



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Livestock

More meat, milk and eggs by and for the poor

Establishment of breeders' cooperatives in the priority country

CBBP sites

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ICARDA, Addis Ababa

December, 2020

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Editing, design and layout (ICARDA)

ISBN:

Citation: Aynalem Haile, Tesfaye Getachew, Mourad Rekik, and Barbara Rischkowsky. 2020. Business model: community-based breeding programs Establishment of breeders' cooperatives in the priority country CBBP sites. ICARDA, Research Report. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: ICARDA.

Contents

- 1. Background 4**
- 2. Process followed to establish new CBBP cooperative 4**
 - 2.1 Site selection 4**
 - 2.2 Identification of the community members 5**
 - 2.3 Development of by-laws 6**
 - 2.4 Capacity development 6**
 - 2.5 Organizing Farmers into Cooperatives and performance 7**
- 3. Conclusion 7**

Establishment of breeders cooperatives in the priority country CBBP sites

Background

Ethiopia priority country project is a 3-year project designed to consolidate the individual pilot interventions CRP research has been implementing since 2012 and translate that into a pilot integrated packages. The project will generate evidence needed to attract development investment to take the intervention packages to scale by national development partners. Genetics is one of the intervention packages which was included with the rational that small ruminant producers in Ethiopia had little or no access to genetically improved sheep and goat breeding animals. There was little capacity and skills and no supporting infrastructure in the national system to support breeding programs for smallholder sheep and goat producers. ICARDA and ILRI have worked on community-based breeding programs in Ethiopia since 2009. Successes and still existing challenges are well documented. The focus in this project is to make sure that improved genetic material from CBBPs reach the base population.

Genetics flagship has three major areas of intervention in the SMaRT pack:

- (1) Access to improved sheep/goat genetics through CBBPs and selected breeders in new target villages,
- (2) Fully certified breeding sires to support the business model of CBBPs (links to Health and LLAFS),
- (3) Fertility improvement package to enhance sheep and goat reproduction

For efficient delivery on the three areas and overall implementation of CBBP, establishment of breeders cooperatives has been identified as the institutional set up followed for implementation and sustainability of the scheme. This report highlights the process followed in establishment of breeders cooperatives in the project sites

2. Process followed to establish new CBBP cooperative

2.1 Site selection

Selection of the right community and households has been identified as critical for success of community-based breeding programs. For the original CRP Ethiopia small ruminant value chain

development, site selection process was done through a lengthy multi-stakeholder process at national and regional level using GIS-based and other criteria. This led to the selection of seven value chain (VC) sites (Menz, Horro, Doyogena, Atsbi, Abergelle, Borana, and Shinelle).

For the priority country program we selected three sheep (Bonga, Doyogena and Menz) and one goat (Abergelle) VC sites based on the ability of partners for rapid implementation and the potential to achieve changes in new villages in 2 years. For each site we have one target (where the integrated package is implemented) and one control sites.

Table 1. SmaRT pack villages, HHs participating, number of breeding females and sire distributed to the new intervention sites

Breed/species	village	No HHs	Status	No of breeding female	Ram distributed in 2020
Abergelle goat	Sikala	55	New	728	15
Bonga sheep	Shena	50	New	187	15
Doyogena sheep	Lemi seticho	51	New	280	10
Menz sheep	Zeram	83	New	952	15

2.2 Identification of the community members

Identification of the communities and households was done based on criteria developed as detailed in the guideline (Haile et al., 2018). Some of the criteria include 1) willingness/interest of the community to participate in the program; 2) Key species should be a priority. A substantial portion of income should be generated from targeted livestock species. A minimum percentage for selection in relation to the importance of the target species at the national level; 3) The community should have a sufficiently large (combined) and equitably distributed sheep/goat flock (> 500 ewes/does). Situations where one farmer has 400 ewes/does and a few farmers have 10 ewes/does each is inadvisable. To be a member, a household also needs to have minimum number of ewes/doe set for each CBBP; and 4) Existence of communal/shared resources or institutional arrangements. For example, common grazing land or watering points and/or common use of breeding rams, herding or marketing facilities is ideal. Such

arrangements indicate that some common facilities that require collective action already exist. The existing institutional setup can therefore be used as a starting point for developing institutional structures for the breeding program. Once the community and its members were identified, they were sensitized about the program through workshops and public meetings allowing them to make informed decisions. The community/ farmers identifications were done by the stakeholders such as woreda livestock and fishery office, cooperative office, kebele level admiratives and the research system.

2.3 Development of by-laws

Although local communities have traditional norms which are strictly adhered to, it has been found that legally binding by-laws ensure transparency, accountability, and trust among its members. The by-laws include many issues around the operation of the CBBPs. These include, among others, management and communal use of the sires, benefit distribution, field operation of the CBBPs, management/ castration of unselected rams, grazing land management etc. The document stipulates the need for members to be governed by the agreed by-laws and the penalties if a member acts against it.

It has been observed that resources of the cooperatives are well managed and protected and the CBBPs perform better when the cooperatives are legally registered and have by-laws. Particularly, free auditing services and technical support from the cooperatives promotion office can then be exploited.

2.4 Capacity Building

Training of the members on various aspects of the CBBP operations is part of the overall program. The trainings were for the cooperative leaders and the community. The trainings for the leaders focused on principles of cooperatives, cooperative management, financial management and bookkeeping. Whereas, the trainings for the community included organization of mating and data recording, including the sires used, mating date, lambing date, sex of lamb, birth type and how to control unwanted rams from mating. The farmers were

encouraged to keep these data on provided exercise book at home level. Farmers were also trained on full intervention packages (improved forages/ feed production, feeding systems, better management of animals, handling, and better health care).

2.5 Organizing Farmers into Cooperatives and performance

The actual establishment of the cooperatives is done by the cooperatives bureau of each district, through awarding a legal license. The names and operations of the cooperatives vary based on the regions they are from. For example, the Bonga cooperative is named as ‘Best Bonga sheep breed production, improvement, multiplication and dissemination cooperative’. As has been alluded to, breeders cooperatives are the formal institutions at community level used to run the breeding program. Therefore, these institutions exist in all CBBPs. In CBBPs formally registered cooperatives have by-laws and a formal organizational structure. In most CBBPs, the organizational structures are similar and three groups of committees manage the cooperatives: a main committee with a chair, a procurement committee, and a control committee. Other cooperatives for example in Bonga have two additional committees, namely a credit and savings and a capacity building committee. The committees are believed to be responsible for effective functioning of the breeding cooperatives and roles and responsibilities are shared among the committees. It was also learned that formally-registered cooperatives are governed by their by-laws and members abide by the rules. Better management of the cooperatives and financial resources, better selection and management of breeding rams was observed among the legally-registered cooperatives. The government is keen to organize farmers and to support cooperatives. Formally-registered cooperatives have access to free auditing services from district cooperative promotion offices and financial record-keeping training and support.

3. Conclusion

Breeders cooperatives have been found to be effective institutions for implementation and overall running of CBBPs. Consequently, in the four priority country project sites we have established legal cooperatives with clear by-laws following a proven procedure. These

cooperatives, although established as breeding cooperatives, could be used as entry point for other interventions too.