



Impact case study

Limitations of the provision of livestock feed in Tajikistan

Evaluations are invaluable for supporting learning and continuous improvement in emergency response. They assess whether project objectives have been achieved, and if not why not, so that future responses are better designed. This case study looks at an FAO intervention that provided feed and other livestock inputs in Tajikistan. It was included within a desk review by LEGS on *Livestock-related emergencies and response in Eastern Europe & Central Asia*. An evaluation by FAO of its programme in Tajikistan provides further useful insights on what did not work within the intervention.

Background

It is estimated that more than 90% of Tajikistan's livestock is owned and managed in small numbers by rural families. The country is prone to numerous natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, avalanches and drought. Many families suffered from losses caused by natural disasters in 2006 and 2007, and had to sell their productive livestock assets to feed their families. Severe cold weather and a related energy crisis in 2008 then compounded the acute levels of underlying poverty. A consequence of the 2008 severe winter was a general reduction in the quality and quantity of animal feeds, and the unavailability of winter pastures, resulting in increased mortality of livestock. Decreased animal productivity, including milk yield and egg production (roughly estimated to have dropped by 20-30%), severely impacted households' food security and cash incomes.

Activities

In response, FAO implemented the project *Emergency supply of animal feed to weather-affected livestock farmers in Tajikistan*. The specific objective was the re-establishment of livestock production capacity and enhancing livestock reproduction in the spring. The intervention covered the provision of livestock feed, fodder seeds, vitamin and mineral additives, and de-wormers to the poorest livestock farmers and female-headed households. Brochures and leaflets in Tajik containing technical advice on a balanced diet for livestock (effective feeding practices) were prepared and distributed along with the animal feed. Tajikistan has a high rate of female-headed households due to labour migration, and the project ensured a clear focus on female-headed families, with women comprising 41% of the recipients.

Analysis

FAO's evaluation raises critical questions about how the livestock owners used the distributed vitamins and minerals since they had no grain or oilseed cake with which to mix them to feed their animals. It also points out that minerals and vitamins do not save animals' lives, and that fodder seed is a medium-term solution not an immediate response. In the event, 2009 was a year of plentiful rainfall and so there was an abundance of fodder anyway.

In the project activities related to livestock feed distribution, participants received a fixed amount irrespective of the number of animals any individual owned. The quantity provided was therefore not enough to carry the animals through the whole winter. The evaluation also highlights that the training on various livestock farm inputs would have been more beneficial if done at the same time as distribution of the inputs; ensuring that they were available in the localities through local agri-shops soon after the intervention.

The simultaneous distribution of animal health-related inputs may have increased the effectiveness of the distributed compound feed on livestock recovery, growth, and productivity; but there is no focused study on this. The FAO evaluation does however concede that the training could well have enabled the recipients to improve animal feeding in the long-term.

Sources:

LEGS (2021) *Desk review of livestock-related emergencies and response in Eastern Europe & Central Asia* https://www.livestock-emergency.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Desk-Review_October-2021.pdf

FAO (2009) *Evaluation of FAO activities in Tajikistan, 2004-2009*. Final Report <https://www.fao.org/3/bq912e/BQ912E.pdf>

LEGS case studies demonstrate good practice in livestock emergency response. They cover the six LEGS Technical Intervention areas, the eight LEGS Principles as well as the broader contexts covered in the third edition of the LEGS handbook. **Process case studies** illustrate the application of LEGS guidance and **impact case studies** reflect on the outcomes of LEGS interventions.

- ▶ You can access all of the LEGS case studies at [livestock-emergency.net/resources/case-studies](https://www.livestock-emergency.net/resources/case-studies)
- ▶ For more information see the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards Handbook at [livestock-emergency.net](https://www.livestock-emergency.net)

