

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN GIWA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study assessed the involvement of youth in livestock production in Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. Four out of eleven wards in the study area were randomly selected. Thirty youths were randomly selected from each of the four wards to make up a total of 120 youths sampled. Data were collected, using structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distribution and percentages were used to analyze data collected. A three-point Likert scale of very Serious=2; Serious=1; and Not Serious=0, with a mid-point of 1.0 was used to identify the challenges faced by youth in livestock production. The study found that majority 66.6% of respondents who were involved in livestock production where male, 33.33% were female, while 45.8% were between the ages of 21-26 years. The most significant finding is that majority 68.33% were involved in livestock production. The youth perceived cost of management, poor access to loan and credit facilities and lack of incentive from government as challenges faced in livestock production. In view of this, it was recommended that the government and other agencies involved in youth empowerment should give maximum encouragement (in form of incentives and training) to youth involved in livestock production and encourage more of them to engage in the business through motivational strategies.

Key Words: youth, livestock, production, involvement, challenges.

Introduction

Livestock production and the involvement of the youth in livestock production is as old as the biblical times as shown in Genesis 46. In verses 33-34, Joseph instructed his brother 'when the king calls for you and asks what your occupation is, be sure to tell him that you have taken care of livestock all your lives' (Ikhatua 2000). The concept of youth has been defined by some scholars as the period in an individual's life, which comes between the end of childhood and entry into adulthood. The individual has reached the age of maturity, but he is yet to acquire the full rights and duties of adult life, like marriage and earning of livelihood both for self and for one's family, (Umeh and Odom, 2011). The United Nations definition of youth argued that youth starts with the lower age of 15 years and upper age limit as 39 years of age. Youths aged 10 to 24 years are 27% of the world's population and 33% of the population in Africa according to Nugent (2006). Youth possess unique capabilities, dynamism, strength, adventure, ambition, and hilarity. (Waldie 2004; Akwiwu *et al*, 2005). These are assets for livestock production. They receive farm information and in some cases assist parents in analyzing innovations (Nnadi and Akwiwu 2008). The youth constitute the larger percentage of the labour force of every country. It is however unfortunate that in spite of the unique capabilities possessed by the youth, their involvement in livestock production is rather low, this is because the youth lack encouragement from government and relevant authority in

agricultural decision and policy making. Studies in the past have looked at other aspect of youth involvement, such as; preference for agriculture discipline (Ajaero and Njoku, 2005), and youth participation in agriculture (Nnadi and Akwiwu 2008.). The youth contribute the major resource base for any country which wants to embark on any meaningful agricultural and rural development project, the area of livestock production inclusive. In agricultural development generally, the youth constitute a potent force. This is because the youth have a number of characteristics which when nurtured, harnessed and utilized are invaluable assets to livestock production, agricultural and rural development. Their aspiration and opportunities are also indicators of the characteristics of adults in the near future because the world of the future depends on the youth of today. With these attributes, the youth are of vital importance in the implementation of sustainable livestock production and rural development programmes. . In the context of this study, there is limited documented information on the involvement of youths in livestock production. This study tends to look at the involvement of the youth in livestock production in Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna state.

Objectives of the Study

Against the background of the significance of youths to the livestock production development process and the significant roles of institutionalized framework to enhance youths' participation in livestock production, this study

was conceived to achieve the following objectives:

1. Describe the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area.
2. Describe the number of youth involvement in livestock production in the study area.
3. Determine the reasons why some youth in the study area are not involved in livestock production.
4. Describe the type of livestock kept by the youth in the study area.
5. Identify challenges encountered by the youth in livestock production.

Materials And Methods

The Study Area

The study was conducted in Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The location is within the geographical area, referred to as the Northern Guinea Savannah which has long been "recognized as highly suitable for crop and animal husbandry" (Weber *et al.*, 1996). The study area is about 3,350 km² and lies between 11° 00' - 11° 30'N and 7° 00' - 7° 45'E. it is located northwest of Zaria and is about 640m above sea level (Otchere *et al.*, 1987). The average rainfall is

1100 mm and this spread from late April or early May to late October (Wet season). The mean maximum ambient temperature varies from 27-35° C depending on the season while the average relative humidity during the wet season is about 72 and 21% during the period of dry cool weather of November to January as the harmattan (Oyedipe *et al.*, 1982)

Sampling Technique

Four out of the eleven wards in the study area were randomly sampled. Thirty youths were randomly selected from each of the four wards. A total of 120 youths were sampled.

Date Collection

A survey involving 120 youths was conducted. Structured questionnaire and oral interviews were used to elicit facts from the youths.

Analytical Techniques

Analysis of data was done by simple descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and Percentage. A three-point Likert scale of; Very Serious=2; Serious=1 and Not Serious=0, with a midpoint of 1.0: mean score that are equal 1.0 or above indicate serious while scores less than 1.0 indicate not serious, was used to determine the challenges faced by youth involved in livestock production in the study area.

Result And Discussion

Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents

Table 1: socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
15-20	22	18.33
21-26	55	45.8
27 and Above	43	35.8
Gender		
Male	80	66.67
Female	40	33.33
Marital Status		
Single	76	63.33
Married	44	36.67
Involvement in livestock production		
Yes	82	68.33
No	38	31.67
Level of Education		
None	13	10.8
Primary	35	29.17
Secondary	57	47.5
Post secondary	15	12.5
Residence		
Rural	72	60
Urban	48	40

Source: Field Survey Data 2015.

66.6% were male only a few 33.33% were female, with a high percentage of the youth 45.8% between the ages of (21-26). Majority 63.33% of the respondents were unmarried, while 36.6% of the respondents are married. 68.33% of the respondents were involved in livestock production while 31.67% are not involved. This implies that livestock production employs a high percentage of youths especially in the rural areas where agriculture is the major occupation for self reliance and generation of income as suggested by Matthews-Njoku and Ajaero (2006). Also 47.5% of the youth had secondary school education, suggesting that the youth had a moderate level of awareness about livestock production as a result of their level of education. This agrees with the finding of (Aphunu and Atoma, 2010) that youths' with at least secondary education had a moderate

level of awareness about agricultural activities. Finally, most of the respondents 60% were rural dwellers; this placed them in an advantage position in the practice of livestock production and make efficient use of available natural resources to promote food security as suggested by (Aphunu and Atoma, 2010).

Livestock Kept By Respondents

Table 2 showed that youth in the study area are highly involved in livestock production such that, Majority 28.57% rear sheep, 26.37% rear poultry, 23.63% rear goat, 17.03% rear cattle, while a few 3.29% and 1.09% rear donkeys and camels respectively. Those who reared donkeys and camels said, they inherited it from their Parents. This is at variance with the finding of Gwary, *et al* (2008) who reported that youths are more interested in crop production than Livestock.

Table 2: Respondents of youth based on the type of animal they keep

Livestock	Frequency	Percentage %
Sheep	52	28.57
Poultry	48	26.37
Goat	43	23.63
Cattle	31	17.03
Donkey	6	3.29
Camel	2	1.09

* Multiple Responses were allowed.

Reasons For Non-Involvement In Livestock Production

Table 3 shows the response of youth not involved in livestock production. Majority 29.47% said livestock production is for the school drop-out and illiterates. This agrees with the findings of (Aphunu and Atoma 2010) that youths' agreed that farming is for the school drop-outs and illiterates. 26.47% attributed their non involvement in livestock production to lack of finance. This concurs with the findings of (Arowolo, *et al.* 2013)

youth cannot afford the initial capital to establish their livestock farm, except they are aided. 23.53% identified lack of interest as reason for not involving in livestock production in the study area. This agrees with the findings of (Aphunu and Atoma, 2010) that youths are unfavorably disposed to participation in agricultural productivity and hence the massive drift to other non agricultural sector of the economy. A few 20.59% saw Stress and labour as reason for not involving in livestock production

Table 3: Response of some youth not involved in livestock production

Statement	Frequency	Percentage %
Livestock production		
Is for the school drop-out		
And illiterates	30	29.47
Lack of finance	27	26.47
No interest	24	23.53
Labour intensive/stress	21	20.59

*Multiple Responses were allowed.

Challenges faced by the Respondents in Livestock Production.

Table 4, indicated that cost of management (Means= 1.31), poor access to loan and credit facilities (Means= 1.33), lack of incentives from

government (Means = 1.15) were perceived as serious challenges faced by youth in livestock production. Aphunu and Atoma (2010) asserted that lack of incentive from government could hinder youth's involvement in agricultural productivity activities

Table 4: Challenges faced by Youth in livestock production

Challenges	VS	S	NS	WT	MS
Coast of Management	43	40	24	107	1.31
Poor access to loan and credit facilities	50	42	17	109	1.33
Lack of incentives from government	43	41	10	94	1.15
Lack of market for the product	15	18	43	76	0.93

VS= Very Serious, S= Serious, NS= Not Serious, WT= Weighted Total, MS= Mean Score.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The result of this study have shown that the majority of the youth involved in livestock production in the study area are male, most of the youth involved in livestock production were found to possess secondary education. Lack of finance and lack of interest are some of the reasons given by some of the youth for not involving in livestock production. Also cost of management, poor access to loan and credit facilities and lack of incentives from government was perceived as serious challenges faced by youth in livestock production in the study area. Effort to tackle these challenges in addition to motivating and training the youth in modern livestock husbandry will assist in encouraging the youth to venture into livestock production, reduce the rate of youth unemployment and alleviate poverty in Nigeria.

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