

Measuring the impacts of cattle supplementary feeding in Ethiopia

Drawing on experiences from livestock feeding in 2006, Save the Children USA expanded their livestock feed support during another drought in early 2008. This programme set up 10 feeding centres, targeting 6,750 cattle. While some animals were fed in the centres, others were left to graze and did not receive the supplementary feed.

In May 2008, an impact assessment was conducted to measure possible changes in mortality in cattle receiving and not receiving the supplementary feed. Two feeding centres, in areas where the drought had varied in severity, were selected for the impact assessment. In each, different durations of feeding had been used. In Bulbul centre, 1,000 cows were fed for 22 days, whereas in Web centre, 800 cows were fed for 67 days. The impact assessment studied mortality rates among a sample of households (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Impacts recorded in two feeding centres

Location/Group	Mortality	
Bulbul area: affected by moderate drought; 22-day feeding programme started on 15 March 2008		
Unfed cattle moved to grazing areas	108/425	(25.4%)
Cows fed using Save the Children USA feed	13/161	(8.1%)
Web area: affected by severe drought; 67-day feeding programme began on 9 February 2008		
Unfed cattle moved to grazing areas	139/407	(34.2%)
Cows fed using Save the Children USA feed	49/231	(21.2%)

- **Mortality.** Relative to unfed cattle, mortality was significantly lower in cows in both feeding centres.
- **Body condition.** Relative to unfed cattle, cows in the feeding centres gained body condition, with up to 70 per cent of cows moving from 'poor' to 'moderate' body condition.
- **Milk and calves.** Some cows gave birth in the feeding centres and were able to rear calves until the start of the rains. A total of 198 calves survived in the two centres. Some cows maintained lactation, and this milk – amounting to 5,640 litres – was fed to children.
- **Benefit–cost analyses.** In Bulbul the benefit–cost ratio of the intervention was 1.6:1 whereas in Web the benefit–cost was 1.9:1. Sensitivity analysis showed that the intervention was robust and that the benefit–cost ratio was not unduly affected by moderate to high changes in market conditions

Source: Bekele, G. and Abera, T. (2008) *Livelihoods-Based Drought Response in Ethiopia: Impact Assessment of Livestock Feed Supplementation*, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University. <https://fic.tufts.edu/publication-item/livelihoods-based-drought-response-in-ethiopia/>