving the quality of products to meet
the market standards. In many developing projects, farmers receive support in the form of training on the use of new technologies in production. The farmers also receive support in accessing inputs such as breeding services, feeding and animal health services. These services are provided by service providers who are paid for their services by farmers. This support ensures that the services farmers receive will continue to be provided after the intervention ends.

**Access to distant markets**

Access to more distant markets is another strategy for more specialized systems. Local roads and communication resources to access market information is imperative. Group formation becomes more important also. Crop and livestock produce from neighbours can be combined for volume delivery, which most often demands a higher price. Consumers who live and work away from agriculture often develop specific desires for types and quality of agriculture products. This presents an optimum opportunity to construct specific market commodities for these consumer demands.

One outside influence that can derail more specialized systems is the import of similar and lower cost commodities from outside the region. Often, this is tied up in trade agreements that are outside the control of local producers and takes combined efforts to develop protective legal structures at the national government level.

**Use of standards and new products**

Heifer International uses the standards set by the markets either globally or locally while supporting farmers to meet those standards. The milk quality standards are fairly uniform internationally. There could be some allowances for lower standards in developing countries but milk sold to the public must meet basic wholesome standards including low bacteria count and minimum levels of butterfat content and other solids not fat. Each country has its own local standards but milk crossing the border must meet internationally recognized quality standards.

If there are new products being introduced to the country or any local population, the quality standards remain the same as those accepted internationally (see also Kenya Dairy Board, 2005).

**Farmer field schools**

The farmer field school is the basic farmer institution where farmers come to learn new farming technologies, adopt them while they are learning and also obtain inputs to their farming enterprises. As the production increases, the farmers will have need for market outlets where they can sell their surplus produce.

The farmer field school can move to a higher level of legal entity before it engages itself in market organization. The field school can move to farmer association, cooperative society or limited liability

**Farmers' groups**

Another area of support is on institutional strengthening, where the farmers establish an institution, which will help them in organizing and operating the markets. The institutions will link up farmers to markets. They will pool farmers’ produce and sell to upper markets such as dairy processors or high-end consumers. The farmer institutions will enter into contract in marketing of farmers’ produce and pay farmers when the produce has been sold (Box 11.3).

The role of Heifer in this market development comes in two key areas: development of the institution that will manage the market and linking this institution to the market. By supporting farmers in this way, Heifer is facilitating the smallholder livestock farmers to have access to the markets.
Mr Laban Kipkemoi Talai is a youth by Kenyan standards. In 2002, Laban ‘borrowed’ a dairy cow from his relative to help him take care of the nutrition of his family and to provide some income. To meet his family’s ever-growing needs, he decided to venture into a brick-making business. He also expanded his horticulture farming business to include capsicum and other local vegetables. He used to rent 0.2 acres of land for the gardens and was paying Ksh 1000 (~US$13.30) per month. In 2005, after seeing the benefits of being in a successful group in the area, he started a group of his own with 16 members called the Silanga Youth Group. The group was mainly involved in merry-go-round activities, such as horticulture and tree planting.

In 2005, the group applied for funds from the Government of Kenya Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF). The group was, however, not successful because they had no bank account. In 2007, they tried again for the same funds. This time, they were successful, as the group had established a bank account. They were given Ksh 36,600 (~US$480). As a group, they used the money to expand their horticulture farming business from 1 to 3 acres, with each member having a portion of between 0.2 and 0.3 acres. They cleared the loan from YEDF in 2008 and used the profits that they had accumulated in their account to buy a dairy heifer for the group.

Then, a new programme was introduced into the area. The East Africa Dairy Development (EADD) programme began working with dairy farmers, such as Laban, in Kabiyet in August 2008. EADD started mobilizing farmers through training meetings. Laban and his group received training through demonstrations on animal husbandry, fodder management, soil conservation and record keeping. The group also started buying shares from the newly registered Kabiyet Dairies Ltd. The demonstrations that were held at Laban’s farm included planting of Elba Rhodes, Calliandra, Kakamega, sweet potatoes, lucerne and Desmodium. As the training continued, Laban was selected by the EADD team for a Training of Trainers course. He started using his acquired skills to train his group and other Dairy Management Groups (DMGs) that were developed by EADD. Laban now trains, on average, 60 farmers per month from in and out of the county on animal husbandry.

From the EADD and Government of Kenya (GOK) extension staff training, Laban has managed drastically to change his dairy cow management practices, particularly in on-farm feed formulation. This has greatly boosted his milk production from an average of 5 to 20 I per day. It has also drastically reduced his costs of buying expensive feed supplements from the agrovet shops (see also Chapter 12, Case Study 4).

company, where it will have strength to enter into contract with others. Several farmer field schools in a region can form a federation, which is again of higher legal status than the basic farmer field school organization.

Additional planning

More specialized agricultural practices take greater long-term planning, more sophisticated inputs and succession planning for labour and management. In turn, it provides greater market variety, volume and geographic distribution. As described in Box 11.4, additional planning may include business plans, in which assessments are made of potential and assured market demand, improvements in natural resource inputs that yield greater returns, optimum timing of application of inputs and harvest, all with adequate labour to gather crops and livestock production at the optimum time for product quality.

Once crops and livestock products are harvested, it is imperative to have adequate storage volume and conditions, to hold product through the market season. Market planning then includes the timing of the next production season to minimize the lack of desired products before the next harvest. Some harvested products are improved during storage with specialized techniques, such as silage making and mixing of nutrition ingredients.

Often, there is the need for capital to be used for longer-term infrastructure development and other business needs. Appropriate loan products that are available to farmers and processors are needed. These are often provided through micro-finance institutions and banks.
Box 11.4. Ramat Livestock Enterprises in Kenya.

Maasai Pastoralists in Narok District, Rift Valley, Kenya are on the path towards sustainable livelihood through new innovation at the thrust of modern livestock production and marketing. With support from Heifer International Kenya, two Maasai communities comprising over 12,000 families are moving from subsistence livestock keeping to sustainable commercial livestock production and marketing. Heifer Kenya has supported the Maasai community overcome perennial challenges of loss of livestock and their livelihood from prolonged droughts, water shortages, environmental degradation, preventable livestock diseases and lack of livestock market access. To address sustainably the lack of market access for their livestock, two Maasai communities organized themselves into a business company called Ramat Livestock Enterprises in May 2007. The company (similar to cooperative movement) is now in the forefront of spearheading modern business approach to livestock production practices and marketing together with the existing community organizations (also shareholders of Ramat Ltd) namely Loita Development Foundation and Keekonyokie Suswa Trust (KST) who are spearheading community mobilization and new livestock technological practices in their respective communities.

Despite the many livestock that the Maasai community own, Narok District has had the highest poverty incidences in Kenya. The Kenya government poverty mapping report for 2003 shows that 60% of Loita and 54% of Keekonyokie people live below the poverty line respectively (or live on less than US$1 a day).

In order to advance its course, Ramat Ltd has leased 1000 acres to establish a livestock holding facility from the KST community in Suswa, 80 km South of Nairobi City. The location was chosen because of the land availability and its close proximity to Nairobi City, with all potential opportunities for niche livestock markets nearby. This is despite the remoteness of the place and its dryness throughout the year with annual rainfall amounts ranging from 100 to 300 mm. The land is heavily denuded but Ramat is prepared to showcase the community how to manage denuded land and prevent soil erosion. Ramat has fenced the land all round for ease of proper management and planning. With support from Heifer Kenya, Ramat has developed several infrastructural facilities enough to justify it as a feedlot facility. These facilities include: fencing, two cattle feedlots, three water reservoirs that can hold up to 1.5 million litres of water, sheep and goat holding yards, livestock handling facilities like weigh bridges, spray race and crushes (Fig. 11.3). A total of 350 acres of pasture field has been established where various grass species

Fig. 11.3. Steers in the livestock holding ground before sale in Suswa, 80 km South of Nairobi, Kenya.

Continued
Besides quantity, volume and quality, consumers want to know that their produce, both crop and livestock is produced in humane and safe ways. Organic and natural agriculture provides food commodities that certainly meet these demands. Other consumers want to support genetic conservation with the purchase of rare and heritage breeds of livestock and varieties of crops. These special markets are available and can demand greater return than conventional produce.

References and Further Reading


