A CASE STUDY ON THE HOUSEHOLD'S DECISION - MAKING ROLE IN SMALL-SCALE GOAT PRODUCTION IN NSUKKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the household's decision-making role in small scale goat production in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Data for the study were collected from 74 households through the use of interview schedule. Frequency distributions and percentages were used in the data analysis. The findings showed that production of manure for replenishing the lost soil fertility under continuous land use was the most valuable reason for rearing goats in the area. The husbands played a larger decision-making role than their wives for certain aspects (such as goat raising initiation; health care; herd-size; planning/organizing for breedings; and grass cutting) of goat production. Implications of the findings for extension practice were presented.

Key words: Household, Decision-Making, Role, Initiation.

INTRODUCTION

Goats are largely kept by arable/tree crop farmers. Typically, individuals keep 2-4 breeding goats in which investment is minimal (Okali *et al*, 1984; and Ezech *et al*, 1986). The existing management system are largely traditional. Tethering of goats is common in the eastern part of Nigeria, especially, Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Goats are tethered in the study area to avoid destruction of crops during the growing season since the farmers practise compound farming system.

In Nigeria, goat production is essentially a traditional activity in which the household units feature prominently. The major aspects of their management are left in the care of wives and children (Ezech *et al*, 1986). In the recent years, there have been studies on the decision-making role of the household in goat

and sheep production. The participation of the household in goat production decision-making process could be felt in the following areas: initiation of goat raising, construction of goat house, cutting of grasses, feeding of goats, health care, water supply marketing, manure management, herd-size, and planning/organizing for breeding (Sry *et al*, 1985).

In a study carried out in the district of Girebon, Indonesia, by Sabrani *et al* (1982), it was discovered that 43% of the women participated in some aspects of goat and sheep production. Additionally, it was found that women played an important role in the decision-making process surrounding small ruminant production. In fact, women were reported to play a larger decision - making role than their husbands for certain aspects of goat production. For instance, in the area of animal health, women considered themselves the primary decision-makers (Sry, 1983). Goats and sheep are the two species of farm livestock which are widely reported to be the responsibility of women in West Africa (Cloud, 1977). Among the Yoruba-speaking people of south west of Nigeria, women have been reported to be the main livestock rearers (Falola, 1979). In the south-eastern Nigeria, especially, in the study area the husbands, wives and their children play vital role in goat production processes. The main question therefore is, what role does an individual member of a household play in the process of goat production? An understanding of the prevailing household decision-making role in goat raising would be greatly helpful for planning and executing small ruminant extension programme(s) aimed at helping them to adopt improved practices. The study was therefore designed to ascertain the household's decision-making role in small

scale goat production in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Specifically, the study was designed to: determine the primary reasons for raising goats by the households; ascertain the household decision-making role in small scale goat production in the study area, and draw implication(s) for extension practice in the area.

METHODOLOGY

Ten out of 19 communities in the study area were randomly sample. A minimum of six and a maximum of 10 households were randomly selected from each of the ten communities sampled based on their relative size. A total of 74 households were involved in the study. In each household, the husband was interviewed. A structured interview schedule was used to elicit facts from the husbands.

The extent of decision-making role of the house-holds in small scale goat production was measured by developing a decision-making scale. The husbands were asked to indicate who they perceived had the major decision-making responsibility for each of the following areas of goat production: initiation of goat raising, construction of goat house, cutting of grasses, feeding of goats, health care, water supply, marketing, manure management, herd-size, and planning/organizing for breeding. The response categories were: (1) Husband only; (2) Wife only; (3) Children only; (6) Wife and Children jointly; (7) Husband, Wife and Children jointly; and (8) Not performed at all. Frequency distributions and percentages were used in the data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of the Households on the basis of the Main Reason for Keeping Goats.

Table 1 shows that 10.81% of the households kept goats for family meat needs, 35.14% kept goats for money making, while the majority (54.05%) kept goats as a source of manure. The households maintained that they needed goat manure to replenish the lost soil fertility under continuous land use.

According to them, the inorganic (chemical) fertilizers were too expensive and besides, they were not readily available in the market.

Household's Decision-Making Role in Small Scale Goat Production.

Entries in Table 2 reveal that the husbands (66.0%) as the households' heads were mainly responsible for initiating the idea of goat raising in the study area. However, the construction of houses for the goats was a joint responsibility of the husbands, wives and the children (76.0%). The role of grass cutting fell mainly on the husbands and the children (48.0%), while that of feeding of the goats fell on the wives, children and the husbands (47.0%). The health care activity rested majorly on the husbands (49.0%), while water supply function was performed by the husbands and their wives (24.0%). However, 40.0% of the households indicated that they did not consider it necessary to supply water to their goats. According to them, the goats were able to extract water from the green fleshy and succulent grasses and legumes supplied to them. Children played lesser role in the marketing of goats. Husbands and wives (54.0%) were jointly responsible for the marketing of the goats. Majority (43.0%) of the households indicated that the manure management was mainly undertaken jointly by the husbands, wives and the children. Herd-size was determined solely by the husbands (73.0%). Planning/organizing for breeding was also carried out mainly by the husbands (69.0%). The implications of these findings for extension practice in the study area are: (1) since majority of the households integrate crop and goat production for the purpose of using the goat manure to replenish the lost soil fertility under continuous land use, there will be need for the household- members to be trained on rational management of their goat manure. The multi-purpose Village Extension Workers (VEWs) under the current Unified Extension System of the State's Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), should be involved in organizing trainings for the household-members in the area on how best they could preserve their goat manure for

TABLE1: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD ON THE BASIS OF THE MAIN REASONS FOR KEEPING GOATS

Main Reason for Keeping Goats	No	%
Family meat needs	8	10.81
To make money	26	35.14
As a source of manure	40	54.05
Total	74	100.00

TABLE 2: HOUSEHOLD'S DECISION-MAKING ROLE IN SMALL SCALE GOAT PRODUCTION (N= 74)

	IN*	CGH*	CG*	FG*	HC*	WS*	MG*	MM*	HS*	POB*
Wife only	27.0	-	-	6.0	19.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	19.0	18.0
Children only	-	-	7.0	6.0	9.0	9.0	-	5.0	-	-
Husband only	66.0	8.0	14.0	13.0	49.0	9.0	24.0	23.0	73.0	82.0
Wife, Children and Husband jointly	-	76.0	6.0	47.0	15.0	8.0	-	43.0	-	-
Wife and Husband jointly	7.0	-	20.0	17.0	17.0	24.0	57.0	14.0	8.0	-
Wife and Children jointly	-	10.0	5.0	7.0	-	-	13.0	6.0	-	-
Husband and Children jointly	-	6.0	48.0	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not Performed at all	-	-	40.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

IN - Initiation;

CG - Cutting of grasses;

HC - Health Care;

MG - Marketing of Goats;

HS - Herd-Size;

CGH - Construction of goat house;

FG - Feeding of Goats;

WS - Water Supply;

MM - Manure Management;

POB - Planning/Organizing for breeding;

effective use. The households should be properly enlightened on how best they can timely and correctly apply their goat manure for effective soil fertility maintenance and probably, termite control. (2) Even though, the husbands could be specially targetted (because of their largest decision- making role in goat production) by the Extension Service to increase goat production and productivity

through appropriate educational activities, the importance of the household as a working unit in extension practice should not be over-looked.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that production of manure for replenishing the lost soil fertility under continuous land use was the most

valuable reason for rearing goats by the households in the area. The study also indicated that the husbands played a larger decision-making role than their wives for certain aspects (such as goat raising initiation, health care, herd-size, planning/organizing for breedings, and grass cutting) of goat production.

Therefore, all members of the household should be intensively involved in any livestock extension programme designed for improving aspects of goat production in the area,

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