



Pro-Poor  
Livestock  
Policy  
Initiative

# Navigating the Livestock Sector : The Political Economy of Livestock Policy in Burkina Faso

**Martha C. Gning**

Research Director: David K. Leonard  
University of California, Berkeley

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## PREFACE

This is the 28th of a series of Working Papers prepared for the Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Initiative (PPLPI). The purpose of these papers is to explore issues related to livestock development in the context of poverty alleviation.

Livestock is vital to the economies of many developing countries. Animals are a source of food, more specifically protein for human diets, income, employment and possibly foreign exchange. For low income producers, livestock can serve as a store of wealth, provide draught power and organic fertiliser for crop production and a means of transport. Consumption of livestock and livestock products in developing countries, though starting from a low base, is growing rapidly.

This paper presents a case study of how livestock policies are made and implemented in a national context, and how they can be improved to better serve the interests of the poor in Burkina Faso. The paper highlights three potential constraints - weak livestock producer organizations, poor animal health service provision, and commercial weaknesses – on the potential contribution of the livestock sector to improving poor people's livelihoods and recommends strategic actions for overcoming each of them.

We hope this paper will provide useful information to its readers and any feedback is welcome by the author, PPLPI and the Livestock Information, Sector Analysis and Policy Branch (AGAL) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

### Disclaimer

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### Author

Martha Gning, under the direction of David K. Leonard. Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

### Keywords

Burkina Faso, policymaking, livestock, rural development, poverty.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

APPL	<i>Association de Promoteurs du Lait Local</i>
ARIOPE	<i>projet d'Appui au Renforcement Institutionnel des Organisations Professionnelles d'Éleveurs modernes</i>
CDP	Congress for Democracy and Progress
FEB	<i>Fédération des Éleveurs de Burkina Faso</i>
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
IEPC	<i>Initiative Élevage Pauvreté Croissance</i>
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDA	<i>Maison de l'Aviculture</i>
MEP	<i>Maison des Éleveurs de Porc</i>
MRA	<i>Ministère des Ressources Animales</i>
ONAVET	<i>Office National d'Approvisionnement et de Distribution des Intrants Zootechniques et Vétérinaires</i>
ONERA	<i>Office national d'exploitation des ressources animales</i>
PDAV	<i>Programme de Développement des Animaux Villageois</i>
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RAF	<i>Reorganisation Agraire et Foncière</i>
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The livestock sector has a key role to play in improving the livelihoods of Burkina Faso's 5.5 million poor, but livestock's potential contribution is limited by existing political and economic dynamics. Implementing successful pro-poor livestock policies requires an understanding of these political and economic dynamics. This paper provides an analysis of the current political forces that limit livestock's potential contributions to fighting poverty and sheds light on political and economic forces that can assist in generating pro-poor livestock policies.

### Organizational Context

The first section of this paper addresses the organizational landscape of Burkina Faso's livestock sector. It emphasizes the existing discrepancy in the organizational resources and cohesion of the various sub-sectors of the livestock sector.

- In rural areas, livestock associations are not uncommon, but these rural associations have had little influence on local, regional, and particularly, national policies. Rural associations tend to focus their attention on NGO or donor activity. Many associations have been created to work with donor-sponsored projects and have fallen apart after the projects' end. Furthermore, rural associations tend to avoid any activity that could be perceived as "political".
- At the national level, all-inclusive livestock producer associations have not proven politically or economically effective. The existing Fédération des Éleveurs de Burkina Faso (FEB) faces strong criticism for its inability to address the needs of the livestock producers outside the cattle sub-sector. It is difficult for any all-inclusive agency to generate a common policy platform from the disparate needs and priorities of livestock producers in Burkina Faso.

As neither existing rural organizations nor all-inclusive national associations appear to possess the organizational cohesion and strength needed to influence policy makers and to provide real services to their members, this paper recommends that interested actors focus on two more viable types of livestock organizations.

- Exclusive, regionally-concentrated associations have become an important, lasting part of the livestock sector's organizational landscape. At the provincial level, herders unions (*syndicats des éleveurs*) have gathered significant followings and established themselves as important actors in provincial politics.
- In urban and peri-urban areas, producers associations have also emerged in recent years but tend to incorporate only relatively well-off producers. These small, exclusive organizations have achieved significant levels of cohesion and accumulated resources, and as a result, have had some influence in policy-making circles.

While these organizations can provide important allies in the fight against poverty, they also present unique challenges. Herders unions tend to be ethnically based, which can provide an important source of cohesion but can also be a source of criticism. Furthermore, they tend to replicate existing inequalities within the Fulani culture. Membership in peri-urban producers associations has been limited to specific sub-sets of the livestock producer population. Consequently, while they can help to produce policy change in the livestock sector, these associations will not necessarily use their influence to promote pro-poor policies. This paper acknowledges the important contributions to be made by these two types of organizations and sees them as the most viable partners in any pro-poor efforts but also cautions that there are potential inequalities inherent in these organizations and their relationship to livestock producers.

## **State Interventions, Animal Health and Livestock Market Conditions**

The second section of this paper addresses current livestock market conditions and considers the state of animal health in Burkina Faso as it relates to the potential development of pro-poor livestock policies.

- This paper contends that one of the best ways to help poor producers is to target the traditional, family-based poultry sector. Traditional, family-raised poultry, which accounts for approximately 70 percent of all poultry production in Burkina Faso, provides an important means for poor families to improve their livelihoods. Demand for traditionally raised poultry is very high in Burkina Faso and has not been displaced by demand for semi-industrial poultry or frozen imports, but producers are not able to meet this demand, in large part because of disease-related animal losses. This paper therefore proposes interventions to facilitate poor producers' access to vaccines as a key step to improving poor producers' livelihoods.
- This paper emphasizes that the small ruminant and cattle sectors offer an important means for improving producer livelihoods, but that they cannot develop until the transaction costs involved in exporting cattle and small ruminants to the West African sub-region are reduced. Furthermore, these sectors require capital infusion and expanded access to credit. Therefore this paper encourages interested actors to explore innovative means of providing credit to those butchers and exporters at the higher levels of the cattle and small ruminant sector.
- Finally, this section advocates an informed re-examination of the role of the state in providing animal health care. It argues that the state has withdrawn from many of the basic animal health services it ought to provide, including the prevention of epizootics, but has not withdrawn from those areas where the private sector could feasibly take over animal health care provision. This paper therefore recommends that some human resources be redirected toward prevention of epizootics. It recommends that other financial and human resources be used to produce a new system of paraprofessional veterinary service provision under the supervision of contracted private veterinarians.

## **Power in Burkinabè Politics**

Finally, the third section of this paper addresses the larger political dynamics in which livestock policy decisions are made. It emphasizes that the points at which political pressure may be applied in Burkinabè politics are highly limited—the president, the governing party, and influential individuals with close contacts to the president or his entourage. While Burkina Faso is moving toward democracy and decentralizing political power, this paper argues that the normal channels of democratic politics are not yet the most effective means of enacting policy change in Burkina Faso. Instead, it points to four potential ways of influencing livestock policy.

- Because Burkina Faso's government has adopted the formal practice of democratic elections, there is an emerging opportunity to build coalitions among politicians seeking popular support and livestock producers. Particularly in areas with a high concentration of livestock producers, politicians may find it in their interest to champion pro-poor livestock policies in parliament and with the government.
- Furthermore, the government of Burkina Faso has begun a decentralization program which may yield significant changes in local politics. This provides an opportunity for rural reform but also poses a significant challenge as many livestock producers have been marginalized from local politics. It is important, at this point in time, to provide livestock producers with the training and knowledge needed to make the most of decentralization.

- The Ministry of Livestock is a politically marginal ministry. Unfortunately this has meant little funding or support for the ministry; however, it has also given the ministry important leeway in dealing with the livestock sector. Its political marginality has insulated the ministry somewhat from the political maneuverings that undermine so many other ministries in Burkina Faso. This political insulation and room for experimentation makes the ministry a valuable partner in pursuing pro-poor policies, as does the general pro-poor outlook of many civil servants in the ministry.
- Finally, this section emphasizes the dismal financial resources of the Burkinabè state and the Ministry of Livestock, and their dependence on foreign assistance to fund policy implementation. While this situation of dependence has negative consequences so numerous as to warrant a separate study, this paper also points out that from dependence grows a willingness to adopt pro-poor policies when these policies are funded. Related, but far more positive, this paper highlights the fiscal importance of livestock revenue to the state and argues that producers could gain political weight if they were able to demonstrate to politicians precisely how much their sector contributes to the state's fiscal survival.

## INTRODUCTION

Burkina Faso consistently ranks among the poorest countries of the world. Although many Burkinabè may not self-identify as “poor”, they live in a precarious economic position.<sup>1</sup> The threat of poverty is ubiquitous; a drought, a poor harvest, an illness in the family, or a closed border with a neighbouring state can easily push families into serious poverty. How can international and local Burkinabè actors help eliminate or reduce the threat of poverty? The answers for Burkina Faso are not easy, or as this paper demonstrates, necessarily politically popular. Those searching for a simple guide to eliminating poverty in Burkina Faso through the development of the livestock sector will not find it here. Instead, this paper seeks to provide a realistic analysis of the current political forces that limit livestock’s potential contributions to fighting poverty. It also sheds light on political and economic forces that can assist in generating pro-poor<sup>2</sup> livestock policies.

Because livestock has always fulfilled fundamental economic and social roles in Burkina Faso, it can—indeed must—be a central force in improving the livelihoods of Burkina’s 5.5 million poor people. The government of Burkina Faso estimates that 85 percent of all households depend on livestock for some part of their income (MRA 2000, 9). For this population, livestock constitutes a form of savings and insurance. Many young farmers rely upon livestock ownership and care to learn financial responsibility, gain independence, and accumulate resources (Kondombo et al. 2003). For women in rural and urban areas, livestock provides a source of revenue to help meet household needs. Furthermore, though sometimes overlooked in national politics, livestock accounts for between 19 and 25 percent of Burkina Faso’s exports, making it the country’s second largest source of foreign currency after cotton. Livestock further constitutes approximately 12 percent of Burkina’s gross domestic product (MRA 2000, 9).

Livestock’s importance goes beyond the economic realm. Animal husbandry as a profession is generally limited to Burkina’s agro-pastoral population. But livestock is integral to social, religious, and economic activities in all Burkinabè societies.<sup>3</sup> As a result, livestock has a potential social and economic role to play in improving livelihoods and reducing poverty in Burkina Faso. Unfortunately, its actual contribution has been limited.

Through a close study of the political economy of the livestock sector, this paper seeks to identify the forces that limit the role of livestock in combating poverty. It does not provide an easy formula for creating pro-poor policies but offers a realistic portrayal of the contested and sometimes unequal political arena in which these policies must be made. By doing so, it is able to identify strategic points at which concerned organizations and actors can apply pressure or intervene to help create pro-poor livestock policies. It should be considered in conjunction with, and not exclusive of, poverty reduction studies based on more technical methods and those based on anthropological research. The conclusions offered in this paper are based on extensive interviews with policy makers, researchers, and observers of the livestock

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<sup>1</sup> Hagberg (2001) found that Burkinabè associate poverty with the inability to move or migrate, personal crises or disabilities that hamper one’s ability to work, drought, and resistance on the part of wealthier neighbours or relatives to help keep one out of poverty.

<sup>2</sup> Pro-poor is a relative concept. By American or European standards, the vast majority of Burkinabè are poor in economic terms. However, within Burkina vast differences exist in poverty levels by region, village, or even household. In this paper, an attempt is made to distinguish different degrees of poverty whenever possible. “Poor” is meant to refer to those living in a precarious economic situation who could easily fall into poverty, as well as those whose personal or social situation forces them into long-term poverty (Iliffe 1987). In a general sense, “poor” as it is used in this paper is *not meant to include* relatively large-scale farmers, large landholders, traditional authorities with access to resources, government employees, or those possessing large herds of cattle or capital intensive fattening or dairy farms.

<sup>3</sup> Kondombo et al. (2003) highlight the social importance of livestock in their study of village chicken production.

sector. These interviews were substantiated through a survey of government, non-governmental organization, and academic documents conducted in late 2004.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of respecting anonymity, interviewees have not been cited by name.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Making pro-poor policies is extremely difficult in any sector. Considering the nature of politics and power relations, it is surprising that pro-poor policies *ever* get made. After all, individuals living in the most precarious economic situations are rarely active in politics. The poorest segments of the population are frequently unorganized and geographically dispersed, and they lack any real political or economic “stick” with which to influence government. Instances when the poor *really* drive politics are as rare as they are short-lived. Politics in Burkina Faso is no exception. Even during Burkina Faso’s “people’s revolution”, those who took the reins of power and influenced policy did not come from the lowest rungs of Burkina’s economic and social system.<sup>5</sup>

Although at first glance there seems to be little reason for politicians to implement pro-poor policies, such policies do get made in Burkina Faso and elsewhere. Cohesive, far-reaching organization on the part of poor populations is one of the few factors that can drive politicians to implement pro-poor policies. This is particularly true when poor populations have an economic “stick” with which to intimidate or influence politicians. Poor populations can constitute the backbone of an economic activity upon which the fiscal survival of the state depends. In these instances, poor populations may use the state’s dependence on their labour or goods to influence policy. They can make effective pro-active demands on the state because these demands are backed by a threat to withhold important resources from the state.<sup>6</sup> But demand-making usually requires a high level of formal organization, allowing populations to present a unified front. Livestock producers in Burkina Faso have not achieved the cohesion and organization required to use their control over Burkina’s second largest source of foreign currency to make pro-active demands on the state.

Since independence, the Burkinabè state has tried numerous times to organize livestock producers, but the results have been limited. The associations that emerged under state guidance focused their efforts on purchasing inputs and functioned more as distributional arms of the parastatal system than as independent livestock producer associations. Livestock producers have also organized of their own accord. In rural areas, associations are not uncommon. Yet, these rural associations have had little influence on local, regional, and particularly, national policies.

At the national level, all-inclusive livestock producer associations have not proven politically or economically effective. Meanwhile, exclusive, regionally-concentrated associations have become an important, lasting part of the livestock sector’s organizational landscape. At the provincial level, herders unions (*syndicats des éleveurs*) have gathered significant followings and established themselves as important actors in provincial politics. However, as addressed below, these unions have faced strong criticism for their ethnically-exclusive membership base. In urban and peri-urban areas, producers associations have also emerged in recent years but tend to incorporate only relatively well-off producers. These small, exclusive organizations have achieved significant levels of cohesion and accumulated resources, and as a result, have had some influence in policy-making circles. But as addressed below, their membership has been limited to specific sub-sets of the livestock producer population. Consequently, while they can help to produce policy change in the livestock sector, these associations will not necessarily use their influence to promote pro-poor policies.

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the political make-up of the revolutionary government, see Loada (1994) and (1996).

<sup>6</sup> In Senegal, for example, the government changed its agricultural policies to more farmer-friendly policies when it saw export earnings plummet as a result of a groundnut farmer movement to sell groundnut crops in neighbouring Gambia and/or to abandon groundnut farming (Diop and Diouf 1992).

## Rural Associations in Burkina Faso

The relatively limited political influence of rural livestock producer associations is symptomatic of more general trends among rural organizations across Burkina Faso. Rural associations have been common in Burkina since the 1970s, but these rural associations have never had the political weight of urban associations in policy-making circles. Although members of both urban and rural associations have been sceptical of the state, urban associations such as labour unions and student groups have translated this scepticism into attempts to limit or change state actions through protests, strikes and negotiations. On the other hand, rural associations' scepticism has led them to avoid the state. According to Engberg-Pedersen, in order to avoid the dangers of "politics", rural associations and their members try to limit contact with the state. Wariness of the state leads rural associations to focus their energies on activities that will keep them free from "politics", but as a result they are less apt to engage the state than their urban counterparts (Engberg-Pedersen 2003, 35).

The disengagement of rural associations from national politics has been aggravated by the failure of the Burkinabè state to incorporate Burkina's rural population directly into national politics. Burkina Faso inherited a highly bifurcated state from the French colonial government. Under this system, rural Burkinabè were governed more as subjects of local authorities than citizens of the Burkinabè state.<sup>7</sup> For all practical purposes, rural Burkinabè were not part of the political world which achieved independence from the French in 1960. Upon independence politicians and policy makers sought the support of rural voters through channels of traditional authority rather than direct contact with rural citizens. Corruption and clientelism thrived under this political system. Rather than establishing state power via a rational state bureaucracy, those in power distributed state goods and positions via unofficial channels to powerful rural leaders who in exchange promised the support of rural voters (Engberg-Pedersen 2003, ; Loada 1994).

After coming to power in 1983, the Sankara government tried to incorporate the rural population into national politics by replacing traditional authorities with local revolutionary councils. While this system sought to end the political marginalization of rural Burkinabè, it did so on the government's terms causing the incorporation of rural Burkinabè to occur on very unequal terms. Despite the revolutionary discourse to the contrary, Sankara's revolutionary project relied upon a totalitarian vision which employed centralized, top-down state intervention to achieve its revolutionary goals. As a result, while "revolutionary in many ways, Sankara's project actually reinforced... the marginalization of the rural population" (Engberg-Pedersen 2003, 23).

In recent years, the Burkinabè government has pursued important political reforms designed to democratize the political system, but the rural population has not yet been fully incorporated into national politics via direct channels. Despite a far-reaching decentralization policy, most researchers believe that the central state continues to rely upon traditional authorities for rural support (Loada 1994, ; Loada 1996, ; Tallet 1996). Because intermediaries continue to dominate rural politics and the decentralization process has not yet been fully realized, rural Burkinabè remain largely marginal to national politics. Today there are signs that this situation may be improving. President Compaore's apparent commitment to (limited) democratic reforms may indicate that politicians see the incorporation of rural voters into national politics as a necessary step toward legitimizing the political system (Otayek 1996).

According to many observers, the implementation of development projects in Burkina Faso further reinforces the very local and apparently apolitical focus of rural

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<sup>7</sup> See Mamdani (1995) for a discussion of the bifurcated state.

associations' efforts and limits their lifespan. Almost all observers and documentation consulted during this research project argue that rural associations are often created in response to the requirements or encouragement of development projects (Diawara 1996, ; Engberg-Pedersen 2003, ; Hagberg 2004, 202). This causes associations to see themselves as project associations. They focus their efforts on achieving project goals or extracting resources from project sponsors. Being closely tied to a given project does not encourage political activism or branching out to new issue areas because association members fear losing the association's advantageous relationship to the project. Furthermore, association members may be entirely focused on project goals and see the association only as a means for facilitating the project, not as a means for pursuing other goals. Some observers worry that rural associations may serve as little more than advocates of a given project, weighing in on political issues only in defence of the project to which they are attached. This study found very little evidence that development projects, as they are implemented today, ultimately increase rural organizational capacity. Quite to the contrary, because the existence of rural associations is so closely tied to that of development projects, associations rarely outlive development projects or go on to pursue a wider advocacy or service agenda.

A further reason for the limited political power of rural associations may stem from the nature of association leadership. In a controversial argument substantiated by interviewees, Diawara (1996) contends that many of Burkina Faso's new rural associations serve *primarily* as political jumping boards and sources of personal wealth and respect for association leaders in Burkina Faso. As multiple observers noted of associations in the livestock sector, decision-making processes are rarely democratic. Some associations may not even be seen as legitimate representatives by their own members. Yet this has not stopped association leaders from profiting personally and politically from their associational title. According to Diawara, many leaders create and head rural associations in order to access potential resources. Serving as the intermediary between rural populations and the state or project donors allows leaders to gain status, financial resources, and political access. By Diawara's account, the advancement of association members' common interests does not figure prominently in the drive to create associations. If Diawara's image of leaders as *courtiers de développement* is correct, as many observers believe, this bodes ill for the political development of rural associations. This type of leadership limits the possibilities for collaboration between associations as leaders compete to be the primary intermediary. It also limits associations' eventual capacity of to engage the state because they do not have the strong, committed membership base needed to negotiate with it.

When placed in context, livestock producer associations' lack of political weight and cohesion is not nearly as exceptional as many argue it to be. While common, associational life in rural Burkina is frequently focused toward local apolitical issues and is often excessively tied to development projects. Rural associations do not seem to pursue a pro-active, political role focused on defending common interests. Instead, they attempt to avoid "politics". Rural associations engage the state infrequently and instead focus their attention on the donor-sponsored projects to which they are closely tied. The state, in turn, does not strive to incorporate rural populations into the political sphere.

## The Challenges of Organizing the Livestock Sector

Observers frequently lament that Burkina Faso does not have an effective, all-inclusive livestock producers' association to serve as an intermediary between producers and the state, noting that cotton producers have greatly influenced national policy thanks to a national federation. This paper argues, however, that it is highly

unlikely, if not impossible for any all-inclusive association to thrive in Burkina Faso's livestock sector.

As noted earlier, highly organized poor populations can push forward pro-poor policies, particularly when they control an economic "stick" with which to pressure the government. However, successful organization usually requires certain facilitating conditions. Geographically concentrated producers organize more easily than those that are spread out over a large area. When producers share a common identity, this increases their likelihood of successful organization because they have something to organize around. Finally, when an organization appeals to a fixed group of potential members who share a set of common needs or priorities this makes long-term organization more feasible. Unfortunately, for Burkina Faso's livestock sector as a whole, these conditions are not present.

The sheer diversity of the livestock sector limits wide-spread organization among its producers. To argue that livestock producers share an economic activity is in fact misleading. Livestock producers vary considerably in the type of animals they raise, the technology they employ, and the importance of livestock production to their economic and social needs. The economic realities and needs of rural producers raising three to five chickens differ almost fundamentally from those of investors running fattening farms for cattle in peri-urban Burkina Faso. Any national-level, all-inclusive livestock association would face serious dilemmas the livestock producers outside the cattle sub-sector. There is little reason to believe another all-inclusive association would fare better.

The diversity of livestock sector producers makes it almost impossible to form a common, shared identity around livestock. As noted earlier, almost 85% of all Burkinabè households are involved somehow in livestock production. For the majority of these households, raising livestock is not their primary economic activity, nor does livestock production determine their social position. Ironically, while the commonness of livestock production makes it an interesting intervention point for poverty alleviation and makes it a potentially strong "stick" with which to influence state policy, this commonness also makes it virtually impossible to create a strong national-level organization that can represent the entire sector. In most contexts, those who are only marginally involved in livestock production simply do not identify as livestock producers; as a result, they are unlikely to organize around this identity. Furthermore even if they were to participate in a national-level association, those producers for whom livestock production constitutes their entire livelihood or their primary source of identity would still dominate any national-level association. For the latter, livestock production is so important to their livelihoods and identity that they will always have stronger incentives to participate.

The third force working to limit the development of an all-inclusive national association is livestock producers' geographic dispersion. Because livestock production occurs across almost the entire Burkina territory, the transportation and communication costs associated with national-level organization are prohibitive. While livestock production is concentrated in certain areas, any organization based only in these areas would fail to incorporate many of Burkina's small-scale livestock producers who are precisely those most susceptible to economic insecurities. Employees of state and internationally-funded interventions in the livestock sector have found it difficult to evenly implement livestock related policies across the entire Burkina territory. It is difficult to imagine, in this context, that a resource-poor national association would be able to effectively travel to all areas where livestock production occurs.

In the absence of any successful national-level organizational efforts, two types of livestock producer associations have come to dominate the livestock sector: peri-urban professional associations and provincial-level herder unions (*syndicats des éleveurs*). Both types of associations are based on relatively exclusive membership.

(They rarely exclude members explicitly but appeal to a relatively limited number of potential members.) For these associations, exclusive membership appears to favour associational development. In the livestock sector, broad-based, inclusive membership may not facilitate collective action. Instead appealing to a small set of members, *who share a common identity and common needs*, allows existing associations to successfully organize producers. Both types of associations address the particular production and economic needs of a sub-set of livestock producers. They do not take on the entire range of issues affecting the sector, instead they try to change policies and address issues which are of pressing concern to their members. This has the distinct advantage of concentrating organizational efforts on achieving visible outcomes that may induce members to become more committed to the association. Although the exclusive nature of these associations raises important doubts about their potential role in pushing pro-poor policies, any intervention seeking to empower livestock producers must take advantage of these pre-existing, relatively cohesive associations.

### Peri-Urban Professional Associations

Peri-urban professional associations group producers involved primarily in semi-intensive production of poultry, pigs, and/or dairy. The three main associations today are the *Maison de l'Aviculture* (MDA—House of Aviculture), *Maison des Éleveurs de Porc* (MEP—House of Pork Producers), and most recently the *Association de Promoteurs du Lait Local* (APLL—Association for the Promoters of Local Milk). All three associations are composed primarily of producers found in and around Burkina's two main urban centres, Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, and all three fulfil both advocacy and service-provision roles.

At present, both the MDA and the MEP receive financial assistance from the French-funded *projet d'Appui au Renforcement Institutionnel des Organisations Professionnelles d'Éleveurs modernes* (ARIOPE). This project helps cover the organizational costs of professional associations in the modern livestock sector by providing assistance for training sessions, staff costs, etc. In the case of the MDA, ARIOPE also convinced the Burkinabè administration to place a part-time technical assistant at the MDA to facilitate the association's service delivery role. Although the project continues to provide some assistance to the MDA, the MDA has achieved a remarkable level of financial self-sufficiency in recent years. By offering veterinary and other supplies at a discounted rate to members (whose numbers are ever-increasing), the MDA is able to sustain its own staff and operational costs. The MEP has not yet reached a similar level of self-sufficiency, but the ARIOPE project director and MEP members believe the association is moving along the path toward self-sufficiency and hope it will reach this point before the ARIOPE project ends in 2006.

While the director of the MDA recognizes the important role ARIOPE has played in helping the association, he also believes that the association's success is a reflection of the nature of semi-intensive poultry production. When asked if the association could provide a model for other associations in the livestock sector, he argued that the specific conditions that allow for successful organization in the semi-intensive poultry sector exist in few other areas of the livestock sector. The work of the MDA is facilitated by the fact that its members are relatively concentrated in one geographic region. While time consuming, the MDA still travels to the peri-urban area and provides on-site services to most farms at least once a year. Furthermore, members can come to the association's headquarters to attend meetings and educational seminars and to purchase products and services. More importantly, however, semi-intensive poultry production is input intensive. Semi-intensive poultry producers share a common need for reasonably priced inputs. Consequently, they have a strong incentive to back an association which can facilitate the wholesale purchase of inputs. Furthermore, the costs of entry into this type of production are relatively high. Those

who have chosen to pursue semi-intensive poultry production have made a considerable investment. They try to minimize losses by investing in material inputs, veterinary inputs, and educational resources. They therefore have a common interest in sustaining an association that can help minimize their losses. By focusing on these clear needs, the MDA has been able to provide tangible returns for semi-intensive producers. The MEP is currently pursuing a similar strategy; however, it remains to be seen whether pork producers in fact require the amount of inputs and services that poultry producers do. At present, it is doubtful that the MEP will achieve the same level of financial performance as the MDA, as pork production is less input-intensive. If the service-provision side of the MEP is not used frequently or if the MEP is not able to provide services at an attractive price, it will be difficult for the MEP to become financially self-sufficient. Similarly, the survival of the APLL will likely depend on its ability to meet dairy producers' common needs.

The relative associational stability and cohesiveness of peri-urban professional associations has allowed them to play a role in livestock sector policy-making. Officials in the Ministry of Livestock recognize and work closely with these professional associations, as do state laboratories and research institutes. Officials in the livestock ministry consistently list peri-urban professional associations as the most reliable interlocutors with which policy makers and state agents come into contact. Furthermore, although some members of these professional associations feel that state policy is made without their input, the Ministry of Livestock has generally been receptive to developing modern livestock production techniques. Until recently, the minister personally promoted intensive, modern production as the future of Burkina Faso's livestock sector. Although not all members of the livestock ministry agreed, the policy preferences of the minister nonetheless set the general tone for ministry policy. The current livestock minister has focused his attention on more traditional production modes but remains open to supporting modern production methods as well. Many observers argue that the Ministry of Livestock is more receptive to the needs and demands of semi-intensive producers than those of livestock producers involved in low-input, extensive production.

Peri-urban associations' location makes it easier to meet regularly with ministry representatives and attend conferences, meetings, etc. at which policies are discussed. Similarly, peri-urban associations normally possess the language, computer, writing, and other professional skills needed to operate in the formal, bureaucratic sphere of state administration. Finally, it is possible that peri-urban associations have found a more receptive audience to policy requests than their rural counterparts because it is easier for the state and donors to intervene in peri-urban production. While costly, interventions are concentrated and produce visible results. Furthermore, the targets of these interventions are classic market actors. To some extent, the cultural considerations which the state and donors appear to have such difficulty addressing in rural areas are not a great concern when dealing with peri-urban, semi-intensive producers.

Finally, peri-urban associations have also benefited from the personal and professional contacts of their members and leaders. In some instances these contacts have allowed for associations to build partnerships with related associations in neighbouring countries and/or research institutes and international organizations working in the sector. One of the most impressive examples of partnership-building is the successful bid by the MDA and other poultry producer associations in the West African region to convince the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) to revisit the tariff levels assigned to modern poultry inputs. Using personal and professional contacts between association leaders, these associations were able to organize a regional campaign to petition the UEMOA to change tariff levels. For example, considering the difficulty obtaining day-old chicks, the alliance pushed for reduced tariffs on the importation of day-old chicks. However, recognizing the important potential to support domestic industry, they argued encouraged the UEMOA to raise tariff levels on

feed troughs and chicken coups. Interviewees at the UEMOA noted that this type of regional organization is precisely the type of organization that can influence regional trade and tariff policies. In particular, they noted that the poultry producers were able to commission convincing market and fiscal studies on the impact of UEMOA tariff rates and to provide concrete policy advice.

In many instances, the personal and professional contacts of peri-urban producers have not served to strengthen peri-urban associations. Instead, as several observers both within and outside the administration noted, these producers are able to either by-pass state regulations or are able to get personally-tailored policy and informal interventions from the administration. Peri-urban producers frequently have very close ties to the administration. Sometimes these "nouveaux acteurs" or "new stakeholders", as they are often termed by social scientists working on Burkina Faso, are retired or even current civil servants. Sometimes, they are business men or investors with close contacts to the state. Without exception, they are more educated, literate, and well-off than their rural counterparts involved in extensive or low-input production. Their professional contacts and resources help them receive a favourable audience with many state officials and potential business partners.<sup>8</sup>

The exclusive, relatively privileged membership base of peri-urban professional associations does not necessarily preclude them from helping to produce pro-poor policies. Research has shown that pro-poor policies are sometimes implemented because the interests of well-off, better organized, or better connected individuals in a given sector correspond in some way to those of poor workers involved in the same sector.<sup>9</sup> In Burkina Faso, peri-urban associations and poor producers share several common interests; as a result, peri-urban associations' advocacy efforts may generate some positive side effects for poor producers. First, the production methods which the MEP promotes are not fundamentally opposed to those used by small-scale pork producers. The veterinary needs, if not all the input needs, are actually quite similar across producers. Furthermore, any policy designed to promote pork products could help increase demand for all pork products regardless of production method. Second, the MDA is already working to combat the massive importation of frozen poultry products in Burkina Faso and neighbouring countries. Many regional observers believe these imports have had disastrous consequences for domestic poultry (and increasingly meat) markets in much of West Africa (Gning 2004). Any policies designed to limit the amount of poultry imported by Burkina Faso and its trade partners will likely have positive effects for all poultry and meat producers regardless of income level or production method. Furthermore, there is little indication at present that the type of semi-intensive production promoted by the MEP, MDA, or even the APLL, will create any serious commercial competition for rural livestock products. Their products appeal to different markets, and semi-intensive products are generally either more expensive or less attractive to most Burkinabè consumers than traditionally produced livestock products. For example, while semi-intensive poultry is cheaper when measured by the kilogram, it is more expensive per unit than village chickens. Consumers buy per unit and simply cannot afford to pay more per unit even if they are getting more for their money. Furthermore, even up-scale hotels and ex-patriot consumers frequently prefer traditionally produced poultry for its flavour. At present, traditionally produced poultry represents in upwards of 70 percent of Burkina Faso's

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<sup>8</sup> In their studies of new agricultural and livestock stakeholders, Friedberg (1997) and Ouédraogo (2003b) both found that, although diverse, new stakeholders had significant financial resources, professional and personal contacts, and alternate income sources that distinguished them from other agriculture and livestock producers. For a surprising number of new stakeholders, the ultimate goal in owning and operating a farm was not necessarily financial gain. Many stakeholders sought instead to increase their social standing and reputation or pursue a part-time hobby and were ambivalent to the economic performance of the farms.

<sup>9</sup> Swenson (Swenson), for example, has shown that business owners may at times favour coalitions with labour over coalitions with other business owners.

total poultry production and satisfies approximately 24 percent of Ouagadougou's total meat consumption (Ouédraogo 2003a, 6).

- Strategic Entry Point 1: Work with and provide assistance to pre-existing peri-urban, semi-intensive producers' associations on issues that affect all producers in the poultry, pork and dairy industries. Tariffs and macro-economic policies are one level at which the interests of rural producers and peri-urban producers may coincide. Furthermore, both groups can profit from basic veterinary health measures (not advanced veterinary health interventions required to raise exotic breeds), like vaccinations against Newcastle disease or efforts to stop the spread of African swine fever.

*Cautionary Point:* Peri-urban, semi-intensive professional associations already have exceptional organizational advantages vis-à-vis their rural counterparts. Although they can promote common goals and address common needs, they also have very specific concerns which are not related to those of extensive and low-input producers. Any intervention that seeks to promote pro-poor policies with the cooperation of peri-urban associations must proceed cautiously and never lose sight of the potential anti-poor focus of associations designed to promote peri-urban, semi-intensive production. This entry point is not a recommendation to provide general support to these associations. They already have the contacts, professional skills and experience needed to seek out support. Instead this entry point is meant to encourage anyone attempting a pro-poor intervention to consider the possibility that peri-urban professional associations can be valuable partners on certain policies.

## Herders Unions

Cattle herders unions play an important role in organizing producers in the cattle sub-sector at the provincial level in Burkina Faso. These unions, which are primarily involved in advocacy and policy-reform efforts, have become an important factor in provincial level politics, particularly in debates around land tenure policy. The ability of these herders unions to achieve a degree of cohesion, garner a committed membership, and present a united herder voice in provincial politics stems from three main factors. First, these unions, by virtue of their provincial focus, have been able to limit the transportation and communication costs that often lead national associations to fail. The geographical concentration also allows them to focus on the specific concerns of herders in their area. Second, the herders that make up these unions are largely involved in the same type of production. They raise cattle and some small ruminants, mainly through extensive methods. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the herders in these unions are almost all of the same ethnicity, Fulani. They share a common identity beyond livestock rearing and are already, by virtue of ethnic and familial relations, part of a shared social system. In fact many Fulani intellectuals are active in the unions despite the fact that they are not directly raising cattle.

Interviewees inside the Ministry of Livestock and observers from outside agencies criticize the herders unions. The provincial focus is argued to be too narrow. The unions are critiqued for failing to include producers who raise livestock other than cattle or who employ other production methods. (In fact, the name *syndicat des éleveurs* literally means a union of livestock producers, not a herders union.) Finally, almost all observers strongly critique these unions for being predominately Fulani and for allowing Fulani intellectuals and politicians who are not directly involved in livestock production to become members. However, it remains unclear whether they may in fact own cattle which are being cared for by family members or employees.

Ethnicity is an undeniable fact in the organizational landscape of Burkina Faso's livestock sector. For agro-pastoralist cattle herders, livestock production is part and parcel of their ethnic identification. It is not surprising therefore that agro-pastoral

producers have chosen to unite in associations which are predominately Fulani. But because existing law does not allow the state to officially recognize ethnically-based associations, Fulani livestock producers have chosen to present their unions as professional livestock producers unions. Fulani agro-pastoralists are not alone in this practice. In fact, it is extremely common for ethnic groups in Burkina Faso to create associations which promote their ethnic groups' rights and needs but to present these ethnic groups officially to the state as development associations or home-town associations. Associations which are blatantly ethnic in nature are recognized by the Burkinabè state because in their official discourse they formally respect state laws limiting ethnically-based association (Hagberg 2004). The oft-heard criticism of Burkina's *syndicats des éleveurs* seems a bit misplaced if we consider the *de facto* ethnic nature of many voluntary associations across Burkina Faso. Furthermore, in light of all the forces working against successful organizational efforts in the livestock sector, unions should perhaps be applauded for sustaining their collective efforts by drawing on one of the few social elements in the sector that is conducive to collective action. But again if we consider the state's official wariness of ethnic associations, these criticisms are not surprising, nor are they entirely unwarranted, as will be addressed below.

Despite the criticisms levelled at herders unions, they have nonetheless managed to become important players in land tenure discussions at the local and provincial level. Undoubtedly this stems in part from the fact that unions have not excluded Fulani intellectuals and politicians from participating in the herders unions. These urban, educated Fulani bring professional resources to the unions that allow them to engage in politics. Unions provide important assistance to members, particularly in dealing with land disputes. At one union office in Bobo-Dioulasso's trade union building, "there is a permanent flow of people and information in the small office" (Hagberg 2003, 129). As noted earlier, rural associations frequently shy away from direct engagement with state representatives. Herders unions, on the contrary, engage the state and attempt to use state law to further their cause. For example, the unions represent members in court cases, they "carry out missions in villages that experience disputes", and they organize public speeches and advocacy campaigns (Hagberg 2003, 129). By claiming that state law guarantees Fulani rights, herders unions seek formal, legal solutions to land disputes. Hagberg argues that this rights-based engagement with the state has frustrated many government officials and supporters of agricultural farmers. Many state officials would prefer that agro-pastoralists deal with disputes locally by "mobilizing [informal] relations to settle specific disputes" (Hagberg 2003, 129). If we consider the status of agro-pastoralist populations in rural land disputes, however, it is not surprising that herders unions would instead choose to resolve disputes through more formal state channels and call on state law.

In most rural areas, the sedentary farmer population considers agro-pastoralists to be "strangers". Traditional rural authorities and local councils are generally drawn exclusively from sedentary farmers. As Hagberg notes, local farmers consider Fulani agro-pastoralists as both "strangers" in the sense of coming from elsewhere and as "physically, economically, and culturally 'different' from farmers" (Hagberg 2000, 165). In this context, Fulani rarely have any *right* to land or resources. They may be allowed to use land or to access water sources, but as strangers they do not have permanent rights to these resources. Nor are they represented in the decision-making bodies that control resources at a local level. When conflicts arise, they frequently feel that local councils or traditional authorities unnecessarily favour farmer interests. It is quite common for agro-pastoralists in conflict situations to turn to state officials or the court system to resolve the conflict, precisely because any rights the agro-pastoralist population may possess are granted by state law. Furthermore, representatives of central state agencies may in some contexts actually favour agro-pastoralist populations, particularly in areas targeted for the development of livestock resources. While some officials and observers may prefer that agro-pastoralists mobilize relations to solve disputes, agro-pastoralists may not in fact have the types

of powerful relations needed to solve disputes in a favourable way without recourse to the state.

Fulani agro-pastoralists are actively engaging with the state via formal channels, but they are not well-positioned to profit from informal connections with the state administration. While both Mossi immigrants and Fulani agro-pastoralists are “strangers” in many rural areas, Mossi immigrants appear to have easier access to land and suffer fewer run-ins with local residents. Not only are Mossi immigrants numerically important, they also possess important contacts within the state administration. Politicians and state administrators in Burkina Faso are predominately Mossi, thus making it easier for Mossi migrants to engage social networks to protect themselves in dispute situations. As Hagberg notes, Mossi immigrants “are criticized [by local farmers], but feared for their “long arms” into the state administration” (Hagberg 2003, 136). As noted earlier, many scholars believe that the political system and state administration in Burkina Faso operates to a great degree via informal channels not formal bureaucratic structures. While it is admirable that Fulani herders engage formal state institutions to regulate conflicts with farmers, this formal engagement may not actually be the most effective means of affecting policy. In recent years, the expansion of Mossi agricultural endeavours has resulted in numerous land disputes between Mossi migrants and Fulani herders. In these situations, Mossi migrants may be better able, in the existing political system, to defend their interests than the formally organized but politically marginal Fulani populations.

Agro-pastoral producers, however, have a potentially strong tool to use in negotiations with the state. Fulani agro-pastoralists raise approximately 65 to 70 percent of the cattle in Burkina Faso and approximately 30 to 40 percent of all livestock in Burkina Faso (IEPC 2005, 7). The exports of cattle and small ruminants, produced primarily by agro-pastoralists, provide between 19 and 25 percent of Burkina’s export earnings (MRA 2000, 18). The Burkinabè state depends upon these and other export earnings for its fiscal stability. Burkina Faso has suffered a structural trade deficit since the 1970s. Although lightened slightly in recent years by migrant remittances and foreign aid grants, the trade deficit remains a significant burden on the Burkinabè state and its domestic economy (Englebert 1996, 107). Many observers of Burkinabè politics believe that state officials actively seek to expand export opportunities, or as several interviewees put it, “are searching for foreign currency”.

To date, this quest for foreign currency does not appear to have made the state particularly focused on increasing livestock export earnings. Nonetheless, a well-run advocacy campaign by livestock producers could raise awareness among the public and state officials about the critical contribution livestock exports play in combating the trade deficit. Alternately a concerted protest action on the part of pastoral producers or a threat to stop exports for a period (a “strike” of sorts) could force the state to recognize the importance of agro-pastoral producers to its own fiscal situation. While difficult to coordinate, strikes or protests can clearly demonstrate to politicians that agro-pastoral producers control an economic “stick” with which to drive forward negotiations. Agro-pastoralists in Senegal, for example, employed the threat of a strike to force the state to revisit a land transfer policy that removed land from agro-pastoralists’ control (Gning 2004).

Though agro-pastoral producers control an economically important resource, herders unions have not yet managed to wield this control effectively in national level negotiations. This appears to be the result, in large part, of organizational failings at the national level. By most accounts, the Ministry of Livestock actually created the national-level *Fédération des Éleveurs du Burkina Faso* (FEB—Federation of Livestock Producers of Burkina Faso). It did not grow out of pre-existing unions; rather it was created by Fulani leaders with ties to the livestock ministry who later, with the assistance of the ministry, attempted to build partnerships with existing unions. This organizational approach has not been successful. Most observers believe that the FEB floats above existing local and provincial level associations with no real ties to or

grounding in them. Even members of the state administration who are actively involved in assisting the FEB recognize that it does not have wide-spread support, even among Fulani producers. Few ministry officials are prepared to negotiate seriously with a “hollow” association like the FEB.

To create a truly representative, active, and well-backed national federation, the organizational impetus would likely have to come from pre-existing unions. In order to effectively employ their control over cattle and small ruminant exports to influence state policy, however, these unions would also have to incorporate Burkina’s large-scale traders and butchers into the national level association. While primarily Fulani, these traders and butchers have options beyond herders unions for influencing state policy. At present, individual traders and butchers often possess “arms into the state administration” that agro-pastoral producers lack. Like peri-urban producers, their personal contacts and professional work sometimes make it possible to either by-pass state regulations or get personally-tailored policy or informal interventions from the administration. As a result, they have less immediate incentives to participate in a national-level association than producers themselves.

This discussion of herders unions raises three possible entry points for empowering herders to promote policies that will help improve the livelihood of Burkina’s agro-pastoral producers.

- *Strategic Entry Point 2:* Organizations seeking to help livestock producers organize must accept that herders unions are ethnically based and will remain so despite their need to present themselves as professional unions. It may, however, be possible to take advantage of the cohesion of ethnically-based herders unions by using them to provide information, training, and legal assistance to agro-pastoral producers. Particularly as decentralization proceeds, herders unions can help provide agro-pastoralists the information and political resources needed to make sure they do not lose out as decision-making roles are delegated to local authorities.

*Cautionary Point:* Herders unions are not exempt from the leadership and legitimacy issues other associations face. Many observers critique these unions and similar Fulani associations for being unrepresentative even of Fulani producers. Unions are frequently lead by urban, educated Fulani whose connection with rural, poor producers may be tenuous. Furthermore, these associations grow out of a pre-existing hierarchy in Fulani society. Consequently, the most vulnerable producers, women and youths, are frequently excluded from leadership and decision-making positions, as are Fulani who cannot afford cattle of their own. Furthermore because women and youth are frequently more involved in the production of short-cycle ruminants and poultry, their particular production needs may not be addressed by the cattle-focused herders unions. Finally, while unions’ active engagement with state law and state agencies is admirable from an outside perspective, it has generated great resentment among farmers, local state agents, and traditional authorities who argue conflicts should be regulated at the local-level through negotiation.

- *Strategic Entry Point 3:* By providing organization-building assistance to existing herders unions if and when they seek to build national-level coalitions, donors and other interested organizations can help create a stable national-level association through pre-existing associations.

*Cautionary Point:* Before intervening, donors and other interested parties must accept that any initiative for national-level organization must come from pre-existing provincial unions and must avoid providing funding directly to a national-level association not grounded in lower-level associations.

- *Strategic Entry Point 4:* To help livestock producers make better use of the economic “stick” they control, interested organizations could provide herders unions with research findings, literature, and pamphlets on the fiscal importance of

livestock exports to the Burkinabè state. By helping unions develop the “campaigning” skills needed to educate state officials, *beyond the Ministry of Livestock*, on the fiscal importance of livestock exports, donors or other interested organizations could help unions raise the political salience of livestock exports. It is important, however, that unions focus their efforts on educating officials before they begin making demands; officials must know a group wields a fiscal “stick” before they can be intimidated by it.

### **What about other livestock producers?**

The most vulnerable livestock producers are not included in peri-urban professional associations and are only marginally included in herders unions. Many producers involved in sedentary livestock production of short-cycle ruminants, poultry, and pork live in an exceedingly precarious economic position. They generally only control small numbers of livestock and spend a large part of their time growing subsistence crops. They cannot afford extensive inputs for their livestock or agricultural crops and likely do not have the time, means, or money to invest in any large-scale organizational efforts. In addition, poor livestock producers are spread across almost all of Burkina Faso making organization exceedingly difficult. Because they possess only small numbers of livestock, organization around this activity seems unlikely. Usually these producers are not active in cash crop production either, making it hard to organize around any economic activity.

Burkina’s very poor producers are responsible for producing the majority of livestock consumed domestically, but they are not politically important. They lack any organizational base from which to negotiate with the state or use their control over domestic meat production to influence state policy. Furthermore, it appears that Burkinabè politicians today are more focused on garnering foreign currency and export earnings than on production for the domestic market, making the control over domestic meat production of little political significance. It is highly unlikely that poor producers will organize anytime in the near future to promote their own needs or even to facilitate the distribution of needed veterinary services. Pro-poor policies will have to come from elsewhere. This section has presented possible domestic allies in the promotion of pro-poor policies. However, in order to appreciate the feasibility of various pro-poor policies, we must consider the role of the state, animal health providers, and market actors in the livestock sector.

## STATE INTERVENTIONS, ANIMAL HEALTH AND LIVESTOCK MARKET CONDITIONS

The first major state interventions in Burkina Faso's livestock sector occurred under the French colonial government. Beginning in the early 1950s, the colonial government took an active role in improving veterinary health across French West Africa (Landais 1990). Following independence, the Burkinabè government moved beyond the animal health role played by the earlier colonial government into the commercial and market side of the livestock sector. These interventions, as we will see, have had mixed consequences for the development of local and regional markets for Burkinabè livestock, as well as Burkinabè producers ability to meet market demand.

During the colonial period and in the years immediately following Burkina Faso's independence, state interventions focused almost entirely on disease prevention (Landais 1990). The colonial government's interventions in the commercial aspects of the livestock sector were limited. The goals of early interventions were primarily to increase herd size and eliminate the most devastating epizootics, particularly those effecting cattle. Colonial interventions were quite successful. The quantity of cattle grew significantly during the colonial period and most major epizootics were brought under control (Tall 1999). Until the droughts of the early 1970s, many observers hoped the sector would be able to sustain the impressive growth rates achieved under French colonial government (Landais 1990, 47-8).

While the colonial government did work to develop the livestock sector, it focused primarily on developing agricultural crops for export, in particular cotton. Livestock was never at the top of the colonial government's agenda. The colonial administration saw Burkina Faso primarily as a potential cotton growing area and as a source of labour for neighbouring colonies. Upon independence, therefore, the new government inherited an economy dependant on cotton production and labour remittances. Not surprisingly, the newly independent government tended to focus development efforts on improving cotton production, a ready source of needed export earnings. Despite Burkina's regional importance as a livestock producing country, its primary focus was not on developing the livestock sector.

Burkinabè politics in the post-independence period was highly unstable. In a mere twenty years, the presidency changed hands six times. Only with Compaore's rise to power in 1987 did the system begin to stabilize (Englebert 1996). In this political environment, the government was not able to generate a clear development policy for the livestock sector. While the sector experienced a succession of projects and limited interventions in the 1960s and 1970s, there was no universal development policy to speak of. Furthermore, the remarkable progress in the control of epizootics under French colonial government began to slow and even reverse as a result of mismanagement by poorly funded, poorly managed government agencies (Tall 1999).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Burkina Faso underwent what many have termed an internally-driven structural adjustment program. The finance minister implemented a number of rigid fiscal policies that drastically reduced state expenditures. The state's fiscal and trade balance improved considerably from the immediate post-independence period. Nonetheless, although good for the state as a whole these reforms were disastrous for many of the country's most basic sectors, including livestock. Faced with severe budget cuts, key government agencies like education, agriculture, and livestock, *"ont consacré virtuellement tous leurs crédits au paiement des salaires préfèrent laisser dégrader l'équipement de*

*fonctionnement*<sup>10</sup> (Zagré 1994, 78). This meant that the potential benefits of responsible management envisioned by the reforms did not crystallize in the livestock sector. Instead the degradation of services experienced immediately after independence continued unabated. By 1976, the Burkinabè government had abandoned the fiscal rigor of the adjustment period, but the fiscal indiscipline that followed did little to create the basis for long-term stability in the state administration (Zagré 1994).

In 1980, the government disbanded the livestock agency created under the French colonial government and handed its tasks over to the Ministry of Rural Development. As a result, "livestock agents on the ground no longer had a direct tie to their superior in the capital" (Tall 1999, 1635). This disconnect undermined the functional efficacy of the beleaguered livestock services' efforts to control the spread of epizootics, so much so that Burkina Faso saw the resurgence of the African Rinderpest. The government did not re-establish the livestock ministry until 1997. Before the creation of the current Ministry of Livestock, livestock services were shuffled between government ministries for which livestock was only a secondary priority.

The Burkinabè state like most other African states became directly involved in the provision of animal health services and supplies and in the marketing of livestock products in the 1970s. Through two parastatal agencies, the *Office national d'exploitation des ressources animales* (ONERA) and the *Office National d'Approvisionnement et de Distribution des Intrants Zootechniques et Vétérinaires* (ONAVET), the government sought to stimulate the sector through state subsidization and control. The government created ONERA in 1975 with the assistance of the Netherlands and Germany to facilitate the commercialization of livestock products; it dissolved the agency in 1988. The government created ONAVET to import and distribute of veterinary medicine and supplies. ONAVET lasted until 1998 when it was liquidated as part of Burkina Faso's structural adjustment program.

While state marketing boards such as ONERA were common across Africa into the 1990s, their actual contribution in promoting and facilitating the production and sale of domestic crops was often dubious. Frequently marketing boards actually served urban and political interests before those of crop producers. By fixing product prices at lower-than-market rates or by distributing inputs based on political rather than economic calculations, marketing boards actually hurt producers in the long-run (Bates 1981).

While the state's success in directing the marketing of livestock products was limited at best, it did make important in-roads in basic animal health under the ONAVET. ONAVET proved to be effective (both in terms of cost and quality) at organizing the importation and distribution of veterinary medicine and supplies. State veterinary agents further helped to meet animal health needs by providing basic veterinary services in rural areas. Although animal health remained poor despite state interventions, most observers agree that under the ONAVET veterinary medicine and supplies were far more readily available than today. According to one interviewee, the state imported twice as much medicine in the late 1980s as private importers do today. And although basic medicines were offered to producers at lower-than-market prices, the agency remained profitable (IREC 2003). ONAVET was able to use the sale of profitable medicines to subsidize unprofitable, but nonetheless necessary, basic medicines.

In addition to ONAVET's widespread provision of veterinary medicine, the state trained and employed veterinarians to provide animal health services across Burkina Faso. While costly and ultimately of only moderate effectiveness, the public

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<sup>10</sup> "preferred to let the functional equipment decay while using almost the entire budget to pay salaries". Translation author's own.

veterinary program nonetheless helped to assure the provision of basic animal health services, particularly in areas which would not be attractive markets for private veterinarians.

## **The Withdrawal of the State: Consequences for Animal Health**

While the Burkinabè government dissolved ONERA in 1988 in response to domestic considerations, its later decision to liquidate ONAVET in 1998 grew directly from the requirements of the structural adjustment program it undertook with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In the case of ONERA, the withdrawal of the state from livestock marketing does not appear to have been particularly negative for livestock producers. As argued below, Burkina Faso's livestock sector has remarkably well-developed commercial systems already in place in the private sector. Addressing the weaknesses of the existing commercial systems does not require direct state control over the commercial activities of the livestock sector. The dissolution of ONAVET, on the other hand, has left Burkinabè producers with limited access to veterinary medicine. The privatization of veterinary service provision has equally limited many producers' access to veterinary services.

According to most observers, ONAVET was dissolved too rapidly; reformers paid little attention to its relative success at providing necessary public goods for the livestock sector (IREC 2003). Similarly, the privatization of veterinary services is argued to have occurred before the private veterinary sector was capable of meeting the needs of livestock producers. Many interviewees argued that the international financial institutions responsible for setting the conditions of Burkina Faso's structural adjustment program forced the government to adopt one-size-fits-all policies that ignored the particularities of Burkina Faso's livestock sector. It is far from clear that the state's partial withdrawal (it still fulfils many services but with a reduced budget) from providing animal health and medicine services has helped poor producers.

The privatization of the importation of veterinary medicine proceeded rapidly after the liquidation of ONAVET, but according to observers in the sector, the private importers that emerged to replace ONAVET face serious difficulties in securing adequate medicine to cover current demand. Five factors have made it difficult for private importers to meet producer demand. First, while ONAVET had well-established connections to pharmaceutical companies in Europe and elsewhere which allowed them to import on credit and at preferential rates, Burkina's new import businesses must pay pharmaceutical companies up-front for medicines. In addition, because they are importing significantly smaller quantities than ONAVET, they do not benefit from the most attractive bulk rates. Second, private importers do not have sufficient capital to purchase large quantities of medicine, making it difficult to purchase at bulk rates and to meet demand. Third, constrained by the purchasing power of Burkinabè producers, importers operate on small profit margins making it risky to provide medicines to veterinarians on credit. As a result, importers sell only to veterinarians who are able to pay up front for medicine. This limits veterinarians' and indirectly clients' access to veterinary products. Fourth, licensed private importers must compete against informal, unregulated importers selling fraudulent medicine at discounted prices. Finally, private importers are not able to secure credit from formal financial institutions. According to one importer, banks will not offer credit in the livestock sector. This importer worries that without some means of increasing capital, importers will not be able to meet existing demands for veterinary medicine.

Beyond merely meeting producer demand, however, there is some concern that private importers are not importing the vaccines required to control epizootics. As one importer noted, trypanocides account for 80 percent of his business. In order to remain economically viable, private importers must focus on meeting consumer

demands for trypanocides which producers are willing to pay for because they provide visible benefits. Vaccinations, on the other hand, rarely produce visible benefits and producers can frequently “free ride” on the vaccination efforts of other producers.<sup>11</sup> In circumstances like this, the private market may not adequately provide public, collective goods.

According to interviewees, the state has not entirely withdrawn from the importation of veterinary medicines. The *Programme de Développement des Animaux Villageois* (PDAV) is the largest vaccine importer (almost exclusively of vaccines for poultry and small ruminants) in Burkina. Although the PDAV purchases vaccines through an open-bidding system, local importers cannot compete with the bids of foreign companies. The PDAV in turn sells these vaccines at a discounted rate to producers at the village level. In the market for small ruminant and poultry vaccines, private importers must compete against vaccines provided at a discounted rate by the PDAV. However, it is important to note that private importers show very little interest in the small ruminant and poultry vaccination market, concentrating their sales and imports on medicine intended for cattle.

The distribution and sale of veterinary medicines and the provision of veterinary services in the post-privatization period also raises important doubts about the private sectors current ability to meet animal health needs in Burkina Faso today. According to interviewees, the privatization program envisioned by the World Bank failed to consider the difficulties involved in moving from an entirely state-run approach to animal health toward a private veterinary system. Many believe the state disengaged from precisely the services it needed to continue to provide (training and public health preventative services) while remaining active in those services which should have been handed over to private veterinarians (sale of pharmaceuticals), or as this paper argues, paraprofessionals. At the same time, observers note a rise in the illegal trade of veterinary medicine, often times undertaken by former auxiliary agents trained by the state in earlier vaccination and animal health campaigns but now operating on their own (IEPC 2005, 31).

As in much of Africa, Burkina Faso’s private veterinarians lack the capital and financial resources needed to establish private practices (Leonard 2000). Those veterinarians who have successfully established practices have generally done so thanks to credit granted by lending institutions under credit assurance programs offered by external donors. In order to repay these credits, however, private veterinarians must be able to generate a profit by providing veterinary services. In reality, veterinarians make little profit off services; rather they rely upon the sale of veterinary medicine to cover the costs of operating a business and travelling to areas where producers live. As a result, the fact that state agents, most of whom are paraprofessionals, continue to sell veterinary medicines frustrates private veterinarians. While private veterinarians must charge enough for medicines to cover business and transportation expenses, state agents can undercharge for medicines as the government has already covered their transportation and living expenses. Ironically, these state agents are located primarily in the areas of the central plateau region and the west, those areas in which veterinarian practices might otherwise be most viable (IEPC 2005). The provision of veterinary medicines by Burkinabè state agents, either working directly for the Minister of Livestock or in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, which is quite common in isolated areas, creates unfair competition for veterinarians attempting to build up private practices.

While the state has not entirely withdrawn from the provision of veterinary medicine, the government has stopped hiring veterinarians, except in special circumstances. It has also stopped funding the training of veterinarians. According to one informant,

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<sup>11</sup> See Leonard (Leonard) for a larger discussion of the incentives associated with the provision of public goods such as vaccinations.

the state no longer gives students scholarships to attend the regional veterinary school in Dakar, Senegal. For students who are not guaranteed employment with the state and for whom private veterinary practice may not seem particularly promising, the financial investment required to attend the regional veterinary school may appear too burdensome. As one observer with extensive professional experience in the Ministry of Livestock argued, there is an alarming decline in the number of Burkinabè students pursuing veterinary careers. Something must be done to ensure that Burkina Faso does not lose this professional capacity for it is fundamental to the prevention of epizootics and the development of the sector.

Multiple observers argued that the state is slow to respond to epizootics. In one current example, the state does not appear to have made an adequate effort to stop the spread of African swine fever. Officials in the Ministry of Livestock argue that the ministry responded as quickly as possible to the recent threat of African swine fever crossing into Burkina from neighbouring countries. But many observers argue that despite the clear threat of an outbreak, the ministry was slow to react and has not made necessary efforts to limit its spread within Burkina. Whether the spread of African swine fever is the result of negligence on the part of state agents or institutional incapacity is not clear, but one state official noted that the state was slow to declare the presence of African swine fever because it did not have the facilities needed to test for the disease. Furthermore, although the state has banned the transportation of pigs within Burkina and ordered producers to keep them enclosed to avoid disease spread, observers on the ground believe the state does not have the means to enforce these regulations. While anecdotal, the spread of African swine fever offers a stark warning that state livestock agencies may not be capable of providing the basic public animal health services, such as the control of epizootics, which the private sector cannot be expected to provide. Ultimately if the state and nascent private sector are not able to provide the basic animal health requirements needed to stabilize and increase livestock production, Burkina Faso's livestock producers and the supply of livestock suffer.

Although we have seen that state agents must refrain from selling veterinary medicine if private veterinarians are to succeed, it is also apparent that the state must play some role in ensuring that basic animal health services are offered, both to protect against epizootics and to facilitate economic development of the sector. The market cannot fulfil this role independently because private veterinarians cannot make a reasonable living by focusing on basic, rural animal health services. The transportation costs are too high and producers too poor to support a private veterinary practice. Private veterinarians therefore congregate in urban and peri-urban areas where clients can pay higher prices for their services.

Considering these constraints, how can the Burkinabè state both privatize the veterinary sector *and* correct for market failures that leave basic animal health needs unfulfilled?

This paper proposes that the system needs to be re-examined and the states' role reconsidered. For any reform to be feasible it must encourage privatization or it will not garner support from the World Bank and other donors. However, successful reforms will also have to address the lack of market incentives for private veterinarians to serve low-income, low-input producers in rural areas and for private importers to import vaccinations, particularly for poultry and small-ruminants.

- *Strategic Entry Point 5:* Clearly, the current private import system is not helping veterinarians and producers to secure the medicines they want and need, nor are private importers accumulating the capital needed to expand their import businesses. This paper recommends that a more in-depth study of the constraints facing import businesses be conducted in order to generate feasible means for increasing capital and capacity in the import business. Possible recommendations include encouraging pharmaceutical companies to create partnerships with

importers or encouraging the state to guarantee a certain portion of the debt accrued from imports until import companies are able to generate needed capital.

It is unreasonable to expect private veterinarians to ensure that animal health services and medicines reach poor, rural producers and that public animal health services be carried out across Burkina Faso. Reliance on private veterinarians would "[raise] the costs of care to the level necessary to compensate a university graduate and [tend] to make it financially accessible only to fully commercialized producers, leaving the mass of quasi-subsistence herders outside the net of protection" (Leonard 2000, 22). Para-professionals with some training in animal health must be used if services are to be provided to all producers. Many observers argue that paraprofessionals should not be allowed to sell certain medicines because they lack diagnostic skills. According to this logic, veterinary presence is still preferable in rural areas. However, paraprofessionals already provide many veterinary medicines, and most medicines dispensed in rural areas are common vaccinations or are intended to treat easily identifiable problems. Furthermore, for all of the reasons outlined above, we cannot expect private veterinarians to travel to all rural areas to sell medicine. Veterinarians do not have a comparative advantage in the sale of medicine in rural areas. As C. Ly (2000) demonstrated in the Senegalese case, producers make little distinction between veterinarians and paraprofessionals when purchasing veterinary medicines and are unwilling to pay higher prices to receive medicines from veterinarians. It therefore makes economic and practical sense to allow paraprofessionals, trained by the state, to provide preventative and basic curative services in rural areas while leaving veterinarians to perform specialized services only they are qualified to conduct (and for which producers will pay). These paraprofessionals must, however, move out of the direct employment of the state and under the supervision of private veterinarians in order to facilitate the privatization process.

- *Strategic Entry Point 6:* In order to facilitate the privatization of veterinary services while retaining basic national animal health preventative capacities, the government could contract private paraprofessionals to provide preventative services in specified geographical areas. In exchange for providing preventative services, these paraprofessionals would be granted the right to sell basic curative medicines to local producers in the area.
- *Strategic Entry Point 7:* To guarantee that these paraprofessionals receive appropriate veterinary supervision and that veterinarians' specialized skills are promoted in rural areas, the government could contract with private veterinarians to supervise the paraprofessionals and to track public animal health concerns, such as the spread of epizootics, in specified areas. In exchange for their supervisory role, private veterinarians could receive transportation subsidies that would allow them to provide curative services at a reduced fee while travelling for supervision purposes. This monopoly on curative service in a given area would help assure veterinarians a sound financial base for their private practice.

*Cautionary Point:* Both of the entry points offered raise the important risk of distorting markets through government-sponsored monopolies. However, certain institutional guarantees could be implemented to protect against the potential harms of this system. Leonard (2000) describes two possible mechanisms for limiting the nefarious effects of monopoly. First, short term contracts could be implemented that would require paraprofessionals and veterinarians to bid competitively for their contracts every two to five years (Leonard 2000, 27). Of course some worry that this system would create too much room for corruption and not enough focus on local service provision, therefore a second guarantee is recommended. A mechanism must be created to ensure client involvement in the making of contracts; one possibility is to allow clients to vote on preferred contract providers. To ensure that these

paraprofessionals respect market rates for the curative medicines, clients should be provided by either the state or a professional association with a list of market prices.<sup>12</sup>

- *Strategic Entry Point 8:* To ensure that Burkina Faso retains a critical mass of veterinarians to supervise the work of paraprofessionals, interested donors or organizations could implement a scholarship program to sponsor Burkinabè students interested in attending the regional veterinary school in Dakar, Senegal. The scholarship could require students to return to Burkina Faso to practice veterinary medicine for a given amount of time.

## Meeting Demand in the Market for Livestock Products

By all indications, the most significant difficulties facing Burkina Faso's livestock sector from a market point of view appear to stem from the limited supply of livestock products rather than weak demand, particularly for the poultry sub-sector. During the 1970s and 1980s, an over-valued exchange rate and the importation of cheap livestock products from the European Union by West African countries drove down demand for Burkinabè livestock products in the West African region (McCarthy 2004). Since the 1990s, however, the devaluation of the CFA and anti-dumping restrictions have helped to dramatically increase demand for Burkinabè livestock products in the regional market. Yet, as addressed below, high transportation and transaction costs, have limited Burkinabè producers' ability to supply the regional market. Furthermore, domestic consumption, particularly of small-ruminants and short-cycle livestock, has increased with population growth. Almost all of the interviewees consulted for this study felt that the largest challenge facing the sector was to meet existing demands, either by increasing production or facilitating exportation. Few believed that efforts needed to be made to stimulate demand for livestock products (see below, *Improving Existing Commercial Systems*).

Although it is clear that the sector suffers a deficit in the supply of livestock products, it is far from clear how to go about rectifying this situation. Perhaps one of the largest policy debates at present among state officials, donors, and producers is how to go about making Burkina Faso's livestock sector more productive. Pasture depletion, increased land tenure disputes, and the expansion of agriculture into traditional livestock areas make herd expansion an unfeasible way to increase livestock supply. Some type of intensification is needed. While all actors agree on this point, every actor has his or her own definition of intensification.

### Defining Intensification

The Burkinabè state faces a dilemma in the rural world. It is difficult for the state agents to regulate competition between livestock producers and agricultural producers because they must work to increase *both* crop and livestock production. Furthermore, state officials do not have a reliable, clear set of state laws to consult in regulating competition. If officials want to meet domestic food consumption needs and boost exports, they must figure out a means of promoting both livestock and agricultural development. It is not surprising therefore that consecutive Burkinabè governments and their international and bi-lateral partners have placed an increasing emphasis on the intensification of production.

According to Breusers (1999), the Burkinabè state and many of its foreign partners have come to see intensification as necessarily requiring the sedentarization of livestock and agriculture. He argues that many policy makers believe Burkina Faso's

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<sup>12</sup> For a more thorough consideration of possible mechanisms for insuring client involvement see, Leonard (2000).

traditional extensive agricultural and livestock systems to be incompatible with the environmental difficulties facing Burkina today. In order to generate sufficient animal and agricultural crops to meet domestic demand, policy makers promote “mixed farming”. Mixed farming or “the integration of agriculture and animal husbandry—and the intensification of both—on the level of individual farms ... constitutes the foundation of agricultural and economic progress” (Breusers 1999, 392). However, the concept of integration at the individual farm level is at odds with historical social practices in Burkina which emphasize societal-level integration. Furthermore, several interviewees believe that state officials see intensification as synonymous with modernization. The state, they argue, promotes modern livestock production techniques which frequently rely upon the use of exotic breeds as the key step in intensifying production while skipping small-scale interventions at the local level which could have more widespread advantages.

Many interviewees see intensification as the gradual introduction of improved, low-input techniques into existing production systems. These interviewees and researchers argue that there is no indication that modern production techniques or even mixed-farming are ultimately more productive in the Burkinabè context. All factors considered, transhumant methods of raising livestock appear to be more productive in Burkina Faso than sedentary production. As Breusers argues, Burkina Faso has always been home to a system of mixed farming, but this mixed farming occurs at a societal level not at the level of the individual family farm. There is no real evidence to demonstrate that developing mixed family farms produces significant benefits over the promotion of societal-level mixed farming (Breusers 1999, , 392). Furthermore, interviewees continue to emphasize that intensification is only viable if based on low-cost interventions that are adapted to the realities of rural Burkinabè production.

In a country as poor as Burkina Faso, the feasibility of modern, intensive livestock production meeting the country’s consumption needs and improving rural producers’ livelihoods is probably limited at best. Yet the idea has at different times been well-received by certain state officials. As already noted, the previous minister of livestock was strongly committed to the development of modern production techniques, particularly in the dairy sector. Furthermore, one interviewee told of the state sponsored importation of exotic cattle from Brazil to jump-start Burkina Faso’s dairy industry. The dairy industry does not appear to have significantly improved as a result of this effort or artificial insemination programs. By all indication, these efforts are focused primarily on subsidizing well-connected investors in the sector, not on the long-term development of the livestock sector. Fortunately, there have been few major fiascos in the development of modern livestock production in Burkina.

While neighbouring countries have seen massive sums of money lost in dubious livestock intensification programs, Burkina Faso’s government has been relatively cautious in its spending on large-scale intensification programs. It is not entirely clear how or why the government has avoided the types of fiascos that struck neighbouring countries. Englebert (1996) argues that Burkina Faso simply has not had the money to invest in large-scale development projects. Others believe that the Burkinabè state simply has its “pieds sur terre” or feet on the ground. Still others see the state’s pragmatism as a legacy of the Sankara era. Regardless of the reasons for its caution, the Burkinabè state has not engaged in any large-scale modernization or serious intensification efforts in the livestock sector despite official proclamations of the importance of intensifying livestock production.

### **Land Tenure, Pasture Depletion, and Agricultural Expansion**

As noted earlier, the push for intensification is largely a response to environmental degradation and its consequent crop insecurity and reduction in pasture area. However, extensive production methods are not the sole cause for the degradation of

Burkina Faso's natural resources. Burkina Faso's land tenure regime, state policy, and the cycle of droughts in the 1970s and 1980s have all played a part in the degradation of Burkinabè resources. In order to grasp the difficulties poor livestock producers face in securing pasture and water for their livestock, it is necessary to briefly explore the tensions created by vague land tenure laws, depleted natural resources, and agricultural expansion in Burkina Faso.

In the years building up to Burkina Faso's first major drought in the early 1970s, its human and livestock populations rapidly expanded thanks to human and animal health advances. To feed these populations, producers of both crops and livestock expanded their production to new areas placing stress on Burkina's natural resources. With the droughts of the 1970s and even more so the droughts of the 1980s, pastoral populations who had lost significant amounts of livestock during the droughts, migrated more-or-less permanently from northern and central Burkina to the southern, south-western and western regions. In these more hospitable climates, livestock populations quickly recovered to near their pre-drought levels. The drought-era migration was so marked that the southwestern area is now home to the majority of Burkina's livestock.

Simultaneously, agricultural migrants from Burkina's central and eastern areas have moved into the southern, southwestern and western areas of the country in search of fertile land (Tallet 1996, 120). These migrants have claimed land on the peripheries of existing villages and towns—land previously ceded to migrant pastoral populations. In some instances, migrant farmers, in order to increase the land available for agricultural endeavours, have destroyed the local forests upon which pastoral producers depend. While land conflicts in the area are often framed as native versus stranger conflicts, many of Burkina's fiercest land conflicts have occurred between agricultural migrants and pastoral populations (see above discussion of Mossi migrants and Fulani pastoralists). Native versus stranger conflicts also arise, particularly in areas where a process of dual immigration has created high demand for available land (Ouédraogo 2003b).

Existing land tenure laws offer few reliable mechanisms for reconciling these conflicts. Officially rural land tenure is governed by the 1985 document *Reorganisation Agraire et Fonciere* (RAF), last revised in 1998. The first official document designed to regulate land use in rural areas, the RAF nationalized all Burkinabè land making it part of the national domain. However beyond nationalizing ultimate control over the land, the RAF offered little practical guidance in the management of rural land. According to most interviewees, the RAF simply is not applied. Instead, local customary authorities continue to allocate land based on customary rules. Even state officials charged with applying the RAF employ customary practices when attempting to acquire land for their own use (Ouédraogo Unknown, 13). The "new stakeholders" responsible for the creation of Burkina's newest intensive farms also rely upon customary land tenure agreements to gain access to land. However, these customary practices offer no permanent security making it impossible to access credit or make large investments on the land. More importantly for poor livestock producers, the system makes it difficult for actors traditionally excluded from the bodies responsible for distributing land to make formal claims to the land they occupy. When customary practices coexist with an inapplicable legal land tenure regime, it becomes difficult for state agents to enforce existing laws and procedures. As previously argued, livestock producers frequently fare poorly in the customary division of land; whereas, formal state law often grants them rights to the land. If state law is inapplicable or ignored, ultimately its potential beneficiaries will see very little real improvement. Furthermore, when potential beneficiaries such as livestock producers take their land tenure disputes to the state level, the rulings made by state agents often appear "illegal" to local populations accustomed to governing land tenure through customary channels. This generates further tension between different groups at the local level (Ouédraogo Unknown, 14).

The RAF envisioned the creation of a *gestion des terroirs* approach to the management of rural land which would empower local stakeholders to make decisions regarding the use of local land. The approach was meant to expand the realm of stakeholders involved in making land tenure decisions beyond customary authorities. This approach has had mixed results due to three factors: resistance among customary authorities, lack of funding, and unequal representation of local stakeholders on the committees responsible for regulating land use. Customary authorities have perceived of the *gestion des terroirs* approach as an encroachment on their inherited right and obligation to care for the land of their ancestors. However, with concerted effort on the part of state agents, project leaders, and other local authorities, committees have been created to implement the *gestion des terroirs* approach. It appears therefore that customary authorities are not the principal hurdle in the application of this approach. Rather, a constant lack of funding has limited the application of the *gestion des terroirs* approach to a few experimental areas. The state has never funded the widespread application of the program. Instead, the approach has spread only to areas where international or other donors have been willing to sponsor its application. However beneficial the approach may be, it simply is not a reality for many Burkinabè. Many donors and Burkinabè politicians today argue that one priority in the state's current decentralization program must be the spread of the *gestion des terroirs* approach. Before embracing this prescription for rural Burkina's land tenure woes, it is important to realize that the *gestion des terroirs* approach has not always lived up to its promise of incorporating all relevant stakeholders. Among those most apt to be under-represented or unrepresented on decision-making committees are women, young people and pastoral producers, all of which constitute the most vulnerable producers in the livestock sector.

To generate recommendations for improving the position of poor livestock producers in conflicts over land tenure would require a more in depth examination of land tenure issues than this study can provide. This brief survey is intended simply to alert the interested observer to the fact that land tenure conflicts must be addressed if we are to improve poor producers' livelihoods. Observers believe that while complex, the issue of land tenure is a politically tractable. The fact that Burkina Faso does not have a class of large land owners bodes well for the future negotiation of land tenure laws. While the current debates on decentralization and land distribution processes often fall outside of the classic rubric of livestock policy, these state policies will have lasting consequences for the most vulnerable producers of the livestock sector.

## Improving Existing Commercial Systems

Poor livestock producers in Burkina Faso are fortunate to have relatively well-developed, functional commercial systems in which to sell their products. The informal system which has developed over time to move poultry from the small-scale producer to the urban consumer is remarkably well-adapted to Burkinabè realities. Approximately 25 percent of the meat consumed in Burkina Faso's urban areas comes from small-scale (generally poor) poultry producers in rural areas. Through a system of bicycle-based collection, moped transportation, and street vendors, rural poultry is transported from the smallest farm to even the largest hotel.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, meat producers are able to tap into an informal but nonetheless effective, if often economically inefficient, commercial network to transport live animals to consumers across the West African sub-region. Both of these commercial systems offer a promising start for improving poor producers' livelihoods through minimal interventions, most of which do not require direct state action.

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<sup>13</sup> Many studies of poultry production have been undertaken in Burkina Faso, (Ouédraogo 2003a) and (Kondombo et al. 2003) provide good starting points to examine this sector.

Small-scale poultry production is central to the daily survival of Burkina Faso's rural population. According to Zoundi (1997), this production is *the* principal source of daily revenue to meet family needs in certain areas of Burkina Faso. Poultry from small-scale familial production not only helps producers, it also drives a commercial enterprise that employs vendors and transporters across Burkina. Approximately 20,000 chickens and guinea hens reach Ouagadougou each day, a commercial flux worth 5,840 billion FCFA per year to rural producers. Another 5 billion FCFA per year are distributed among the commercial actors in the poultry trade (Ouédraogo 2003a, 6). Considering that this commercial trade is largely informal and requires little to no direct state support, its performance is remarkable.

Burkina Faso's poultry producers have thus far been fortunate that frozen poultry imports have not had a significant impact on the domestic market for poultry. Despite the fact that Burkina Faso applies the same import regulations and tariffs on poultry imports as neighbouring UEMOA countries, frozen poultry imports have not flooded into Burkina Faso as they have neighbouring countries. It remains unclear exactly how Burkina Faso has avoided these imports, but most observers believe, its distance from the closest port has been highly important.

Despite the poultry systems performance and lack of direct competition, the system is not currently meeting market demand for poultry, particularly at holiday periods. Interviewees involved in the commercial system and in state administration believe that the inability to meet market demand arises from the limited supply of poultry, not from failures in the system of commercialization. Most interviewees believe the current commercial system is capable of expanding to deal with greater supply and demand. However, at the producer level, increasing production is challenging. Disease continues to wipe out a large proportion of rural poultry. Producers are unwilling, or unable because of more pressing financial demands, to make investments in disease prevention.

Although the state has sought to withdraw itself from the provision of veterinary services, providing discounted vaccinations against common diseases, such as Newcastle disease, helps poor producers to take advantage of the existing commercial system. The Burkinabè government has already shown a commitment to promotion of small, rural poultry production by funding the *Programme de Développement des Animaux Villageois* (PDAV). When French funding for the program was cut, program advocates were able to convince the Burkinabè government to provide the funding necessary to continue the program. It is quite rare for any donor-funded program to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. For a program designed explicitly to meet the needs of poor-producers to secure national funding through the political process by petitioning members of government and parliament is remarkable. However many observers feel the PDAV, despite its strengths, needs to work towards its own demise by facilitating the emergence of private mechanisms capable of meeting the health needs of small-scale producers. Because of the apparent political power of the PDAV and its supporters, it offers a potential leader in the process of contracting out preventative and veterinary medicine functions proposed in strategic entry points six through eight. Because of its size, PDAV is able to import vaccinations for small ruminants and poultry, particularly for Newcastle disease, and basic curative medicines at preferential rates. Furthermore, it has the facilities to store medicines at appropriate temperatures and the means to distribute medicines to rural areas.

- *Strategic Entry Point 9:* In order to increase the production of village poultry, vaccinations and basic medicines must be made available to producers at accessible prices. If the PDAV facilities could be used to provide preventative medicine to contracted paraprofessionals at competitive rates, this would allow private paraprofessionals to pass on the price advantages offered by the PDAV's economy of scale while still operating as private actors.

In several interviews, participants in Burkina's cattle and small ruminant sub-sector complained of the lack of state assistance in the commercialization of livestock.

These complaints contrasted to the written documentation and outside observations of the effectiveness of the cattle and small-ruminant commercial system. In reality both opinions are legitimate. The existing commercial system for cattle and small-ruminants shows remarkable flexibility and resilience, especially in light of the limited credit available to commercial actors in the livestock sector and the poor state of the sectors' transportation infrastructure. However, the lack of credit, poor infrastructure and limited purchasing power of Burkinabè consumers put a damper on the entire system, leaving people within it frustrated and vulnerable and undermining the systems' ability to meet regional demand.

In reality the cattle and small ruminant commercial system is composed of at least two different commercial systems. The extended commercial system whose ultimate market is frequently neighbouring countries relies upon intermediaries to connect producers and consumers; whereas, in the direct commercial system producers sell directly to consumers for local consumption. Each system accounts for approximately 50 percent of the cattle and small ruminants sold each year, although poor producers tend to be more active in the direct commercial system. The direct commercial system offers poor producers a way to reduce the personal risks associated with the extended system, but ultimately provides less room for growth and development than the extended commercial system.

The extended commercial system is the more formal of the two systems. Because the system involves large-scale exportation, many of its agents must pay export and import taxes, license fees, etc. As a result, the Burkinabè state is able to draw revenue from this commercial system. When the state considers the economic benefits of the livestock trade, it is primarily in terms, therefore, of this extended system. While the state benefits from the formality of the system, system agents are not receiving the benefits normally associated with legal formality. Though the system is more formal than its direct counterpart, agents in this system are not able to access formal bank credit or credit from the state's agricultural credit union. Even at the highest levels of this commercial system, traders and butchers find the *caisse nationale de crédit agricole* quite reticent to provide funding in the livestock sector. Furthermore, observers also believe that the state is not reinvesting the money obtained from exporters in the infrastructure exporters rely upon—roads, border crossings, etc. Beyond the formal taxation imposed on exports, exporters in the extended commercial system face what UEMOA officials label "irregular" taxation. At many border crossings, exporters and transhumant producers are forced to make side-payments to border control officials. However, the UEMOA is initiating a program which with the proper resources may help root out these "irregular" taxes.

Because the extended commercial system is linked to regional markets, it can drive growth in Burkina's livestock sector in response to regional demand. Burkina's local market is sharply constrained by the limited buying power of Burkinabè residents, while this creates a strong market for poultry because of its small size and low cost, it limits the market for cattle and small ruminants. The extended commercial system, however, allows local producers to profit from increased buying power and demand in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, the extended commercial system displays much flexibility in responding to regional markets. For example, when the conflict in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire caused the government to close the Burkina-Côte d'Ivoire border, exporters were able to reorient exports toward Ghana before incurring massive losses. When the conflict made transportation by road too dangerous exporters moved toward train-based transportation.

While the flexible extended commercial system offers room for growth and expansion because of its connections to external markets, it is not a particularly hospitable system for poor producers. In this system, the ability for poor producers to receive needed payment for their livestock depends on market conditions not only in Burkina but abroad, on the survival of livestock when transported over long distances, and therefore, on road conditions, political stability, and even weather conditions. Poor

producers are vulnerable for two related reasons. First, according to interviewees, producers frequently sell their animals on credit to trusted intermediaries who are responsible for securing payment from other agents higher up in the commercial system. However, intermediaries find it difficult to fulfil these guarantees when animal loses, market conditions, or political conditions prevent the last agents in the commercial chain from selling the animal. Whenever significant losses occur at the highest levels of the commercial chain, the consequences are filtered back down all the way to the poorest and most vulnerable producers. Second, even when producers are paid up front, intermediaries are highly responsive to market conditions. All actors in the commercial system operate on very small margins of profit and must absorb significant risk in any transaction; therefore, they are very careful to respond immediately to market conditions. Frequently this means limiting the amount of livestock they purchase. For poor producers who generally sell only when they need money, the inability to sell at any given time can have disastrous consequences.

To avoid these risks, poor producers often chose to sell in the direct commercial system. While this may assure their ability to sell at a given moment and limit the risks associated with selling on credit, the market for local consumption is limited making it unlikely this system will expand. Furthermore, producers do not receive significantly larger profits in this system than those available in the extended commercial system. By selling through the direct system, producers avoid the risks associated with exportation, but they also miss out on possible benefits.

Although poor producers remain vulnerable under the current extended commercial system, this paper advocates interventions in this system nonetheless. The system's formality means that the state stands to benefit from its expansion. The fiscal rents afforded by the formal system may generate political interest in assisting this system. Furthermore, the formal nature of the system means that at the highest levels commercial actors are registered, regulated, and officially recognized. This legal status may help actors in the formal system obtain credit from formal institutions. By all indication, increasing the capital available to merchants at the top of this system could have positive effects down to even the smallest producers.

Currently merchants do not operate with profit margins large enough to allow them to absorb losses, instead these losses are passed down to producers. As noted earlier, merchants in this system operate bear significant risks; however, risk-reducing strategies, such as investing in better modes of transportation, expanding to new markets, or improving the state of slaughterhouses, are often too costly for merchants to undertake. Yet formal lending institutions are highly reticent to offer credit to anyone in the livestock sector. Banks and credit unions refuse almost categorically to offer credit when it is not secured by immovable assets. Banks fail to recognize that cattle themselves constitute one of the most important assets in Burkina Faso. Ironically, state officials, businessmen, and according to one interviewee, even bankers themselves, invest heavily in cattle, preferring this traditional investment over the formal banking system. Yet banks continue to shy away from the livestock sector.

Observers believe that the expansion of the extended commercial system requires an infusion of capital. This is particularly true for merchants seeking to improve transportation and slaughterhouse conditions. Informal credit systems already exist to meet some merchants' capital requirements, but all interviewees agree the system is not meeting existing needs.

- *Strategic Entry Point 10:* Increasing the capacity and reliability of the extended commercial system likely requires that credit be extended to actors at the highest levels of the formal commercial system. This paper recommends that someone with competence in the field undertake a study of the feasibility of developing a credit program for the commercial system. Considering the position of formal financial institutions, the most politically feasible program would likely build on the existing informal system of credit provision.

Two other priorities deserve mention although they cannot properly be thought of as entry points. First, the state of transportation and border crossings in the region currently results in unnecessary costs for Burkinabè exporters. Any improvements in transportation and the regulation of borders would facilitate the livestock trade, decreasing the risks and costs associated with exportation. Second, over time the war in Côte d'Ivoire could constitute one of the most serious dampers on the development of Burkina's livestock sector. Even if Burkinabè exporters are able to direct livestock exports toward other countries in the region, the Ivoirian market remains the key market for Burkinabè exports.<sup>14</sup>

## Conclusion

The Burkinabè state's role in providing animal health has shrunk in recent years, leaving the livestock supply vulnerable to epizootics and basic health problems which the private sector is either not capable of, or interested in, preventing. Private, donor or state interventions are needed to increase the presence of veterinarians in the country and to improve the state's ability to provide basic public goods, such as the control of epizootics. Furthermore, we have seen that the lack of effective state policy for regulating land use ultimately has hurt poor livestock producers. On the other hand, private actors in Burkina's livestock sector appear quite capable of developing appropriate commercial systems for the marketing of livestock products with only minimal state or donor assistance.

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<sup>14</sup> In 2000 at the beginning of the conflict, approximately 50 percent of all cattle and small ruminants were sent to Côte d'Ivoire (MRA 2001, 71).

## PRESSURE POINTS: POWER IN BURKINABÈ POLITICS

Residents of European and North American countries are accustomed to political systems with multiple pressure points. Political parties, elected officials, appointed officials, and even career civil servants can all serve as targets for changing public policy and state action. At local and national levels, citizens, interest groups and businesses seeking change can apply pressure to political and administrative structures. In Burkina Faso, as in much of Africa, the pressure points available for changing policy are frequently more limited. In a centralized, one-party presidential system like Burkina Faso's, real policy making power resides with the president and his or her entourage (Jackson and Rosberg 1982). Groups seeking change have few avenues beyond the highest levels of government to achieve policy change. Yet access to these individuals is frequently tightly regulated, being limited to party activists, personal contacts, and politically important businessmen or political patrons.

Burkina Faso's political leadership today faces significant international and domestic pressure to open the political system and to create new avenues for public influence over policy, a process generally referred to as democratization. In response to a perceived loss of domestic legitimacy and international requirements to democratize the political system, Burkina Faso's ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) party has chosen to gradually open the political system to new participants (Santiso and Loada 2003). Today, the government is run by a coalition of parties which nonetheless remain loyal to the president and CDP. In the parliamentary elections of May 2002, the CDP altered electoral rules to *increase* the representation of opposition parties, both loyal and otherwise, and to decrease its own majority. Furthermore, the government has undertaken a decentralization policy designed to give real policy making power to local elected governments. All of these transformations bode well for the creation of alternate pressure points to influence policy.

Before celebrating these advances, however, it is important to note their weaknesses. According to political scientists studying Burkina's democratization process, the gradual opening of the political system has been highly calculated. The CDP, sensing a threat to its own legitimacy and long-term control of the Burkinabè state, has altered electoral rules and named opposition ministers in order to gain domestic and international esteem. By carefully orchestrating the limited incorporation of loyal opposition groups into government, the CDP has cultivated an illusion of democratization without actually threatening its own control over government. As a result, many coalition parliament and cabinet members owe their position to the ruling party, but the CDP is not dependent on these coalition members or their parties, as it does not need their participation to achieve a majority. These parties therefore cannot operate as real opposition parties. True opposition parties meanwhile are marginalized in the current government and parliament.

The decentralization program faces its own difficulties. Decentralization is frequently perceived as an affront to the power of central government officials and politicians. This is particularly the case when decentralization involves transferring control over government funds from the central government and its agencies to local-level governments. In resource-poor states, government agencies often guard their resources jealously. Furthermore, in patronage based political systems, the loss of financial resources often translates into a loss of political power and significance. It is not surprising therefore that Burkina Faso's political decentralization has not resulted in the financial decentralization necessary to allow local governments to engage in true policy making. Nor have national politicians or parties been willing to disengage from local politics. And local politicians have employed decentralization as a means of accessing national politics without focusing on the needs and demands of local voters. In the governments' decentralized bodies, the key to local electoral success

appears to depend more on one's standing with the national party than on one's platform for local change.

Regardless of its flaws, Burkina's progress toward democracy has had positive effects on citizens' access to policy making. Although largely dominated by party machines, the electoral process nonetheless requires that candidates be palatable to the electorate. Candidates have an incentive to appeal to their constituents because the parties sponsoring these candidates are unlikely to stick by extremely unpopular candidates. Furthermore, while limited, the decentralization process is opening new spaces for citizen input and participation in local decision making.

What do these political changes mean for individuals and organizations interested in helping promote pro-poor livestock policies? The first message to take away from this brief analysis is that the pressure politics of democratic political systems may not be the most efficient way to achieve policy change in Burkina Faso. There simply are too few spaces beyond the highest levels of government where real policy change occurs; and at the highest levels of government, real debate and conflict is uncommon. However, to the extent that politicians must build favour among both party leaders and voters, they do have an incentive to advocate for voters' interests. In voting districts where livestock producers constitute a significant proportion of the voters, politicians may find it in their interest to advocate for their cause. In fact, politicians from pastoral areas have been among the most active in pushing for long registration periods to ensure that all Burkina citizens, including transhumant pastoralists, are represented in the voting process. The second, perhaps sinister, message to take from this discussion is that the true policy makers, the president and his entourage, may be receptive to livestock producers' demands if they see in these demands a means of increasing their own legitimacy. The state's fiscal condition is fundamental to providing the public services and supporting the patronage system which helps to keep the leadership in power. If livestock producers and their supporters can increase leaders' consciousness of the potential fiscal contributions of the sector, they might be able to increase political interest in promoting the sector. Unfortunately, knowing that most livestock policy of relevance to them is generated within the Ministry of Livestock, livestock producers focus all organizational efforts on engaging the ministry rather than addressing the political leaders responsible for making funding decisions that largely determine the range of options available to the ministry.

At present Burkina Faso's political leaders have shown only limited interest in the livestock sector. Beyond a few speeches and efforts in the sector, it has remained largely off the political radar screen. This results in a lack of state funding or large-scale development efforts. Furthermore, the current minister, though well respected by ministry civil servants, is a minor player in the present government, making him a poor representative in the fight for funding. Beyond questions of funding and general direction, the low profile of the ministry has had positive side effects. It is left almost entirely to its own devices in creating specific policy for the livestock sector. This means that civil servants trained in animal health, livestock management, and agronomy dominate decision making in the livestock sector. In interviews, it became clear that these civil servants are committed to developing the sector. Many are very concerned with assisting poor, small-holder livestock producers and understand the stakes involved in improving poor producers' livelihoods. These competent and committed individuals can have great latitude in creating and implementing livestock policy. Certain have even used their administrative position to develop recommended legislation and get it passed through the government, as in the example of the recent *Loi d'Orientation Relative au Pastoralisme au Burkina Faso*<sup>15</sup> which civil servants in

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<sup>15</sup> The law was passed in November 2002 but has not yet been applied. Negotiations are still in progress between local authorities and representatives of the Ministry of Livestock on how to implement the new regulations.

the ministry saw as a key step to securing livestock producers' access to land. Others have actively pursued donor sponsors for the ministry projects they believed necessary. Almost without exception, interviewees from donor agencies noted that all projects and programs began because of the initiative of the Ministry of Livestock.

The dominance of ministry employees in livestock policy making has also had negative consequences for the sector. Many argue the ministry is too dominant across the sector, leaving little room for private or producer-driven initiative. While civil servants from the ministry argue that they always consult interested stakeholders before implementing policy, stakeholders express serious frustration with this process. They argue that they are presented with new policies as a *fait accompli*. No room or time is given for fundamental changes to policy. Feedback is accepted but not incorporated into policy decisions. Producer associations and other stakeholders feel they merely rubber stamp a policy created by ministry civil servants. At present the state's action in the livestock sector is guided by a national planning document, the *Plan d'Actions et Programme d'Investissement du Secteur de l'Élevage*. Although ministry officials prided themselves on the consultative process employed in developing the plan, stakeholders outside the ministry expressed frustration at having been consulted only at the approval state in the process and not in the earlier elaboration periods. Because the document is intended as *the* reference point for sectoral policies, producers' concerns not raised in the elaboration period are unlikely to be addressed after the development of the plan. Ultimately this can undermine the effectiveness of policies because they do not reflect the real on-the-ground concerns of stakeholders.

For all the downfalls of being neglected by politicians and receiving little funding, the current position of the Ministry of Livestock offers some advantages from the point of view of pro-poor interventions. The Ministry of Livestock is starved of financial resources. Livestock receives a mere 1.5 percent of the resources allocated to development in Burkina Faso (MRA 2000). Without resources of its own, the ministry is willing to devote time and effort to implementing almost any project if it is sponsored, at least in part, by an outside donor. Furthermore, interviewees from donor agencies have found the ministry receptive and responsible in implementing livestock programs. Perhaps the political neglect of the sector has also allowed the ministry to operate independent of some of the nefarious political influences often denounced by frustrated donor agencies.

- *Strategic Entry Point 11:* The Ministry of Livestock offers a valuable partner in the implementation of pro-poor policies. Not only are its civil servants generally receptive to pro-poor goals, the resource-poor ministry is willing to implement almost any pro-poor policy if it receives funding.

The quest for funding is a common theme not only in the Ministry of Livestock but across Burkina's government which relies on foreign assistance for 80 percent of its expenditures. When asked where real decision-making power in the agricultural sector (livestock included) lies, almost all respondents replied, "the World Bank". At times all international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, were being subsumed into the term "the World Bank". Still the common message is clear: stakeholders in Burkina Faso's livestock sector are frustrated with the excessive power of international organizations in local policy making.

Although respondents spoke of the negative effects of structural adjustment policies on animal health (see above), they focused particularly on the possible ramifications of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) and the related policy guide, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) which was completed for Burkina Faso in 2000. Both the HIPC program for Burkina and the PRSP were negotiated through Burkina Faso's Ministry of Finance with, observers argue, no input from other relevant ministries. Although a certain percentage of HIPC funds are intended for livestock programs, the Ministry of Finance is ultimately responsible for allocating these funds.

Interviewees held that the PRSP elaboration process was essentially closed to much needed stakeholder input. In part because the PRSP had to be elaborated in a very short period of time, no opportunities were offered to stakeholders either within or outside the government to offer true feedback on the document. Due to the lack of reliable poverty statistics in the livestock sector, this meant that many of the concerns of stakeholders in the livestock sector were not raised during the elaboration process. The lack of input is worrisome precisely because the PRSP provides the policy backbone for international assistance in the years to come. To the extent that it does not address stakeholders concerns it risks directing all future international interventions away from these problem areas.

Burkina Faso's political system, like all political systems, has points at which pressure can be applied to achieve policy change. However, unlike developed democratic systems where pressure can frequently be applied at multiple levels and through multiple channels, the political system in Burkina has relatively few pressure points. Real decision making is concentrated in the hands of the President and leaders of his party and neither face real competition from opposing parties. The lack of true democratic competition makes it difficult to raise new issues in this political system. However, we have seen that the beginnings of democratic governance create the possibility for forming coalitions with elected officials from areas with a concentration of livestock producers and for increasing producer involvement in local decision-making. It is also clear that the political insignificance of the livestock ministry can at times give civil servants important discretion in making livestock policy. Finally, it has been shown that for better or worse, one of the key means for creating policy change in Burkina Faso is through external funding mechanisms. However, unless these policies have an important domestic constituency to support them and keep them going once funding has been withdrawn, they will not be sustainable. Therefore, it is important to consider these political recommendations in conjunction with the earlier discussion of organizational context.

## CONCLUSION: NAVIGATING THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR

It is worth returning at this point to the observation offered at the outset of this paper—if we consider the nature of politics and power relations, it is surprising that pro-poor policies *ever* get made. But this is not sufficient reason for interested actors to abandon their attempts to forward pro-poor policies in Burkina Faso. The stakes are too high. With 45 percent of Burkina Faso's population living below the poverty line according to World Bank statistics, it is imperative that interested actors learn to negotiate the politics and power relations that often work to inhibit pro-poor policies from getting made.

In the livestock sector, opportunities do exist to generate pro-poor policies. Although not all poor producers are organized to defend their interests, well-defined groups of livestock producers have been able to organize successfully. These groups can be allies in the push to create pro-poor policies. While poor producers remain somewhat vulnerable in existing commercial systems, these commercial systems are exceptionally well-adapted to the Burkinabè economy. These systems for the marketing of village poultry, small ruminants, and cattle provide strong starting points for promoting the livestock sector. And though Burkina Faso's political system is not nearly as democratic or decentralized as its leaders argue it to be, increasing political competition and decentralization is opening up new spaces for citizen participation and influence in the making of government policy. Those seeking to take advantage of these opportunities must realize, however, that political realities in Burkina Faso will dictate how they should go about exploiting existing opportunities.

This paper has highlighted three particularly serious political constraints, but has sought to turn these constraints into opportunities. First, the political marginalization of the Ministry of Livestock and the apathy of most elected leaders toward the problems of the livestock sector risk perpetuating the state's neglect of the sector. However, it has also been argued that the political marginality of the ministry may actually allow more room for pro-poor policy makers to influence the actions of the ministry. And it may be possible to take advantage of a second constraint to actually raise the political salience of livestock issues. While the Burkinabè political system remains a *de facto* single-party system without real democratic competition, the system is under stress. For political leaders trying to keep their position secure, it has been shown that export earnings are a key political tool. To the extent that politicians become convinced of the significance of livestock export earnings to maintaining the state's fiscal balance, it may be possible to turn Burkina's democratic deficit into an advantage for livestock producers. Finally, this paper has demonstrated that in resource-poor Burkina Faso, those external organizations that finance the government have an exceptional influence on government policy. Actors seeking to change policy cannot get around the influence of these organizations, but by carefully considering how to generate pro-poor policies that also respect the priorities of these organizations, they can perhaps motivate these funding organizations to adopt pro-poor policies. In Burkina Faso today, this means adapting pro-poor policies to the priorities of the World Bank, including efforts to promote the private sector and the application of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. However, as the strategic entry points suggested above demonstrate, in the realm of animal health and commercial systems the private sector has a role to play in assisting poor producers.

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