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Constraints and opportunities in rainwater management in crop-livestock systems of Volta Basin in Ghana and Burkina Faso

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ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND RAIN WATER HARVESTING SYSTEM FOR DOMESTIC AND LIVESTOCK USE AT ORBILI IN LAWRA DISTRICT
(PHOTO COURTESY DR. N. KARBO)

Key Message

In low external inputs crop-livestock systems, investment in rainwater management is minimal and often on traditional practices. Livelihood options and indigenous knowledge of the rural communities largely shape rainwater management practices and may require technical, institutional and policy firming up in joint learning and sharing to make the system more productive.

Summary

A rapid rural survey was conducted in eight communities each in Ghana and Burkina Faso to collect baseline information on natural resources and water related infrastructures to aid design and testing of subsequent best fit rainwater management strategies. Rainwater management practices in the two countries were found to be similar and included inter-row water harvesting, collection of rainwater from zinc sheet roofed houses and storage in tanks and local earthen-wares, contour bunds, dugouts, and small reservoirs. The zai (pit) system on farms was peculiar to Burkina Faso communities. Major constraints to rainwater management in the basin included seasonal availability, insufficient storage containers for harvesting rainwater, and pollution of small reservoirs by livestock. Individual investment in rainwater management was limited to storage tanks/jars. Given the similar constraints, knowledge systems and resources base of the people in the study areas, there may be huge opportunities for the scaling up and out of innovations across national borders.