

CHANGES IN THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE FOLLOWING LAND REFORM: THE CASE OF MASVINGO PROVINCE

A report of a discussion workshop

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Chevron Hotel
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Full research report available at:

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/KNOTS/AgLivestock.html>

Introduction

Major changes have occurred in the livestock sector in Zimbabwe in the last few years. There have been significant shifts in ownership, use and management of livestock, with implications for disease management, marketing and production. This workshop discussed a report which offers an assessment of these changes in one province – Masvingo – based on a series of local level case studies. The report asks, given the changes that have occurred, what makes sense in terms of practical and policy support to allow the livestock sector in Masvingo province and beyond to contribute to rural livelihoods and the national economy. Given the new contexts the workshop asked:

- What is the way forward for the Zimbabwean livestock sector?
- What are the implications of recent changes for research and extension priorities in the livestock sector?
- How do livestock service providers best engage with their new clients?
- What are the implications for neighbouring countries?

With such a massively changed context for livestock policy, the key question is whether the best response is to aim for a return to earlier policy models, or rethink. For example, Zimbabwean veterinary services and livestock market development have long been geared towards a commercialised, export-oriented industry with a strict regime in place to minimise Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and safeguard exports to the EU (e.g. fencing, zonation, vaccination and movement controls). But is this policy approach appropriate today? And does such a focus provide the opportunities for poverty reduction for the parallel smallholder livestock sector? Given current conditions, is the re-imposition of a strict veterinary regime (including a massive fencing and vaccination programme, movement controls, culling of buffalo etc.), together with an export-oriented marketing system, either feasible or desirable?

Answers to questions such as these will be critical in the establishing a policy framework for the livestock sector. This workshop began to piece together a preliminary understanding of what is going on, and with what implications.

This report is a summary of the workshop presentations and discussions. The day was divided up into a series of five sessions, beginning with an overview which provided details of the questions guiding the study, the methodology used and the study areas. This was followed by sessions on different themes – first production issues, then grazing, fodder and drought coping, and finally marketing and livestock diseases and veterinary services.

The report contains the powerpoint slides presented for each theme, followed by a brief summary of the plenary discussions emerging following each session. The report concludes with a summary of group discussion feedback.

The full report is available at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/KNOTS/AgLivestock.html>

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Changes in the livestock sector following land reform: The case of Masvingo Province

Overview and Background

Slide 2

Overview – trends, questions and policy issues

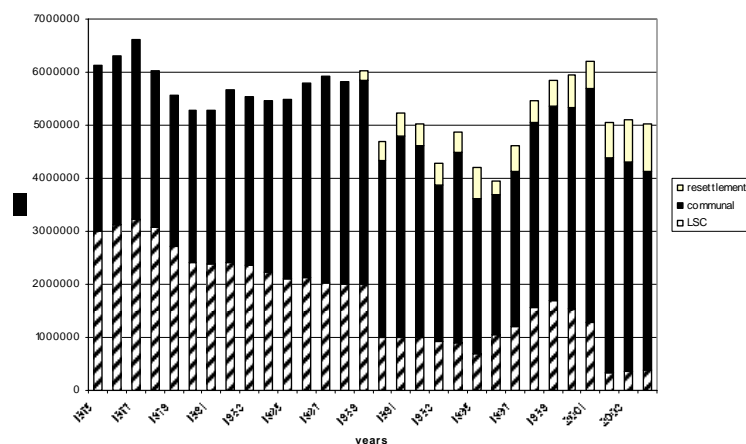
- What is the way forward for the livestock sector?
- What are the implications of recent changes for research and extension?
- How do service providers best engage with their new clients?

Policy debates: review of recent documents

- Focus on commercial beef/dairy rehabilitation
- Focus on (beef) exports – to EU, Malaysia, etc.
- Investment focus on export infrastructure
- Disease control – focus on transboundary diseases jeopardising export.
- Commercial options linked to wildlife and transboundary park

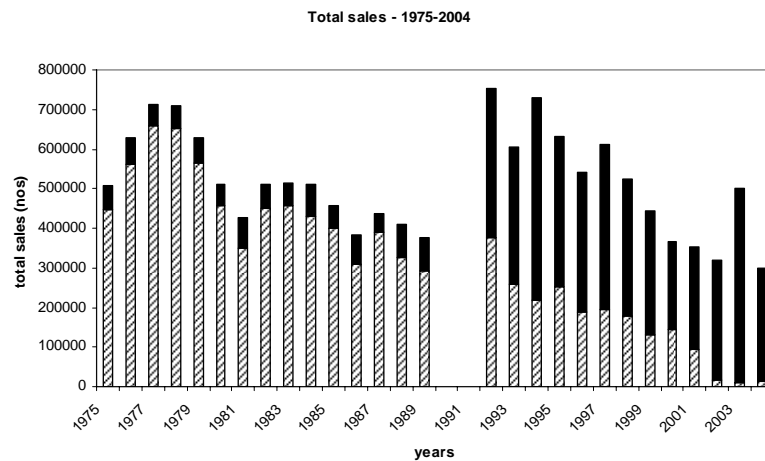
But what is missing? Smallholder, mixed farming, multi-spp, multi-function systems.... (currently c. 97%..)

Trends – cattle nos 1975-2004



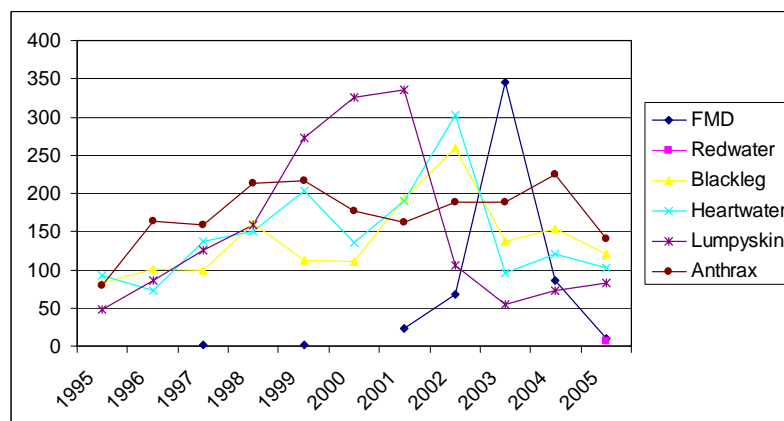
Slide 5

Trends – cattle sales, 1975-2004



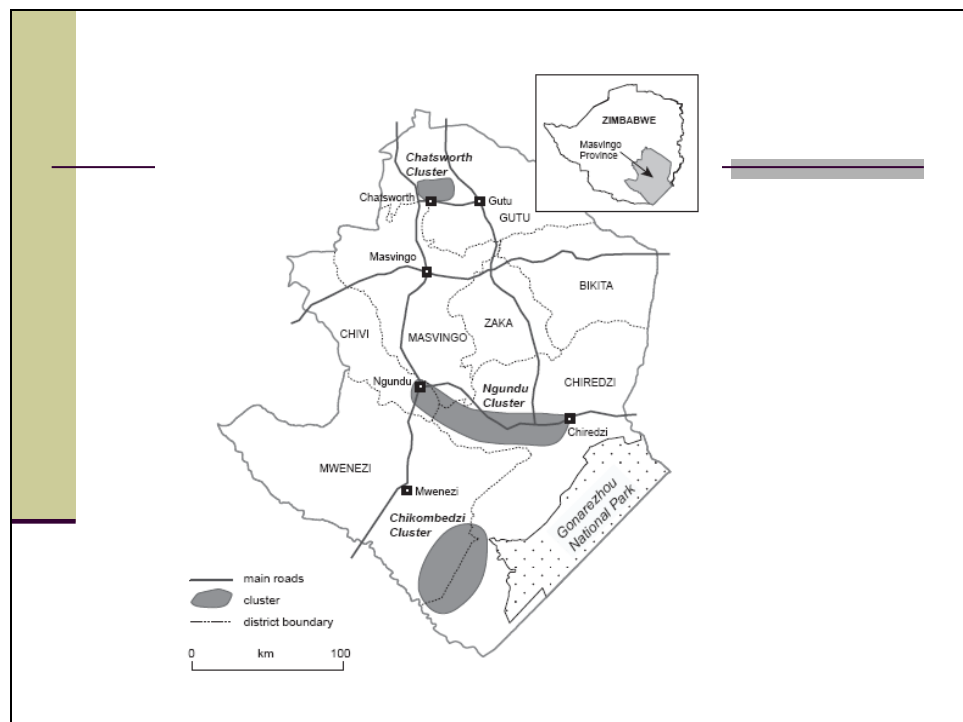
Slide 6

Trends – disease: 1995-2005



Questions emerging

- What is the situation on the ground?
- How have shifts in land use affected the production/marketing system?
- Does the focus on beef/exports continue to make sense?
- Is wildlife really an alternative for the lowveld?
- Is there another scenario for the livestock sector more appropriate to new circumstances – in CAs, A1, A2 across natural regions?
- What policy support would this require?



Methodology

- 3 clusters; 16 sites (6 CA; 1 RA; 3 A2; 6 A1)
- Group discussions – general history and conditions
- Village census and survey – livestock holdings and land preparation
- Individual case studies (4-5 cattle owners per site – production/marketing)
- Cluster level interactions between sites (labour, grazing, draught power)
- Wider changes at provincial level (services, input supplies, marketing)

Key themes

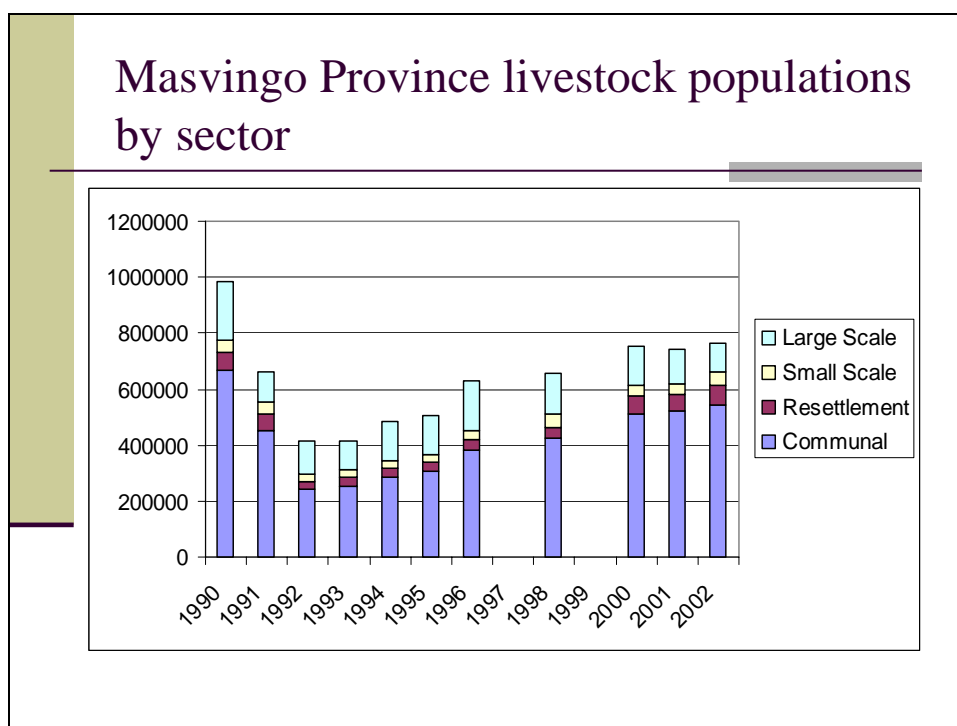
1. Production – livestock and wildlife
 2. Grazing, fodder and drought coping
 3. Livestock marketing
 4. Livestock disease and vet services
- ****
- What are key changes post-land reform?
 - What next for the livestock sector?
 - Implications for different players?

Slide 13

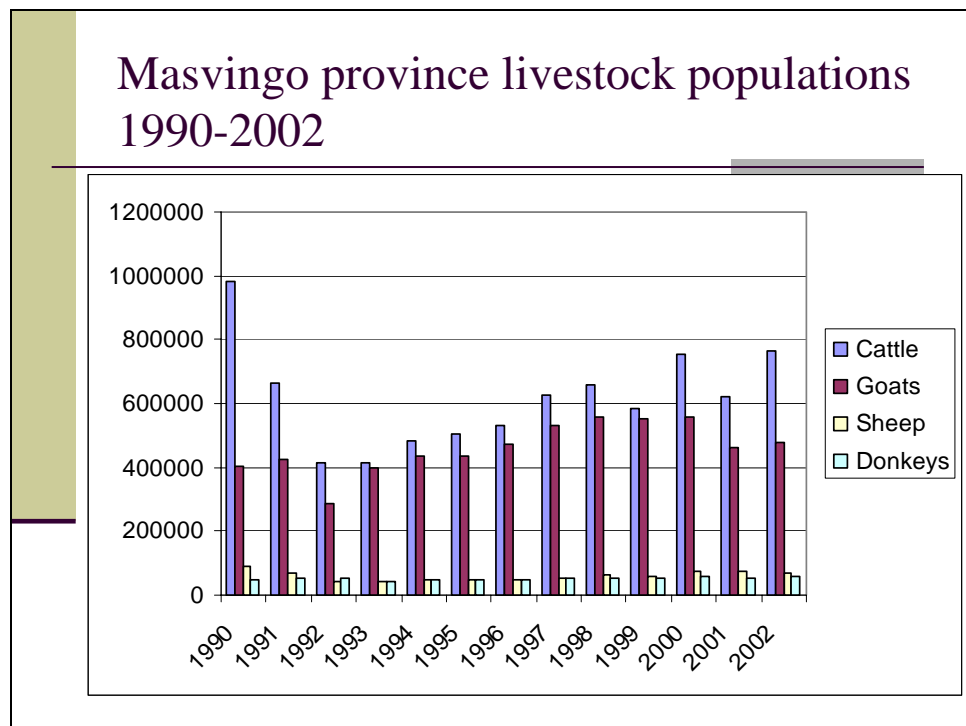
Livestock and wildlife production

Theme 1

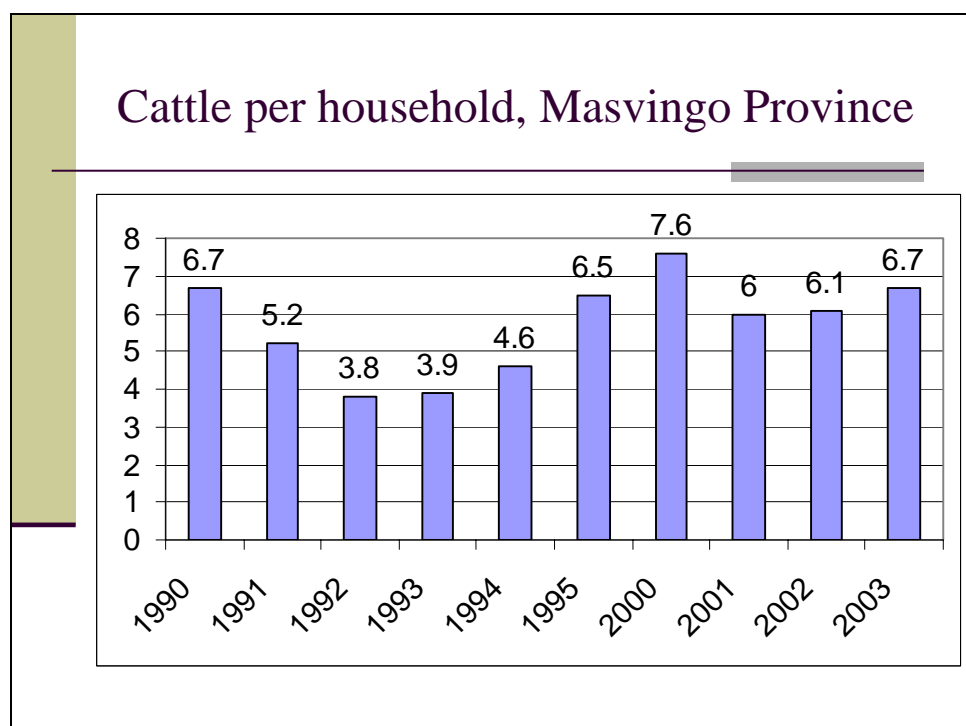
Slide 14



Slide 15



Slide 16



Slide 17

Livestock holdings – study sample

	Communal Area	A1
% owning cattle	49%	52%
Av cattle holding	4.1	5.4
% owning goats	38%	43%
Av goat holding	3.6	4.4
% owning donkeys	8%	13%
Av donkey holding	0.75	1.3

Slide 18

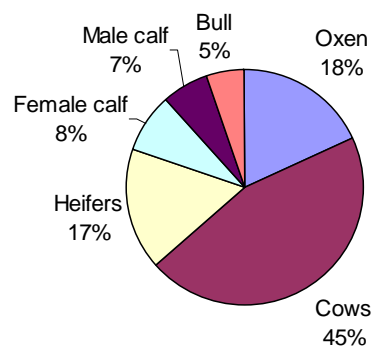
Restocking - sources of funds for livestock purchases: rankings by cluster

	Chatsworth	Ngundu	Chikombedzi
Agriculture/ gardening	2	1	1=
Employment	1	2	1=
Livestock sales	3=	3=	3=
Heifer exchange	3=	3=	
Exchanged for goods	5		
Sale of mopani worms etc			3=

Livestock productivity

- Births most important source of herd accumulation: birth rates 7% - 14% (12% av.) of total herd 1999-2004
- High post-drought reconception rates esp in local breeds
- Age first calving: 3 years; calving intervals av 18 months but wide variation
- Death rates 4%-8% (6% av.)

Age/sex structure of cattle herds

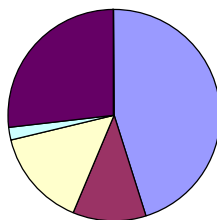


Livestock breed ranking

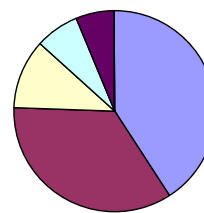
Breed	Now - 2005	Before -1980
Mashona	3	1
Mashona cross	1	2
Brahman	2	3
Sussex	4	
Africaander	5	4
Hereford	7	
Sararine*	6	
Friesland	8	

Draught power

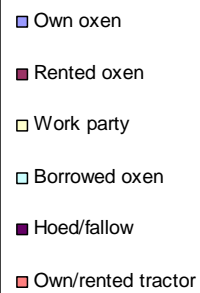
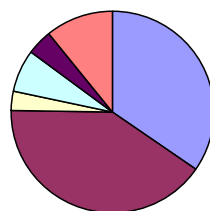
Chikombedzi cluster



Ngundu cluster



Chatsworth cluster



Wildlife management

- Some game ranches/conservancies settled. Wildlife enterprises have declined, as tourist opportunities have declined.
- Increased poaching.
- Safari hunting ongoing and new arrangements emerging.
- Becoming formalised with plans for 'community-based wildlife conservancies'
- Plans for lowveld biosphere reserve linking to transfrontier 'Peace park'
- But wildlife has large opportunity costs and is not a priority for most.
- Wildlife requires extensive land areas and few new resettlement areas outside largely A2 areas in the lowveld are likely to see wildlife as an option.

Summary– Theme 1

- Commercial herd much reduced, but core remains, managed through new relationships.
- Significant redistribution of animals to the new resettlement areas – restocking.
- Access to quality breeding stock, both commercial breeds and indigenous breeds, an issue – but indigenous breeds more of an issue
- Some new commercial herds being established on small scale in resettlement areas, esp. A2 in lowveld.
- Stocking strategies currently focused on herd building - herd structures not geared to beef production.
- Fewer herds large enough for sustainable beef production than before. Most herd sizes at levels where offtake likely to be very limited, with many people not owning any cattle.
- Smallstock and donkeys a key component of all production systems, whether communal, A1 or A2.
- Small-scale, multi-species, multiple use production system dominates.

Workshop discussion – theme 1: production

A number of discussions on the production theme were provoked by the presentation. These can be divided into discussions on production systems and more technical production issues.

Production systems

- Participants argued that, given the new context post land reform, there is a need to redefine what is meant by the 'commercial' sector. Participants pointed out that a range of farmers are engaged in commercial livestock production activities (i.e. regularly marketing stock) from across land uses. While new A2 farmers are deemed to be the core of new commercial activity, very often such new farms have not become established. Some participants observed that in particular the new A1 resettlements – particularly in the self-contained arrangements – show potential which should not be discounted. As participants noted, today it is less the formal land designation that is significant, but the availability of resources – skills, capital, market networks etc. – that defines who is engaging in 'commercial' activity.
- A better understanding of emerging production systems will allow an assessment of whether, in the words of one participant, "we are talking of 'beef producers' or 'cattle rearers'?" As he put it: "Are sales bookings full because of intentional or accidental/distress sales?". This has implications for the type of production objectives and likely sales volumes/quality in the future.
- Discussions explored the 'viability' of different production arrangements. Participants asked: does farm size in the new resettlements restrict production options? For example, does an A2 allocation of 100-200ha prevent a sustainable beef production enterprise, due to the limited number of stock that can be carried on the land? Options for enhancing beef production were discussed including consolidation of units and lease grazing arrangements. But, as one participant pointed out, "2-3 animals is 'viable' in a mixed farming system. It depends on the production focus". As participants pointed out the new situation "presents a totally new scenario", with diverse mixes of production systems evolving requiring more work to characterise and understand.
- Some participants observed that, while mixed farming systems certainly dominated, certain areas within the province and beyond definitely have potential as beef producing zones, particularly in arid areas where cropping is very risky. But, as one participant pointed out, "other issues affect viability beyond production economics", including security of land tenure, risks of further farm invasions, access to expertise for new production approaches, and availability of veterinary services.

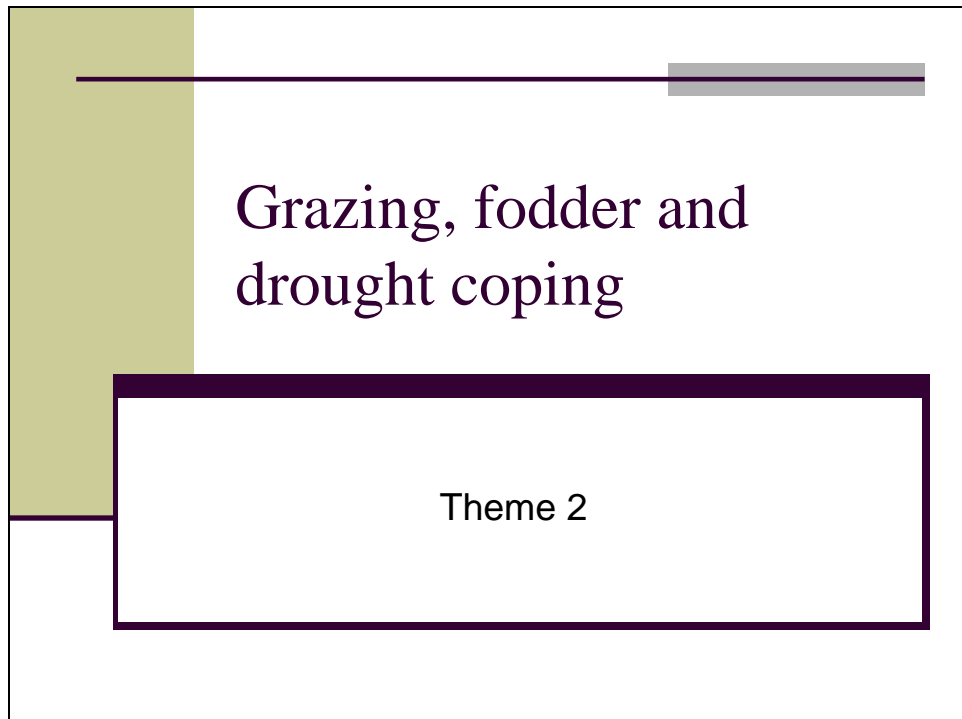
Technical production issues

- Participants noted the low calving rates reported during the study period (estimated at only around 25% per cow). This was seen as a constraint on herd growth and overall production, although others noted the likelihood that these production parameters would have improved in the last season [not reported in the study data] because of good rains.
- Based on wider experience, participants agreed with the report findings that births had been of late the greatest source of herd growth, far exceeding purchases. The lack of an external source of income to drive the cattle economy was noted in

discussion as an issue. This reinforced the argument, participants commented, that support for agriculture and support for livestock should be intimately linked. Given that the last few years have experienced recurrent droughts, coinciding with the major declines in the formal economy, the lack of purchases from agriculture sources or employment are of course not surprising. Workshop participants guessed that following decent harvests in 2006, livestock purchases would increase.


- The lack of credit for herd/flock restocking was noted by participants as an area of concern. Reflection on both government-supported and commercial credit facilities, as well as NGO-led support programmes, was seen as important, given the need to encourage growth in livestock populations in support of agricultural regeneration and poverty reduction.
- The low numbers of goats in most sites was also noted. This reflected wider experiences among participants who had observed declines in goat populations in the province over the last decade. This was attributed to increases in stock theft, as well as a growing demand for cash for immediate needs since the economic difficulties starting from the 1990s, with goats being the first stock to be sold.

Summing up one participant observed: “We are in a completely new situation. We can’t think beef, beef, beef any more. We need to get out of that mode, always talking of stocking rates and so on. We have a new diversified farming system – with cropping, gardening even crocodiles in the backyard. Given the new scenario, we need new thinking and new options”.



Grazing, fodder and drought coping

Theme 2



Land uses and grazing management

In past – high stocking rates in communal lands neighbouring very low stocking rates on extensive, large-scale ranches - allowing relief grazing in drought. Two very distinct grazing/production systems – different carrying capacities, management etc.

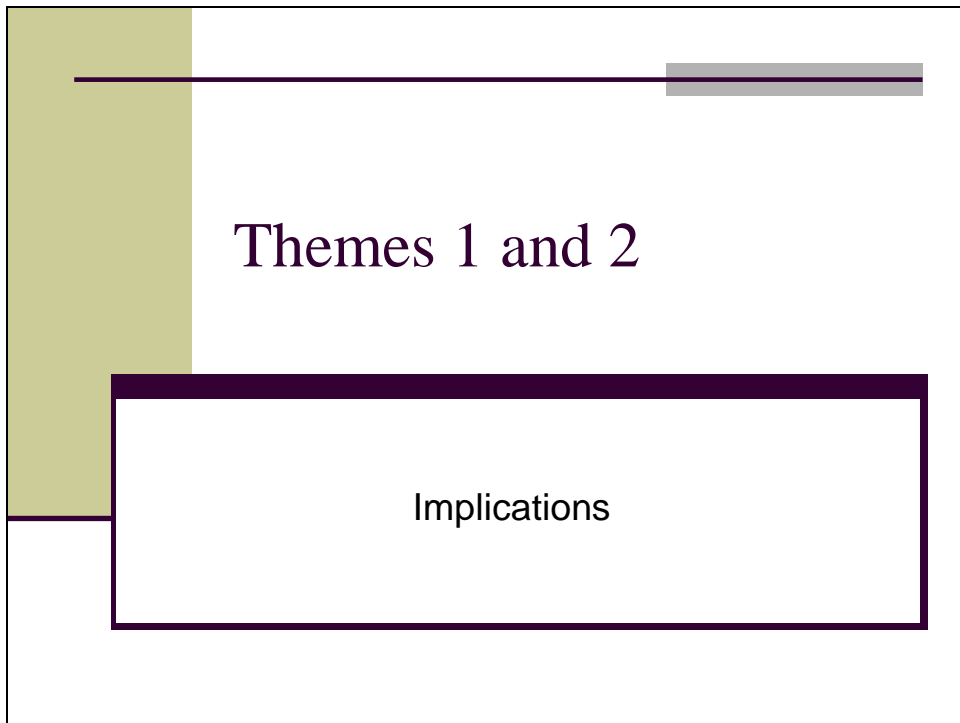
Now/future – with herd restocking on resettlements, can expect higher stocking rates across much wider areas - requiring intensive, high stocking rate management systems in mixed farming CAs, A1 and (maybe) A2.

Grazing and fodder – findings

- Grazing (currently) adequate on newly resettled lands, but constrained in communal areas.
- Currently movement of cattle between communal and new resettlement areas key to survival, especially in drought – requires good social/kin relations.
- Key resources – riverbanks, vleis, hills – critical, especially in communal areas, also villagised A1.
- Supplementary feed – browse, crop residues, phombwe – important in communal areas, but increasingly in resettlements.
- Water resources especially in new resettlements, are limited and a constraint to use of grazing.
- Feedlots used in 1991-92 were not successful then, and no longer functioning today.

Questions arising...

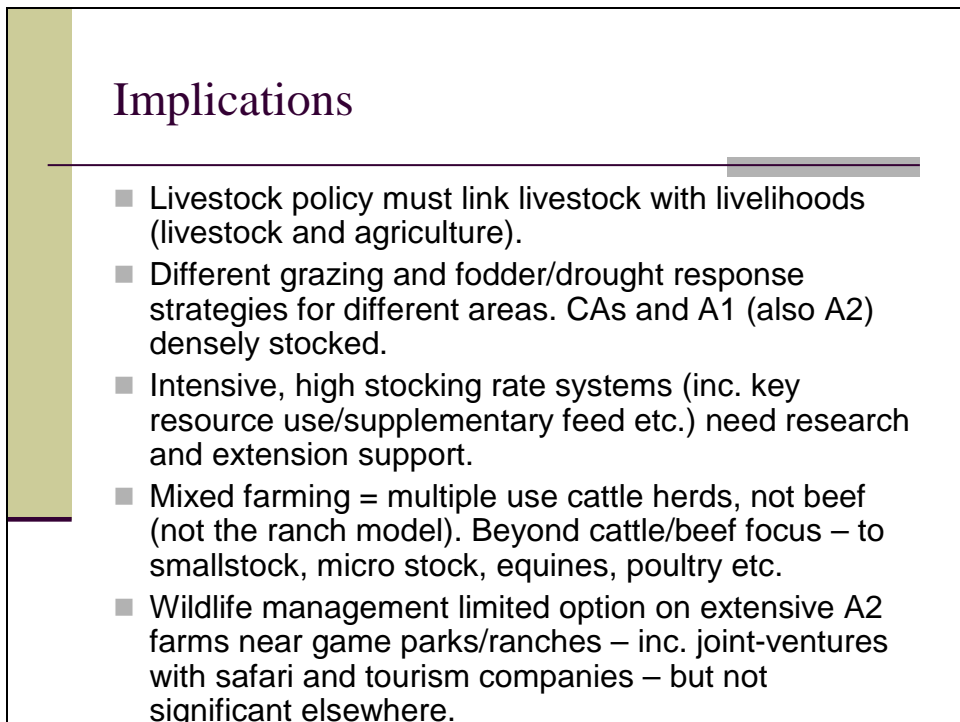
- Are we geared up to supporting a high stocking rate system when most research/extension is focused on ranch grazing systems (low stocking rates/fenced paddocks etc.)?
- With now few low stocking rate ranches, the drought buffer has been reduced: what alternative drought responses are needed?
- With more fencing/exclusion from new resettlement, what ways are there of assuring drought movement and reducing conflicts?
- What support (research, extension, policy) is needed to intensify fodder management with local resources (vlei grazing, local supplementary feeds etc.)?
- How to improve water resources for livestock in the new resettlement areas?



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Themes 1 and 2

Implications



Slide 30 features a light green vertical bar on the left and a horizontal line with a grey rectangular block at its right end. The text "Implications" is centered in a large, dark purple serif font. Below this, a list of five bullet points is presented in a black sans-serif font.

Implications

- Livestock policy must link livestock with livelihoods (livestock and agriculture).
- Different grazing and fodder/drought response strategies for different areas. CAs and A1 (also A2) densely stocked.
- Intensive, high stocking rate systems (inc. key resource use/supplementary feed etc.) need research and extension support.
- Mixed farming = multiple use cattle herds, not beef (not the ranch model). Beyond cattle/beef focus – to smallstock, micro stock, equines, poultry etc.
- Wildlife management limited option on extensive A2 farms near game parks/ranches – inc. joint-ventures with safari and tourism companies – but not significant elsewhere.

Workshop discussion – theme 2: grazing, fodder and drought responses

Discussion focused in on the issue of appropriate stocking rates, and a number of issues were raised by participants:

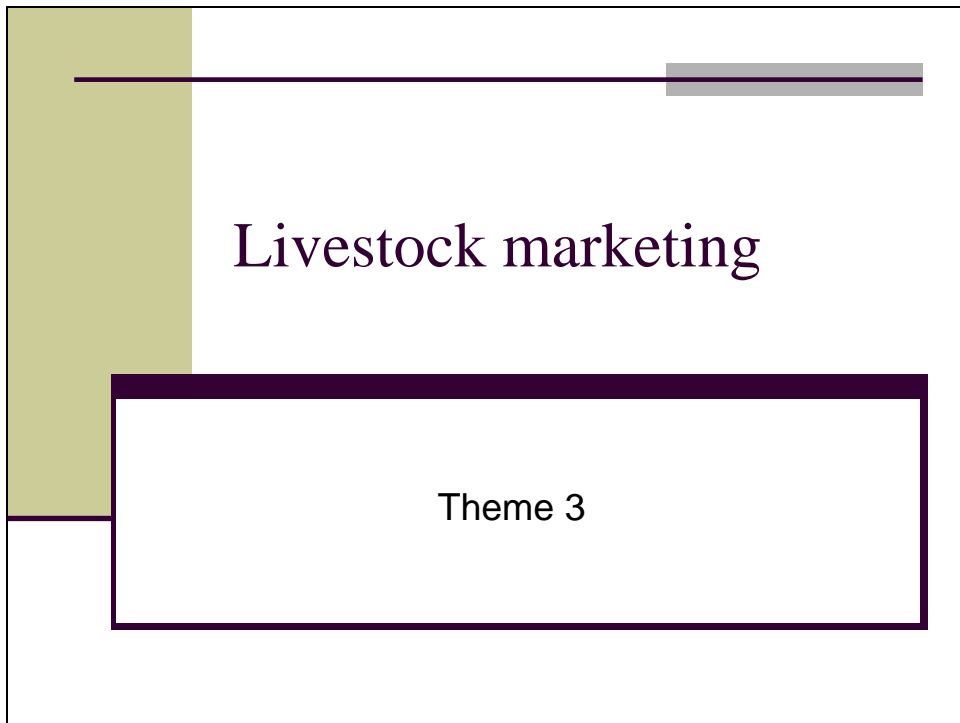
- Evaluating stocking rates is increasingly difficult for any given area due to movement between sites, notably between communal and new resettlement areas. Participants observed that actual stocking rates may differ dramatically between different times of year, with animals being moved into the resettlement areas during the dry season as fodder supplies decline in the communal lands, and later for the ploughing period.
- Someone commented that “stocking rates are only meaningful to the technocrats” and another “I’ve never heard a farmer say my area is overstocked” as farmers are keen to increase herd numbers. Perhaps, someone else asked, “it is the technocrats who are overstocked!”.
- One participant observed that discussions about stocking rates need to be linked to what you are focusing on. For example, you may want to maximise numbers of animals to ensure draught power, or instead you may want to maximise production per individual animal to produce high quality beef. And, across different production objectives, you may have different views about the priorities for environmental management and range conservation.
- Making clear what the objectives are is key, and these will be different across different land uses and farms, participants observed. Blanket recommendations on stocking rates simply do not make sense, particularly given the new setting.
- In relation to stocking strategies, one participant asked whether we should aim for as system of “build up and crash”, with the aim of harvesting before the crash, or whether a more stable system is more desirable. There were pros and cons of both strategies noted, but, as highlighted in earlier discussion, it depends on what the focus/objective is.

Discussion turned to questions of fodder management, and appropriate strategies for this, given the variability in fodder supply in the dry rangelands of the province. Participants noted the need to diversify fodder sources and provide a more reliable supply, particularly in drought. Suggestions included:

- Further research into local drought reserve fodder materials, such as the *phombwe* tuber, noted in the report as important in Chikombedzi. Participants observed that no research had been done on this, and even the identification of the tuber was lacking.
- Researchers outlined some on-going research into drought fodder, including the use of cactus as fodder supplement in the lowveld. But they recognised that this research needed to be expanded to other species and contexts.
- Several participants argued for the desirability of irrigated pastures as a source of fodder. Others, however, observed that with the limitations on irrigation in the province and the associated cost of irrigation infrastructure, it was unlikely that pasture irrigation would be seen as a priority by either farmers or government.

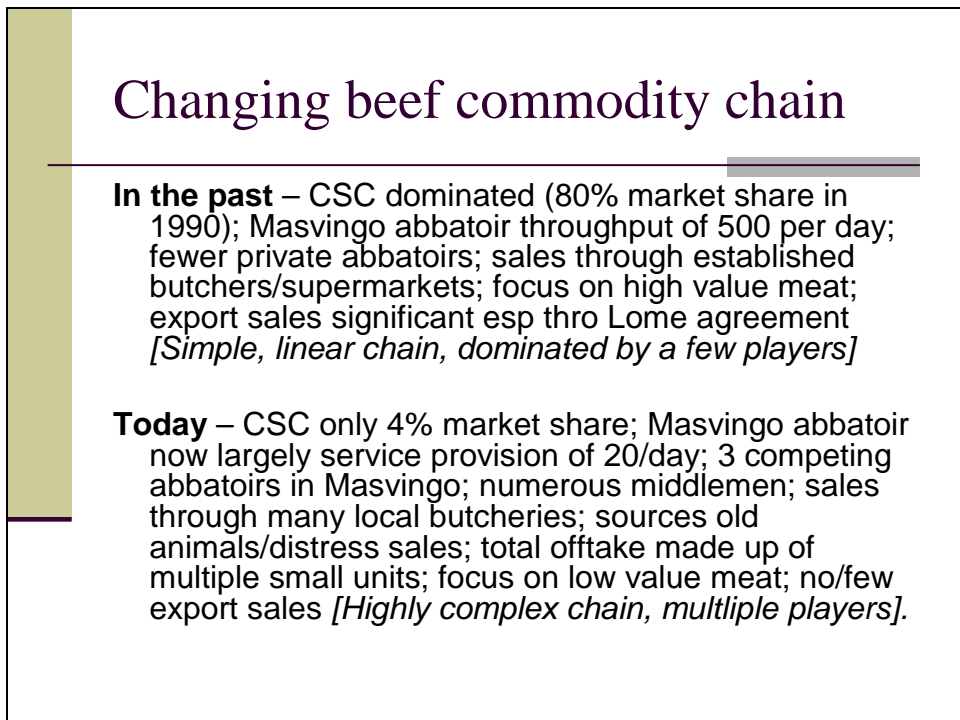
Overall, workshop participants recommended that future planning take drought more into account. As someone pointed out “drought is a fact of life here”. Workshop participants concluded that this requires the elaboration of strategies in two areas:

- Drought contingency planning, including the planning for movement between areas (or, as is likely in future, planning for the lack of movement as fences and boundaries become more secure and defined).
- Low cost intensification of fodder management/supplementation, including research on local plants such as *phombwe*.



Livestock marketing

Theme 3



Changing beef commodity chain

In the past – CSC dominated (80% market share in 1990); Masvingo abbatoir throughput of 500 per day; fewer private abbatoirs; sales through established butchers/supermarkets; focus on high value meat; export sales significant esp thro Lome agreement *[Simple, linear chain, dominated by a few players]*

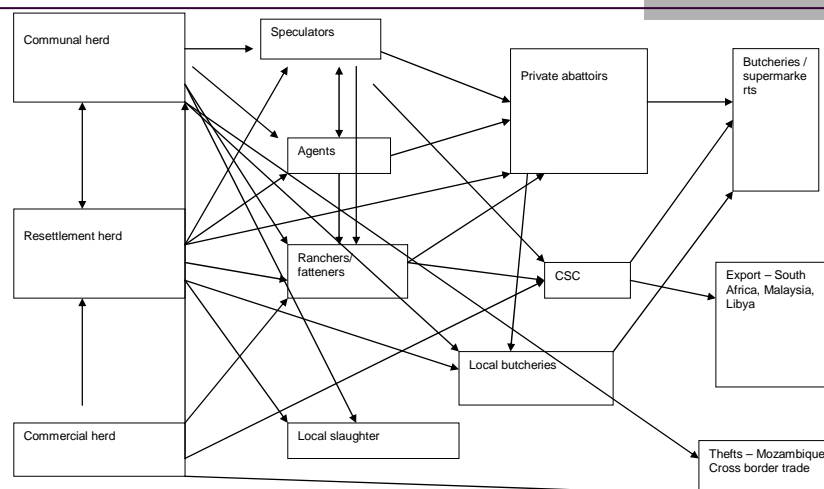
Today – CSC only 4% market share; Masvingo abbatoir now largely service provision of 20/day; 3 competing abbatoirs in Masvingo; numerous middlemen; sales through many local butcheries; sources old animals/distress sales; total offtake made up of multiple small units; focus on low value meat; no/few export sales *[Highly complex chain, multiple players]*.

Cattle sales patterns

- Around 50% (range 38-73%) of communal and A1 resettlement households own cattle.
- Of these under half sold cattle between 1999 and 2004, ranging from 1-30 (avge 2.5).
- Sales varied by year, highest in 2001 (but offtake still only 6%), 1-3% in other years.
- Average herd size outside A2 ranged from 2-10 across sites – ie low for any regular offtake.
- Reasons for sale (in rank order) – household needs, school fees, lobola, heifer purchase, farming inputs, wage costs.
- A2 farmers building herds, but most not geared to beef production.

Total numbers of cattle sales are significant (in Masvingo approx 40k/year from provincial cattle population of 800k, with avge 5% offtake) – but from many small herds, and variable over time.

The new beef commodity chain



Major challenges observed

- Constraints on sale due to small herd sizes, other uses of cattle and on-going herd rebuilding.
- Greater complexity in marketing system – more players, less regulation/control.
- Reduction in role and importance of CSC.
- Few formal auction sales - growth of informal private buyers/intermediaries.
- Continued difficulties in marketing goats.
- Problems faced when veterinary movement restrictions applied.
- Riskiness/illegality and disease implications of cross-border trade (Chikombedzi cluster cases - goats, cattle, biltong).

Players in the new commodity chain

- Small scale speculators (buying, holding and selling).
- Intermediary buyers working for private abattoirs and butcheries on commission.
- Direct purchase, service slaughter and sale by urban butchery owners.
- New (A2) farmers with integrated farm-butchery-store.
- Large scale buyers engaged in heifer exchange, linked to ranches/lease grazing elsewhere (often former ranchers).
- Local purchase and pole slaughter at rural/business centre butcheries
- Local purchase and slaughter, including beef committees

Constraints faced in current commodity chain

- Credit – not available for small operators/businesses.
- Transport and fuel costs/availability, especially for small units.
- Regulations/transactions costs – inc. need to take police and vet officials even for small purchases.
- Inflation – price volatility, changes in value of cash, consumers' ability to pay.

Characteristics of the current marketing context

- Dynamic, entrepreneurial market with multiple players, but constrained by transport costs, lack of credit, high inflation etc.
- Supply focused on low quality beef which matches demand, in both urban and rural areas.
- Beef dominates supply and demand; goat marketing remains informal and very localised.
- Lack of by-products (tallow, hides/skins, bone meal) from current (non-CSC) slaughter routes.
- No high value, (potentially) forex earning products; market oriented to domestic consumption.

So what to do? What are the policy choices?

Policy choices

- Revitalising the beef export industry... but at what cost, given lack of supply, increasing costs of meeting export requirements etc?
- Is a small export enclave option feasible? Where? Who should pay?
- Focusing on meeting domestic beef demand... and supporting the new players in the commodity chain (appropriate regulation/health and safety/credit), encouraging new settlers to supply local beef markets.
- Diversifying away from beef focus to small/micro stock or poultry, wildlife based systems

What should be the criteria for choice – forex, livelihoods and poverty reduction, environmental sustainability?

Workshop discussion - theme 3: Marketing

Discussion on marketing was wide ranging and sparked some intense debate. This focused on two broad themes - the organisation of the marketing system/commodity chain and access to international export markets.

The organisation of the marketing system/commodity chain

There was an extended debate about the merits of organised auction sales as a way of encouraging local marketing. There had been a long tradition of such sales in the communal lands, but these had largely ceased, participants observed, except in a few areas, with private sales taking over as the dominant route for sale.

Advocates of the auction system argued that organised sales increased transparency, reduced costs for farmers, offered 'fair' prices, and overall improved the efficiency and 'order' of the marketing system. They argued further that the 'haphazard' nature of the current marketing system was a problem, allowing exploitation of the producer by 'unscrupulous' middlemen.

By contrast, other participants argued that the current system increases price competition and is more flexible and advantageous for farmers, reducing the reliance on often irregular and unreliable auction sales. Furthermore, they argued that collusion amongst buyers at auctions meant that 'fair' prices were a myth, and misuse of weighing/belt systems was as prevalent as in the informal, private market. With auction sales being controlled by cash-strapped local authorities, the levies and taxes entailed made them uncompetitive compared to the free market.

They argued that "haphazard was another term from the technocrats" and that a controlled, centrally regulated system was not to the advantage of the producer. They argued instead for the education of farmers in weighing/belt systems, and support for the informal marketing system. One participant argued that: "We should remember when people used to cry when the CSC controlled the markets. We must regularise and coordinate, but not go back to the monopoly system".

Access to international markets

The workshop discussion recognised fully the current difficulties being faced, and that the likelihood of regaining export markets, particularly to the EU, soon was very slim. But participants agreed that exports were potentially important for the future, and that "surrendering to the current circumstances" would be defeatist. Participants though urged a sense of realism in the current policy debate, and not to expect that past export successes could easily be recreated. Issues raised included:

- The need to meet high entry requirements for nearly all export markets, whether EU, Malaysia or South Africa.
- The need to rigidly apply SPS requirements to gain access, and comply with a growing array of standards applied by international bodies and importing countries.
- The need to respond to the changing regulatory/standards environment, the apparent inconsistencies in approaches, and the fickleness of importers in a buyers' market.
- The need for the Zimbabwean industry to develop better negotiating skills and networks with importers and their regulatory bodies.

Overall, one participant wondered whether there were currently sufficient incentives to reengage with the export industry today, given escalating costs and barriers to entry. He wondered whether the commodity price (for beef) had declined significantly since 2001 with the decline of the export industry. He went on: “if there was no meaningful difference and the costs of re-entry were high, then a farmer on the ground will not worry too much”.

This in turn led to a discussion of policy strategy. Broadly two views were expressed in the workshop:

- One view emphasised the need to revitalise the beef industry urgently and get back to the situation prevailing before 2001 as soon as possible, with new settlers taking up the challenge to deliver to the market. Given the significance of this for the national economy, the investment of public resources in this effort was seen as imperative and urgent.
- Another view argued that such an export scenario was “certainly desirable but not feasible in the immediate term”. What was needed in the short term given lack of resources and immediate priorities, argued participants advocating this view, was to focus on “poverty reduction not forex” and concentrate on the domestic market. In the longer term the new ‘commercial’ sector needs building up, and once re-established the industry should take the lead in regaining access to international markets. While this may take some public support and facilitation, the major challenge for public investment, it was argued, was to “invest in the sector as a whole”, with focus on improving land based livelihoods, and at least initially emphasise domestic markets.

There were of course various shades of grey discussed between these options. Two issues were discussed during the workshop:

- Gaining access to lower risk regional markets: Several participants noted the potential of focusing on regional markets with lower entry barriers, such as formalising/regularising trade to Mozambique, or exploring options in the DRC, Zambia or elsewhere.
- Establishing an ‘export zone’: Discussion focused on the option of creating a much contracted export zone (or ‘enclave’), in line with on-going policy discussions in the country. But questions were raised: If this was in Mashonaland would this exclude exports from elsewhere, including the lowveld? Would it be ‘disease free’ with vaccination or attempt total disease freedom, and with what implications for movement and market access? Are there options for linking spread out farms beyond a zone if disease control and other measures could be assured?

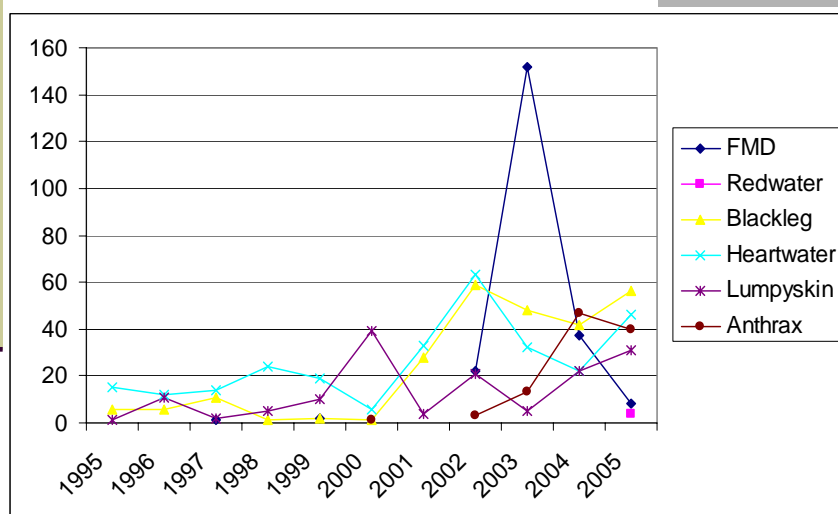
No resolution of these options was achieved during the workshop, but a sense that a more realistic, grounded assessment was needed to take things forward. What were the priorities for next steps discussed at the workshop?

- A need for further understanding of emerging production systems, and the type of products and volumes that will emerge for different markets.
- A need for a better understanding of the conditions for entry for different export markets and their associated costs.
- A need to ensure incentives are right for new producers to develop their production towards particular export markets.
- A need to “regularise and coordinate”, rather than control, domestic markets.

Livestock diseases and veterinary services

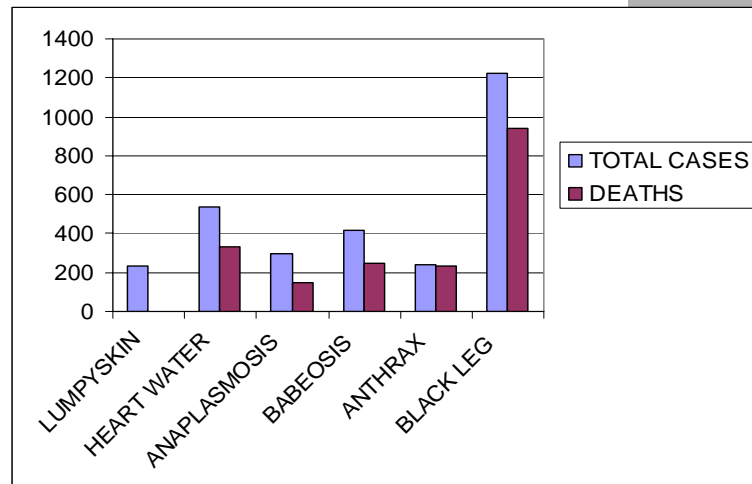
Theme 4

Masvingo cattle diseases 1995-2005



Slide 43

Disease mortality, Masvingo 95-04



Slide 44

Local perceptions: ranking of cattle disease importance

1. Blackleg
2. Redwater
3. Heartwater
4. Gall sickness
5. FMD
6. Boils
7. Mastitis
8. Anthrax
9. Worms
10. Eye infection
11. Lumpy skin

But what has been the focus of external/govt intervention?

Tick borne diseases and dipping

- Major increases in tick infestation, especially on new resettlements.
- Lack of dip tanks in new resettlements; poor maintenance of existing dips.
- Drought affecting availability of dip water.
- Irregular dipping and poor quality dip chemicals; high costs to vet services.
- Dipping committees not functioning well.

Result: Increases in tick-borne diseases.

Tick borne diseases – local responses

- Knap sack spraying, but poor administration and sometimes inappropriate chemicals.
- New private dipping groups on some resettlement areas.
- Traditional treatments/medicines.

Result: some local initiatives, but many cannot afford and cattle die.

Vet services

Vet services in the field extremely stretched – most informants emphasised their absence.

Responses -

- Purchasing drugs – farm supplies stores in towns/business centres.
- Using 'traditional' remedies/treatments.
- Experimenting with sometimes dangerous chemicals/drugs.
- Private individuals (usually untrained and unregistered) offering vet services.

Vet services - challenges

- Few farmers know about livestock diseases – many have relied for a long time on a well functioning, state provided system which is now (largely) absent.
- Farm stores supply some drugs and treatments, but often cannot provide advice on their use.
- Commercial drugs/vaccines are very expensive, supplied in inappropriate packages, and availability is unreliable.
- Traditional systems of animal health provision are limited and unable to deal with many problems.
- All animal health provision focused on cattle, not other stock – disease/pest interactions between different stock not addressed.

Movement control and FMD

- Major FMD outbreaks in Masvingo province – peaking in 2003.
- Movement control restrictions imposed, but mostly ignored – movement essential between communal and resettlement areas for herd establishment, ploughing, drought grazing etc.
- Vaccination campaign launched, but limited coverage due to lack of vaccine, transport problems etc.

New directions for vet services – some issues and questions (1)

- How should animal health issues be prioritised – how important, given the changes in livestock production systems, are market/trade diseases such as FMD, as against blackleg, for example?
- Should investment in disease control for high value, enclave systems geared to export production be seen as a 'public good' or a private business concern?
- With new land uses and interactions, is FMD endemism here to stay? What does this imply for control? Are the high costs of surveillance, fencing, movement control etc warranted?
- How should tick control be encouraged – is publicly funded dipping the appropriate solution? If so how should it be organised? What private solutions can be supported?

New directions for vet services – some issues and questions (2)

- How can drugs/vaccines etc, be made accessible to livestock owners, and how can advice on their use be offered (through training of farmers, store owners etc.)?
- Can a system of community animal health workers/paravets be supported to complement a limited state vet service?
- What should the role be of a publicly funded veterinary service in support of the new livestock sector in Zimbabwe?
- Where should public research and extension efforts be focused (communal/resettlement, cattle/goats etc.)?

Workshop discussion – theme 4: livestock disease and veterinary services

Discussions on veterinary issues were linked to those raised in the marketing session. A number of themes were discussed, including:

- The need to ensure compliance with international export requirements for disease control is about “establishing reliable systems and ensuring trust between producer, exporter and importer along the commodity chain”. As one participant from Namibia put it: “The world wants to know whether you have safe systems, and they need to trust these”.
- Given the Zimbabwe setting, the workshop discussed whether it is appropriate to accept international norms which divide public good support to trans-boundary disease control and private support for production diseases. Some participants argued that the issue of foot-and-mouth control, for example, should be more “a matter for the industry”. Others argued that “costs should be shared” and “profits from export should be ploughed back into the system”. Recalling the past situation, one participant complained that “CSC never paid for the benefits of export”.
- Given the long history of support from the state, dating from the colonial era, for production diseases (including especially dipping), the question was raised: who should pay? One participant argued that “It is time to say we have failed to deliver... it is also time to respond innovatively”. Someone else reflected on the cotton sector where “every player puts resources back into the system to make it work”. Others noted that “farmers are ready to pay for delivery that works, but at the moment they are getting nothing”. Another commented: “What people want is reliability, quality and affordability”.
- In relation to dipping, the observed decline in coverage and effectiveness was noted, and the report’s results reflected others’ experiences. Several participants noted that, in the words of one: “farmers have asked to pay for the actual fee to get a service, but government is refusing”. This situation was seen by many as untenable and in need of reform.
- A number of participants argued that: “it is time to reconsider the option of community animal health workers seriously”. In relation to the delivery of drugs, the potential of a CAHW buying drugs/vaccines in bulk and administering them in units that are affordable to livestock keepers was seen as one advantage of a CAHW system.
- Greater field level coverage through a CAHW system was seen by some participants as a means of getting delivery moving and responding to what is a clear demand, and an apparent willingness to pay for much needed veterinary services. This would allow, participants argued, for the veterinary services to support, train and regulate the delivery system, and avoid the dangers of a wholly unregulated setting where “farmers are using multiple chemicals without regulation, with the dangers of resistance to key treatments around the corner”.

Overall, participants acknowledged the major challenges for veterinary service delivery. As one international participant put it “you can’t have a profitable and successful livestock industry without effective disease control”. Another participant summed up by arguing for an “aggressive, innovative strategy to deal with the situation” arguing forcefully that “this needs to be done urgently”.

Group discussions report back

For the final session of the workshop, participants broke up into four groups to discuss issues that had arisen during the day. Presentations were made from the working groups on the different themes. The following sections summarise the feedback.

Background

- 'Commercial' needs a new definition in the cattle industry.
- ZFU needs strengthening in order to represent farmers effectively.

Production

- Smallstock production should be promoted, and research and extension should go beyond a focus on large stock production.
- Access to information should be improved through participatory demonstrations and use of farmer groups on: fodder production, suitable breeds, nutrition and improved veterinary care.
- Access to credit should be improved on user friendly terms and underwritten by government.
- Use of artificial insemination is currently underdeveloped and could be explored to increase the choice of breeds.
- Local communities should be involved in wildlife conservancies.

Grazing, fodder and drought response

- Research on local knowledge on fodder sources such as *phombwe* is needed. Is it for maintenance, finishing or survival?
- Fodder production initiatives should be implemented: fodder banks and irrigated pastures may options in some circumstances.
- An effective monitoring system is necessary to make sure the resource base and productions system remains sustainable
- A national drought preparedness plan should be developed, incorporating a strategy for fodder management.
- Grazing conflicts between communal areas and resettlement areas must be reduced, for example by opening up additional grazing on adjacent farms.
- Local by-laws and constitutions for natural resource management need to be developed.
- Water for drought mitigation should be provided by the public sector.

Marketing

- Marketing systems ought to be less 'haphazard' – both competitive and transparent.
- Formal livestock auction markets for all stock should be promoted and regulatory frameworks developed.
- An emphasis on local market development is needed. Education should be provided on current prices and their basis, i.e. understanding weigh belts or using electronic scales. Also education is needed on which type and age animals get the best prices.
- Existing district structures should be used to organise local marketing – i.e. the RDCs should continue to collect sales levies, but these should be ploughed back into dip tank committees etc.

- Breeder stock needs to be identified to develop a market base for quality meat to be targeted for the export market
- Meat exports to Mozambique and Libya need further investigation (potentially more reliable than DRC).
- Export of de-boned and matured meat should be further explored and marketed as part of a commodity based trade approach.

Disease

- Control of FMD is both a public and private issue. The costs should be shared with communal farmers via a levy system.
- Affordability of drugs is an issue – farmers should be encouraged to shop around.
- Existing regulations need to be implemented for systematic disease management. Resettlement areas need to be better incorporated into disease control systems.
- A national community based animal health workers should be established and formalised. They should be allocated to each dip tank to do vaccinations, keep drugs and improve efficiency.
- Dipping fees should be charged on a cost recovery basis.
- Dipping should be controlled by local committees who would buy their own drugs without state support.
- Lobbying for change at the policy level is necessary – e.g. to establish that dipping is both a public and private good.

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