

Food safety and animal health in the Shinelle sheep and goat value chain, Ethiopia

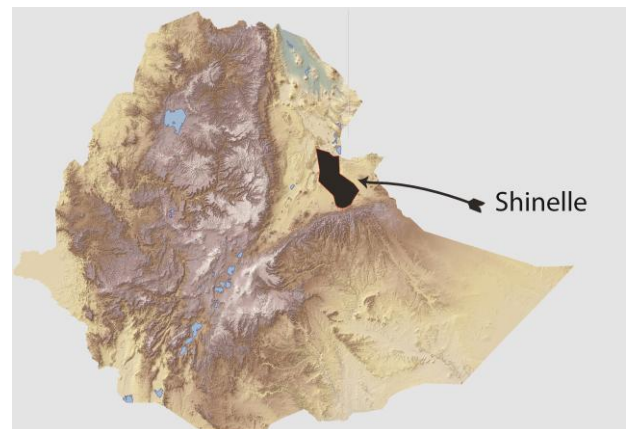


Background

Shinelle District is a lowland district located in the Somali Region. Most inhabitants are Muslims. Lambing is very seasonal with peaks in December-January, March-April and July-August. The predominant production systems are pastoralism and agropastoralism.

Value chain challenges

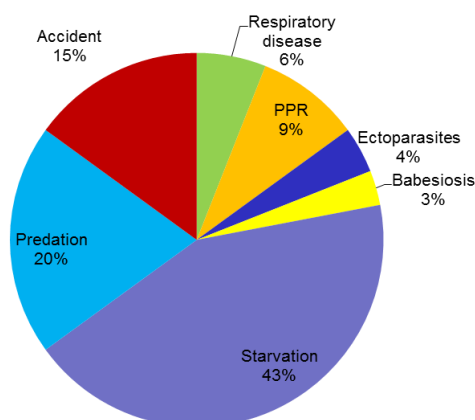
Diseases and starvation (feed scarcity) are among the main meat production constraints in Shinelle (Figure 1). Meat sale is limited by religious holidays. Cash availability influences the amount of meat consumed. In periods of food shortage, sheep and goats are often sold (at low prices as the animals are in poor condition) to buy grains and other staples. Milk is mostly consumed by farm households themselves, making it unavailable for urban consumers during times of food shortage.



Livestock mortality

The main reason of livestock deaths in the region is starvation, which can be attributed to deforestation and erosion. In case of diseases, veterinary services are said to be mostly absent, faulty or insufficient.

Figure 1: Reasons for livestock mortality



Food safety

Shinelle people care for food safety. They have some knowledge they use to mitigate foodborne zoonoses. Some observations include:

- Shinelle people generally avoid meat from animals with certain diseases. However, emergency slaughter and consumption of animals with foot and mouth disease or tick related diseases does occur.
- Dead animals are not consumed.
- Meat is usually purchased at informal markets. The smell, colour and absence of lesions is used to assess meat quality and safety. Suspicious looking meat is cooked thoroughly.

- Milk is consumed raw, but milk containers are usually smoked and people wash their hands before milking. Discolored or bloody milk is not consumed. Milk is also processed into butter, as a safety measure.
- Urban consumers avoid meat that looks suspicious. Meat sold at the market is mostly not inspected.

Future goals

During the value chain assessment process and subsequent discussions (early 2013), stakeholders from the district identified the following vision for their part of the small ruminant value chain development program in Ethiopia: *By 2020: Shinelle pastoralists will practice sustainable market-oriented sheep and goat production which contributes to improved nutrition and income.*

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