



What can we learn from the literature about livestock interventions and women's empowerment?

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Background

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) gender team is currently working on a scoping review entitled 'Pathways to women empowerment through livestock interventions in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in Africa, Asia and Latin America'. The protocol is published on the open science framework <https://osf.io/sjwp9/>.

Why a scoping review on 'pathways to empowerment through livestock interventions'?

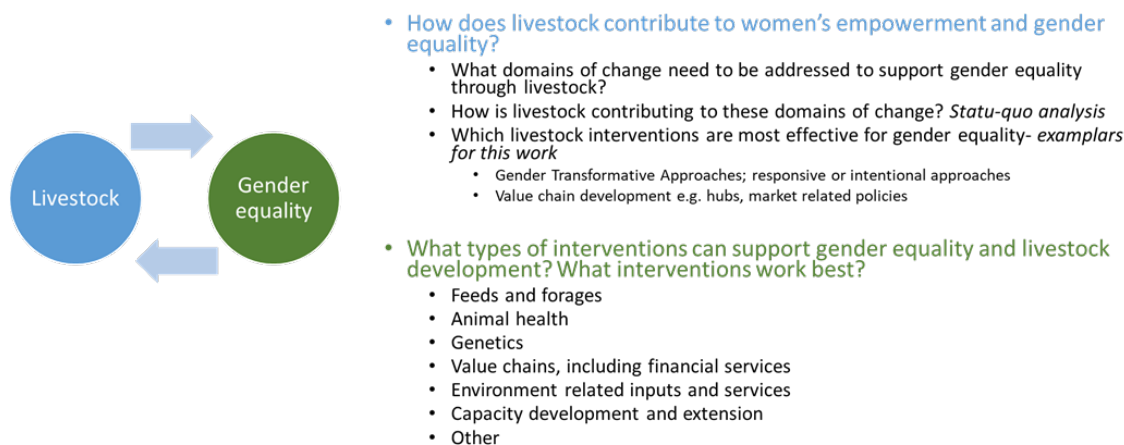
Livestock production supports the livelihoods of 1 billion poor people in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) (Thorne and Conroy 2017). Besides providing milk, meat and eggs to a growing population, the livestock sector also offers opportunities to improve livelihoods for women and men livestock keepers and actors along the value chains. The link between

livestock and gender equality is complex and goes both ways, as seen in Figure 1.

While the bulk of the research has focused on how interventions that address gender equality support livestock development, or 'how can we get a more sustainable livestock sector by addressing gender inequalities?', there is a growing body of evidence looking at the reverse question namely, 'how does livestock contribute to women empowerment and progress towards gender equality?'. This is the main topic of the scoping review.

Livestock indeed offer a unique opportunity for women to progress toward (economic) empowerment, in particular due to the fact that traditionally in some areas, women manage the animals and are able to control some of the benefits of livestock (consumption of products, sale of eggs and milk and use of manure).

Figure 1: Relationship between livestock and gender equality.



Source: Authors.

Livestock is also a key asset that women can own and transfer, unlike land and other physical assets, which might need a title deed.

On the other hand, in livestock, there are strong and persistent inequalities between women and men with respect to ability to access inputs, services and output markets, decision making, as well as control over assets, benefits and income. Indeed, gender inequality prevents the sector from achieving its full potential and reducing these inequalities is an objective on its own.

Unlike the difference between small- and large-scale farmers that is well analysed in the literature, there are surprisingly few papers and data that address the gender differences in livestock production and systems. Moreover, previous literature tends to focus on only one part of the equation namely women. Also, the last review is more than 10 years old and needs to be updated (Kristjanson et al. 2010).

The aim of this brief is therefore to assess the channels or mechanisms livestock has been shown to support women to progress toward gender equality (or woman economic empowerment) and to develop recommendations that maximize the opportunities for the livestock sector to progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment.

Scope of the review

The scoping review includes papers dealing with women's empowerment, economic empowerment and/or progress toward gender equality, with the following 'indicators': equal rights, equal responsibilities, equal opportunities and also looking at the following elements of decision making, division of labour and control over assets.

Looking at both farm (production) and market interventions, two types of papers will be considered. The first type of papers to be included describes gender

differences in the livestock sector, in terms of access and control over animals, livestock production and income from sale, as well as workload. The second type looks at interventions that resulted in a differentiated outcome, between women and men. Within that second case, two types of interventions are included:

1. those targeting the livestock sector, including technical or institutional interventions (e.g. new fodder variety for farm level or dairy cooperative for market level) and
2. interventions affecting social norms (e.g. gender transformative approaches).



Woman selling hay grass and resting animals at Mi'eso, Ethiopia (photo credit: ILRI/Apollo Habtamu).

Research question

We include papers that intentionally contribute to two outcomes: women empowerment and progress toward gender equality, broken down as decision making, division of labour and control over assets.

One of the objectives of the scoping review is to assess the extent to which research has focused on 'intermediate' or simpler indicators like workload, access to and control over assets and income; lack of decision

making; roles and responsibilities as division of labour; on women (economic) empowerment and finally how many are reporting some measures of progress towards gender equality.

The research question is phrased as follows: What livestock-related interventions, at farm and market levels, have an impact on women economic empowerment or gender equality among livestock keepers and other actors of the livestock sector in LMICs in Africa, Asia and Latin America?

Screening process and data extraction

The search was conducted on various databases, including CAB Abstracts and Global Health (access via Web of Science), Web of Science Core Collection (access via Web of Science), SciELO (access via Web of Science), Scopus (access via Elsevier), Dissertations and Theses Global (access via ProQuest); Gardian and

CGSpace. After removing duplicates, a total of 20,403 studies were screened and 487 full-text studies were assessed for eligibility, using double blinding screening. After further full text reviews, a total of 106 studies have now been analysed.

Preliminary results

Data extraction fields include paper description (country, species, farming system), type of interventions (productivity, credit and saving, asset transfer, extension, group, access to inputs or services, access to output market) and method and data. Women empowerment indicators, and the observed change (e.g. increased control over assets) form the core of the analysis. Quality assessment indicators (differentiating between qualitative and quantitative methods) are also recorded. Table 1 below shows the number of studies included from each study region and the species targeted while Table 2 shows the number of livestock interventions recorded in all the 106 studies.

Table 1: Number of included studies, study region and species

	Cattle	Cattle and small ruminants	Small ruminants	Small ruminants and poultry	Poultry	Pigs	Multiple species	Total
America (central and south)							2	2
Eastern Africa	24	3	2		1	1	8	39
Africa (central, south and west)	2		1	1	4	2	2	12
South Asia	30	1	4		5		7	47
Asia (east, south east and west)	1		1			2	2	6
Total	57	4	8	1	10	5	21	106

Table 2: Livestock interventions (number of interventions recorded in the 106 included studies)

Groups/cooperatives	49
Extension, training, education	39
Productivity or husbandry	30
Access to output market	27
Asset transfer	25
Access to inputs or services	25
Loans, microcredit	14
	209

The most common intervention includes groups and cooperatives, that usually provide a variety of services to members, including extension and access to inputs or services.



Ethiopian farmer Fantaye Shenkute holds her newly born lamb (photo credit: ILRI/Zerihun Sewunet).

In terms of indicators of women empowerment, the most common indicator relates to women's access to and control over income from livestock, followed by women's access to and control over livestock assets. Economic wellbeing and various indices of women empowerment (from simple ones to the more complex and recent ones like the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) and the Women Empowerment in Livestock Index (WELI) were also common.

Cross tabulation between livestock interventions and observed change in women empowerment indicators, for different species, regions or systems, will provide unvaluable information for further research topics.

Conclusion

Once completed, the analysis will allow the team to identify erment for further refinements, testing and evaluation.

The paper is expected to be disseminated in 2022.

References

1. Kristjanson, P., Waters-Bayer, A., Johnson, N., Tipilda, A., Njuki, J., Baltenweck, I., Grace, D., and MacMillan, S. 2010. Livestock and women's livelihoods: A review of the recent evidence. ILRI Discussion Paper 20. Nairobi, Kenya, ILRI.
2. Thorne, P.J. and Conroy, C. 2017. Research on livestock, livelihoods and innovation. IN: Snapp, S. and Pound, B. (eds.), Agricultural systems: Agroecology and rural innovation for development. 2nd ed. London, UK: Academic Press: 303–329.
3. In both countries, preventive measures such as subsidized and targeted vaccination wherever PPR incidence is medium or high is highly recommended in alignment with each country's PPR control and eradication strategy.

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Photo credit

Page 1: ILRI/Zerihun Sewunet

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ILRI thanks all donors and organizations which globally support its work through their contributions to the [CGIAR Trust Fund](#).

We also acknowledge the financial, technical and other valuable inputs and support provided by the CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Livestock and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



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