Livestock in Zanzibar: What Census Data Says?

In 2007/2008 the Government of Tanzania carried out the National Sample Census of Agriculture. Reports from the census include a technical report, sub-sector reports, such as for crop, livestock and large scale farms, and regional reports, including for Zanzibar. In January 2012, the Zanzibar Livestock Sector Report was released. Specific objectives of the Census, as spelled out in the Zanzibar Livestock Sector Report, were to:

- ‘Identify structural changes in the size of farm holdings, crop and livestock production, farm inputs and farm implement use, and … determine if there are any improvements in rural infrastructure and the level of agricultural household living conditions.’
- ‘Provide benchmark data on productivity, production and agricultural practices in relation to policies and interventions promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources and other stakeholders’
- ‘Obtain data that will be used to address specific issues such as: food security, rural poverty, gender, agro-processing, marketing, service delivery, etc.’

Data in Zanzibar were collected from 4,755 rural agricultural households as well as 38 large scale farms. The Census included questions on cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, chicken, ducks, turkeys, rabbits and donkeys. The Livestock Report provides summary information on livestock holdings, milk production, animal diseases and manure, which is summarized below.

Livestock holdings

In Zanzibar, an estimated 35 percent of agricultural households, i.e. about 45,700 households, keep large or small ruminants, equines or pigs. Over 50 percent of households keep poultry birds, primarily chickens. These households keep in aggregate over 1 million chickens, about 325,000 thousands ducks, 155,000 cattle and 69,000 goats. All other animals, including sheep, rabbits, turkeys and pigs are low in numbers, their total population ranging from a maximum of 3,000 to just a few hundred (donkeys).
While a large majority of households raise livestock, only a minority of them seem to make use of the variety of services which farm animals provide to increase crop productivity, including manure and draught power.

Data from the Census indicate that, in Zanzibar, a total of about 6,800 households, i.e. about 7.7 percent of all farmers, make use of manure during the long rain season. This manure is used to fertilize about 7.8 percent of the total land planted during the long rain season. Interestingly, there appears to be no correlation at district level between cattle population and use of manure. For example, Michweni and Wete rank second and third respectively in terms of number of cattle, but are among the lowest users of organic fertilizer.

Using agricultural census data with other data for investment purpose

The National Sample Census of Agriculture provides detailed information on the livestock sector in Zanzibar, and data can be compared with those from previous Censuses to identify trends and structural changes in the sector.

Data from the Agricultural Census are not sufficient on their own to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate sector investments. They need to be complemented with data that allow the identification of priority areas for investments — i.e. major constraints to livestock productivity and marketing — as well as data that allow the monitoring and evaluation of sector interventions — i.e. data which are collected on a regular basis so as to observe trends in outputs and outcomes.

For further information please visit:  
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