

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



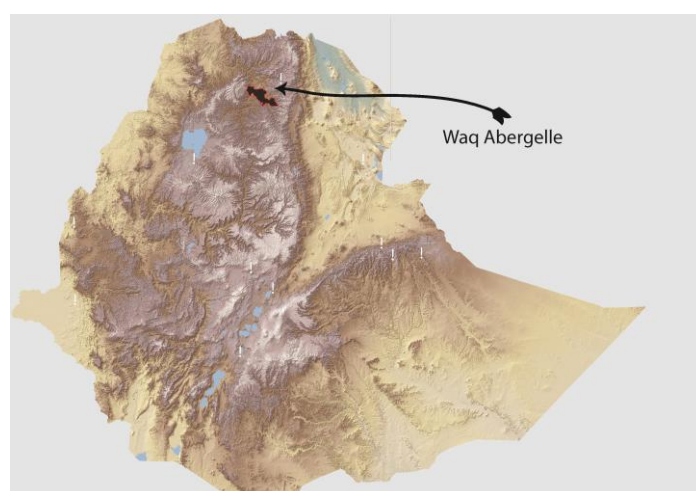
Background

Most inhabitants of Abergelle Amhara are Orthodox Christians thus production and sales are influenced by national and religious holidays. Goat production is seasonal with peaks in November-December. The predominant production system is mixed livestock and crops. Most milk is produced after the rainy season from August to September when sufficient feed is available.

Value chain challenges

The main meat production constraints in Abergelle Amhara are predation followed by starvation (Figure 1). Religion plays a role with fasting for 70% of the year when meat sales are very limited. During food shortages, often due to increasing enclosure of grazing land, sheep and goats are often sold (at low prices due to their poor condition) to buy grains and other food staples. Milk is very important, but availability is reduced by feed shortage. After the rainy season when feed is abundant, butter, yoghurt and cheese are produced. Unfortunately, some of the extended fasts overlap with periods of peak production which remains unutilized (August). Generally there is a lack of meat in the diet, if meat is available, men receive

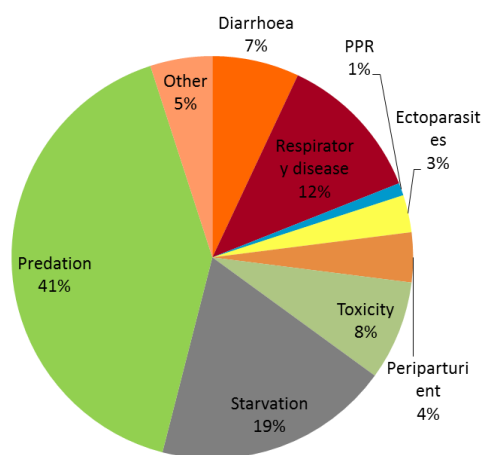
the best parts. Women do not drink whole milk. Drinking milk is associated with an earlier onset of puberty in girls.



Livestock mortality

The main reason of livestock deaths in the region is predation, followed by starvation. Deforestation and erosion lead to seasonal feed shortages. In case of diseases, veterinary services are said to be mostly absent, faulty or insufficient.

Figure 1: Reasons for livestock mortality



Food safety

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

- Diseased animals are not consumed. There are some reports of emergency slaughter and consumption of diseased animals.
- Malaria is associated with milk consumption by Abergelle people. This could be a coincidence, attributable to synchronicity of peak milk production and consumption with the onset of the malaria season. It may be that people acquired a milk-borne zoonosis and misinterpret the symptoms.
- Slaughter is done carefully and smell, colour and texture are used to assess meat quality and

safety. Meat considered to be unsafe is trimmed and boiled thoroughly.

- Milk is only sometimes consumed raw, and milk containers are usually smoked before use. Suspicious milk is not consumed.
- Milk is often processed into butter, yoghurt or cheese.

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: We endeavor to see (safe) sustainable and market oriented Abergelle goat farming benefiting all actors and satisfying consumer requirements and contributing access to balanced nutrition for all.*

This summary was produced for the Safe Food Fair Food project implemented by ILRI and partners and financed by GIZ. It was prepared by Elisabeth Kilian, a communications student on attachment to ILRI. It is based on the report of a wider small ruminant value chain assessment process in Ethiopia. Reports available at cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/16612

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Better lives through livestock

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