



Process case study

LEGS Guided Livestock Feed Distribution during Droughts in Somaliland: Approaches, Impacts and Lessons Learned

Introduction

Severe droughts in the Horn of Africa in 2017 devastated livelihoods, especially for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Somaliland. In response, the Livelihood Improvement Project (LIP) in Saaxil Region, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the German Cooperation for International Development (GIZ) undertook livestock feed distribution to mitigate the impact of the droughts on livestock keepers. The intervention was guided by the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) and targeted lactating, pregnant, and breeding animals, critical for household nutrition and future herd sustainability.

Approach

The project distributed 1,200 tons of wheat bran for 2240 livestock owners/keepers across 24 drought-stricken villages. The initial assessment methodology including the assessment checklists outlined in the LEGS Handbook were used to determine how the intervention would be implemented, including the livestock species to be targeted - cattle, sheep, and goats. As a result of this process, the intervention prioritized:

1. **Community Engagement:** collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock, regional authorities, and Village Development Committees (VDCs) identified severely affected villages and beneficiaries.
2. **Inclusivity:** vulnerable groups, including women-headed households, ethnic minorities, and the elderly, were prioritized, which helped ensure equitable access to resources and support, enhancing overall community resilience.
3. **Targeted Assistance:** consistent with Feed Standard 2 of the LEGS Handbook, to optimize the use of limited available funds the focus was on productive animals – lactating, pregnant and breeding livestock.
4. **Technical Implementation:**
 - Needs assessments undertaken in line with LEGS Feed Standard 1
 - Procurement of safe, high-quality wheat bran from reliable suppliers.
 - In line with LEGS Feed Standard 3, thorough safety assessments and inspections of the feed were conducted prior to distribution to minimize risks of contamination and ensure that livestock received high-quality nutrition.
 - Simplified procurement to expedite feed delivery during emergencies.
 - Utilizing a two-week distribution cycle to address household storage constraints.
5. **Women's Role in Livestock Management:** Engaging women beneficiaries, given their central role in animal care, to ensure feeding practices were sustainable and effective.

Outcomes

- **Livestock Survival and Productivity:** Anecdotal information from beneficiaries indicated that the targeted feeding of critical livestock contributed to the survival of pregnant, lactating and breeding animals, safeguarding household nutrition and the reproductive capacity of herds.
- **Community Resilience:** The intervention fostered local participation, enhancing trust and ownership of the project. Linking farmers to feed suppliers promoted long-term sustainability.
- **Empowering Women:** By involving women in livestock feeding and management, the project recognized their vital role in livestock-based livelihoods. This led to a groundbreaking decision to include women in training as Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs), even in areas where it was previously deemed culturally or traditionally unacceptable. This shift not only empowered women but also enhanced their contribution to improving animal health and overall community resilience.

Lessons Learned

- **Community Engagement is Crucial:** Early involvement of local authorities and VDCs ensured accurate targeting and community buy-in.
- **Targeted Assistance Maximizes Impact:** Focusing on high-value and productive animals during emergencies ensures resource efficiency and long-term herd viability.
- **Flexibility in Procurement:** Simplified tendering processes allowed a rapid response, a critical factor in emergency contexts.
- **Role of Women:** Recognizing and involving women as key stakeholders in livestock management enhances project effectiveness and sustainability.
- **Linking Relief to Development:** Establishing connections between livestock owners/keepers and feed suppliers encourages self-reliance and prepares communities for future challenges.

Conclusion

The feed distribution initiative in Saaxil Region demonstrated the importance of targeted, community-centered, and gender-sensitive approaches in mitigating the effects of drought on pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods. By addressing immediate needs while fostering sustainability, such interventions can serve as models for future emergency responses in similar contexts.

Source: Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed Ali

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
- ▶ For more information see the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards Handbook at livestock-emergency.net

