



A Study of the Role of Livestock in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Animal Production and Health Division and the Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Facility of FAO requested ODI to evaluate references to livestock in the available PRSP documentation. Five case studies examining the role of livestock in the overall economy would explore the value of the PRSPs in more detail. Primarily, this involved downloading and searching the documentation for countries entering the HIPC process. Although sixty-one are recorded as entering the process, documents that can be evaluated are available for only forty-nine countries. These documents were then studied to determine the overall importance allocated to livestock.

The major questions were:

- Are the documents based on a realistic and comprehensive understanding of the economy of the nation-state in question?
- Do they correctly identify the local and specific causes of poverty?
- If so, do the strategies proposed address these specific issues as well as broad structural elements?

A qualitative livestock PRSP rating based on the statements about livestock included in the PRSP was developed and tabulated against variables such as the proportion of people deriving an income from agriculture, the proportion of GDP from livestock or the dynamics of the livestock sector. Regrettably, no consistent connection could be found between the likely importance of livestock for a given economy and the significance attributed to it in the PRSP. For example, some pastoral countries, where livestock is the mainstay of the subsistence of the majority of the population, such as Niger or Tajikistan, only refer to livestock in passing. Evidence from both the documents and from discussions with participants in the PRSP process argue strongly that the underlying reason for this is lack of representation the overall leadership style exerted by the ministries of finance in the PRSP process.

The broad conclusions drawn from the in-depth study of five countries were as follows:

- that livestock is generally under-represented in the PRSP process and output documents
- that greater attention is given to commercial operations than to the species and structures relevant to the poor
- that virtually all recommendations are of extreme generality ('veterinary services should be improved') and are thus unlikely to lead to improved outcomes
- that in many instances the format of the PRSP process will not lead to realistic descriptions of the situation of livestock producers

- that despite the apparently participatory and consultative nature of the process the recommendations are mostly central and top-down suggesting that local opinion may be sought but is usually not incorporated into final documents
- that the Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) procedure does not lead to any increased representation of livestock

In terms of recommendations, the situation can be summarised as follows:

1. Livestock is given a low profile as part of a broader inadequacy in the discussion of natural resource issues. If this profile is to be raised then representation should be made in conjunction with other sectors and other agencies to the IMF and World Bank, preferably with the support of selected ministries in HIPC countries
2. The profile of livestock should be based on a detailed empirical analysis of recent data and should reflect livestock issues relevant to the poor rather than those thought to be the source of economic growth
3. The resources and advocacy of NGOs and similar groups should be drawn upon to provide a solid factual basis for the recommended changes

If FAO, or indeed any other body, wishes to make revisions to PRSPs, then it should certainly be in conjunction with other sectors. It would be ineffective to upgrade the livestock analysis and leave forestry and fisheries untouched. Obviously it can be most effective where only an I-PRSP has been published since there is more room for alteration and correction. Nonetheless, PRSPs are supposed to be 'living' documents and there is surely a case for well-argued changes to be inserted in the text of any posted document.