



## LEGS AND RESILIENCE: LINKING LIVESTOCK, LIVELIHOODS AND DROUGHT MANAGEMENT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

### BACKGROUND

Recurrent humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa have led many aid donors to support an emerging set of strategies, frameworks and programmes around the concept of resilience<sup>1</sup>. This support is likely to lead to substantial aid investments in the Horn of Africa region, through both regional and national programmes, and with the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) acting as the lead regional actor. Central to this support is the concept of reducing, or ending, the impacts of drought. There is also increasing recognition that drought alone is rarely the cause of humanitarian crises in the Horn, but is a contributing factor along with various complex forms of protracted political instability and conflict, increasing human populations and declining access to land, and local and international market trends in food prices and the demand for livestock.

Published in early 2009, the *Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards* (LEGS) are the first set of global guidelines for the design and delivery of livestock projects in humanitarian crises. Since publication, LEGS has been widely supported by aid donors, UN agencies and NGOs in the Horn of Africa, and globally LEGS is a companion to Sphere. However, although LEGS mentions resilience these references use resilience in terms of a general interpretation of the word, rather than relating LEGS specifically to emerging resilience frameworks and programmes. In part, this is a timing issue – LEGS was developed and published before the recent donor interest in resilience thinking. This briefing paper presents some initial ideas on how LEGS relates directly to resilience and how it contributes to resilience strategies and programmes.

### LINKING LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

Across different donor resilience frameworks and discussion papers, some critical areas stand out:

- the importance of livelihood assets, i.e. the financial, social, human, physical and natural assets of households and communities affected by crises, and the concept that asset holdings relate directly to the capacity of households to respond to, and recover from disasters
- better integration of development and humanitarian efforts within longer-term programmes; and stronger systems of risk-based disaster management.

Each of these areas is already supported by LEGS, and is explained below with emphasis on the Horn of Africa region's complex emergencies and recurrent drought. In addition, LEGS also aims to support local markets and services during crises, thereby enabling post-crisis recovery.

### PROTECTING AND BUILDING LIVELIHOOD ASSETS

LEGS is structured around three livelihoods objectives; providing rapid assistance through livestock-based interventions; protecting key livestock assets; and rebuilding key livestock-related assets. Central to this approach is the sustainable livelihoods framework, and an understanding of the roles

of livestock as financial and social assets. Clearly, for the many pastoralists in the Horn of Africa, livestock are the key financial and social asset.

Notably, at least one resilience framework is a variation on the sustainable livelihoods framework<sup>ii</sup>. This helps to explain the importance of assets to resilience, and also, the direct links between LEGS objectives and resilience. In practical programming terms, LEGS interventions such as destocking, livestock feed supplementation and veterinary care have direct impacts on household livestock assets while also supporting trade and local input supply and service provision. Typically, it is far more cost-effective for aid agencies to protect key livestock assets in pastoralist areas during drought, rather than support asset rebuilding after drought<sup>iii</sup>.



The LEGS intervention of **commercial destocking** during drought relates directly to resilience by enabling people to acquire cash. They use this to buy food and healthcare, while also investing in animal feed and veterinary care. Therefore, commercial destocking provides direct assistance to households, protects assets, supports asset rebuilding, and supports local markets and services. Long-term, it depends on pre-existing market capacity and flexibility, and wider issues such as regional or international demands for livestock products.



The LEGS intervention of **livestock feed** supplements for specific types of livestock aims to protect core assets and support post-drought recovery. Some types of livestock feed programme can also help to maintain milk supply to young children and prevent malnutrition<sup>iv</sup>. This emergency intervention relates to longer term processes such as local livestock fodder production and sale by the private sector.

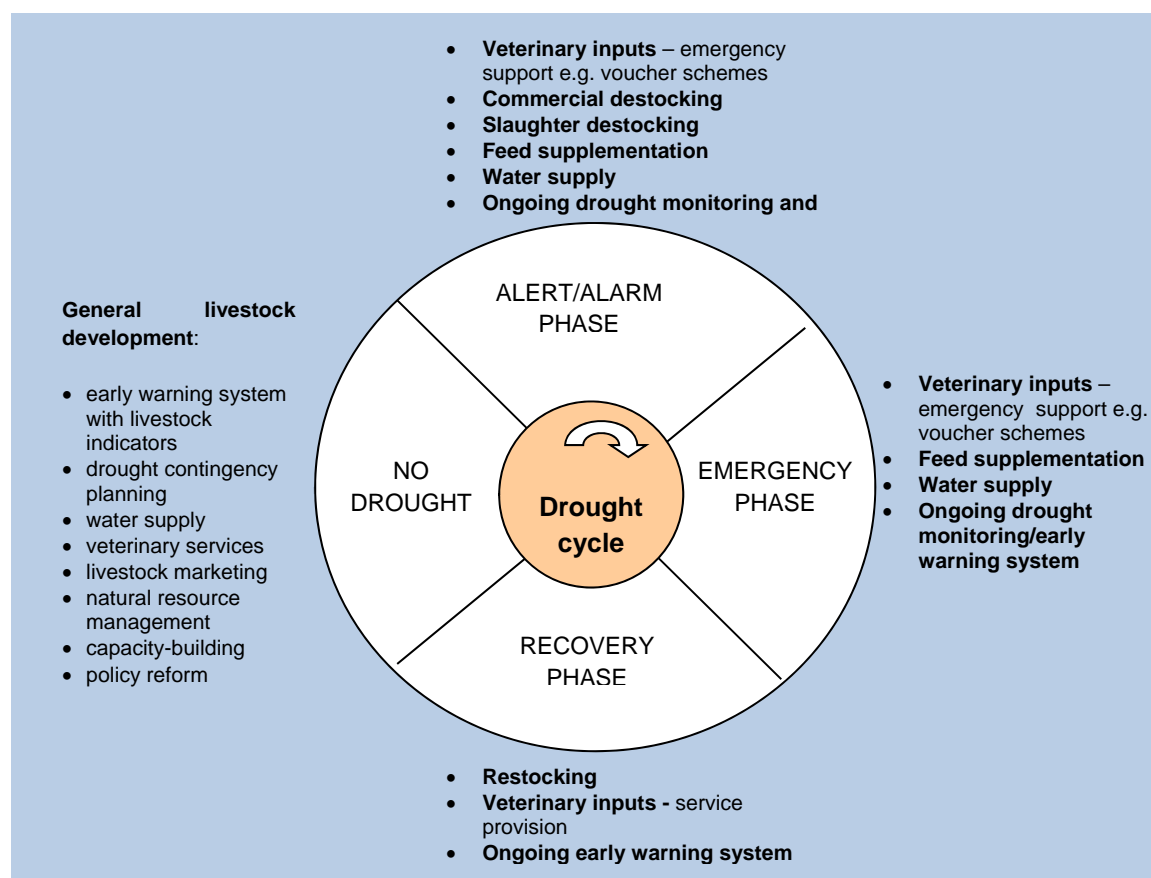


The LEGS intervention of basic **clinical veterinary care** also helps to protect core livestock assets, especially if combined with supplementary feeding. LEGS encourages further use and evaluation of veterinary voucher schemes during drought, whereby targeted households can access treatments from private sector veterinary service providers, especially local para-veterinary professionals. This approach has long-term implications, such as national policy and legal support to community-based animal health workers.

## STRENGTHENING RISK-BASED DISASTER MANAGEMENT

LEGS describes drought as a slow-onset emergency, with negative livelihood impacts increasing slowly over time. LEGS also has a Common Standard on Preparedness, and promotes the use of **drought cycle management** in which drought is expected and where drought preparedness is emphasized during normal periods. These approaches relate directly to resilience thinking, because drought cycle management automatically integrates longer term development, drought preparedness and drought response. The correct use of drought cycle management also has other implications for resilience because in general, early interventions are far more effective in terms of the economic returns of aid expenditure. For example, support to commercial destocking in Ethiopia resulted in a benefit-cost ratio of 41:1 in terms of aid investment<sup>v</sup> and herders used some of the cash from livestock sales to transport remaining livestock to better grazing areas. In contrast, livestock feed supplementation by aid agencies later in drought resulted in a benefit-cost ratio of less than 2:1<sup>vi</sup>. Other economic comparisons can also be made, such as the benefits and costs of a livelihoods-based response during drought such as commercial destocking, versus food aid. With the former approach, cash from some livestock sales can be used to buy food locally rather than relying on food aid. In Ethiopia, commercial destocking was 125 times less expensive than food aid in terms of aid expenditure for local food aid purchases, and 137 times less expensive if food aid was imported.<sup>vii</sup>

### LEGS interventions in the drought cycle



## CONCLUSIONS

- By following a livelihoods-based approach to emergency livestock interventions and by supporting risk-based drought preparedness, LEGS can directly support resilience thinking and programmes in pastoralist areas of the Horn of Africa
- The institutionalization of LEGS is already well underway in countries in the region, and resilience programmes are an opportunity to further integrate LEGS into national drought management systems
- LEGS focuses on the protection and building of livestock assets, and therefore is particularly relevant to pastoralist households.
- LEGS is also relevant to non-pastoralist households, but responses need to be harmonized with non-livestock asset protection and in some cases, social protection and other types of assistance.

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<sup>i</sup> For example, see:

DFID (2012) Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/Defining-Disaster-Resilience-DFID-Approach-Paper.pdf>

Frankenberger, T. et al. (2012) Enhancing Resilience to Food Security Shocks in Africa. Discussion Paper November 2012

European Commission (2012) The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises. EU Commission, Brussels, and [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/resilience/resilience\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/resilience/resilience_en.htm)

<sup>ii</sup> Frankenberger, T. et al. (2012) *ibid.*

<sup>iii</sup> See :

Cabot Venton, C. et al. (2012) The Economics of Early Response and Disaster Resilience. Report for DFID.

<https://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/Econ-Ear-Rec-Res-Full-Report%20.pdf>

Catley, A. and Cullis, A. (2012) Money to Burn? Comparing the costs and benefits of drought responses in pastoralist areas of Ethiopia. *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, 24 April, 2012 <http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1548>

<sup>iv</sup> SADLER, K. ET AL. (2012) MILK MATTERS: THE IMPACT OF DRY SEASON LIVESTOCK SUPPORT ON MILK SUPPLY AND CHILD NUTRITION IN SOMALI REGION, ETHIOPIA [HTTP://SITES.TUFTS.EDU/FEINSTEIN/FILES/2012/05/MILK-MATTERS-2.PDF](http://sites.tufts.edu/feinstein/files/2012/05/MILK-MATTERS-2.PDF)

<sup>v</sup> Abebe, D. et al. (2008). Livelihoods impact and benefit-cost estimation of a commercial de-stocking relief intervention in Moyale district, southern Ethiopia. *Disasters* 32/2, 167-189

<sup>vi</sup> BEKEKE, G. AND ABERA, T. (2008). LIVELIHOODS-BASED DROUGHT RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA: IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF LIVESTOCK FEED SUPPLEMENTATION. FEINSTEIN INTERNATIONAL CENTER, TUFTS UNIVERSITY

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<sup>vii</sup> Catley, A. and Cullis, A. (2012) *ibid.*