

Addressing the Challenges of Livestock in Camps

Refugee and IDP Camps



Photo credit: Ana Urgoiti

Camps are formed – as a last resort – when people are displaced due to conflict or natural disaster, and there is no other settlement solution. When livestock-dependent people are displaced from their communities into a camp, a number of specific issues arise:

- Camp design issues related to shelter, location of livestock in the camp, water supply, as well as security and protection measures.
- Issues relating to the political context, such as access to grazing, land rights, relations with host communities and government, permission to bring livestock into a camp etc.
- Lack of available livestock feed resources in and around the camp.
- Impact of livestock on public health due to water and air pollution, slaughtering wastes, uncontrolled use of vet drugs and transmission of disease from animals to humans.
- Impact of livestock on animal health due to increased risk of some livestock diseases.

Organizational Challenges

These issues are further aggravated since many relief organizations do not have the technical knowledge or expertise to address the challenges of livestock in camps. As a result, they often rely on the recruitment of external experts to provide programme guidance. This is because livestock generally does not receive institutional priority, and is often an add-on activity.

The lack of mainstreaming livestock in camp programming results in:

- Lack of understanding of the important role of livestock and the part it plays in livelihoods – this informs livestock programming, to a large extent, as well as the expectations of programme managers when a disaster occurs in a given context.
- The absence of institutional or sectoral memory on livestock, through documentation such as best practices and lessons learned
- Inadequate promotion of existing guidance material which has the potential to improve livestock interventions



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Programming Challenges

Livestock interventions are rarely considered as part of relief work in camps, except when diseased or dying livestock threatens hygiene standards for people, or where livestock has become the only nutritional source for populations. This is because livestock is seen as relevant largely only during recovery phases, or as part of development and preparedness efforts before a disaster, or possibly as cross cutting, reinforcing resilience during chronic and complex emergency. Procurement and storage of livestock fodder and veterinary medicines also present a challenge to camp management.

Ways Forward

- Livestock support should be integrated into all aspects of camp planning and management, not just as a public health concern but as a key livelihood support activity.
- Local communities are often best placed to support programming, drawing on their particular livestock knowledge which varies from group to group - for example nomadic societies with large herds have different needs and experience compared to urban camp residents with smaller groups of animals.
- Camp site selection needs to take into account nearby facilities for storage, animal health and protection.
- Procurement methods should be improved to facilitate the purchase and effective storage of fodder and livestock medications.
- The concerns of host communities need to be considered as a key element of livestock intervention programming by making them beneficiaries and decision influencers of the interventions.

Many of these issues are addressed in the second edition of the LEGS Handbook, available via the LEGS website in pdf or hard copy format.

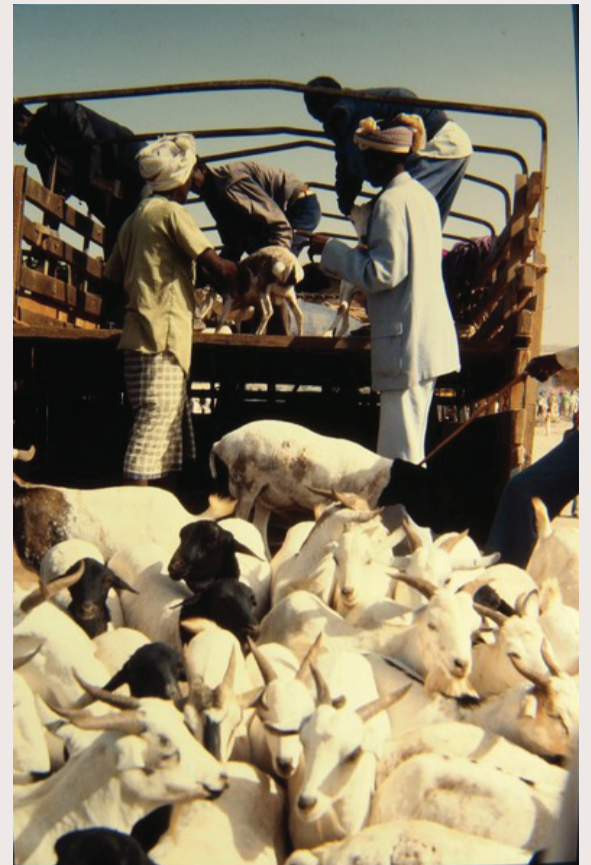


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This Policy Brief is based on the following paper which was commissioned by the LEGS Project to contribute to the revision of the LEGS Handbook: The Shelter Centre (2013). Livestock Interventions in Camps: A briefing paper for the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards. Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards, Addis Ababa. The full paper is available on the LEGS website resources page.

About LEGS

The Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) are a set of international guidelines for improving the quality of livestock programmes in humanitarian crises. The LEGS Project, established in 2006, grew out of concerns that livestock responses in emergencies were frequently inappropriate, poorly designed and/or delivered to late. The LEGS Project provides standards and guidance based on good practice from around the world to help decision-makers and practitioners to improve their support to livestock keepers affected by crisis. The LEGS Project is overseen by an international Steering Group and is hosted by Vetnetwork UK.

Find Out More

How to become part of the LEGS community:

- Visit the website: www.livestock-emergency.net
- Contact us directly: admin@livestock-emergency.net

