The Tanzania National Sample Census of Agriculture 2007/2008: A Livestock Perspective

The Preliminary Report of the 2007/2008 National Sample Census of Agriculture of Tanzania has been released in March 2011. The data was collected from a sample of about 53,000 rural households involved in agriculture, as well as from 1,006 large scale farms on a complete enumeration basis.

The 2007/2008 Agriculture Census has been the second undertaken under the Census and Survey Program, which involves carrying out the Agricultural Census after every five years. Specific objectives of the Census were to:

- ‘Provide data for the measurement and growth and poverty in the rural sector [...] as well as the impact of the objectives/goals of the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP), Poverty Reduction Strategy under the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction (NSGPR) [...] and other rural development programmes.’

- ‘Provide data on agriculture production and productivity to policy makers in order to assist them in assessing the status of the agriculture sector.’

- ‘Provide data on the changes in agriculture practices in relation to policies, thrusts and interventions promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders’.

The Agriculture Census divides households by size of holding (with 11 classes ranging from 0.01-0.50 ha to above 5 ha) and by production systems, including ‘crops only’, ‘livestock only’, ‘pastoralist’ and ‘crops and livestock’. Livestock data in the Preliminary Report include number of animals/species by different categories of households and by Regions, and some other minor livestock related information.

Livestock holding and farm size

Tanzania agriculture is smallholder-based, with almost 60 percent of households having farms of less than 2 hectares, and another 20 percent falling in the 2-3 ha category. Livestock are a common asset among agricultural households, with about 40 percent of them partly depending on livestock for their livelihoods.

About 99 percent of livestock keeping households are mixed crop-livestock farmers, with the remaining 1 percent comprising both ‘livestock only’ and ‘pastoralist’ households. Large farmers are definitely more likely to keep some livestock than smaller ones: about 64 percent of households in the >5 ha category are livestock-dependant, vis-à-vis 31 percent of those in the 0-1 ha category. Some barriers to entry appear thus to prevent marginal and/or small farms from keeping livestock.

Livestock holding and animal species

Ownership of chicken is widespread, as about 66 percent of all livestock-keeping households raise some poultry birds. About 30 percent of livestock keepers own some cattle or goats,
while 11 and 9 percent respectively keep sheep or pigs.

Indigenous species comprise the largest majority of all livestock kept in Tanzania. For example, only about 0.3 and 2.4 percent of large ruminants are exotic beef cattle or dairy cows respectively; and only about 0.7 and 2.8 of goats are ‘improved for meat’ and ‘improved dairy’ respectively.

The distribution of improved breeds across the various Regions in the country suggests that the Dar Er Salaam Region is the most specialized, though livestock and livestock production are mainly concentrated in the Regions of Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Lindi and Mtwara.

**Livestock and crop production**

Despite the largest majority of livestock keeping households being mixed crop-livestock farmers, only a minority of them seem to make use of the variety of services which livestock may provide to increase crop productivity.

If 23 percent of farmers make use of ox-ploughs, about 0.2 percent use ox-planters and only about 4 percent apply some organic fertilizer, including livestock dung, to increase crop productivity.

**Combining agricultural census and household survey data**

Several Census Reports, including a Livestock Report, are expected to be released in the near future. The Livestock Report will be quite detailed, as the census questionnaire is quite comprehensive, including not only sections on crop and livestock, but also on household characteristic and poverty level.

An innovation section of the Census questionnaire is that on constraints, in which households are expected to rank up to five major constraints affecting production and productivity. Constraints include both asset-policy- and market-related constraints, such as limited access to land or equipments, high taxes or excessive input costs.

A thorough analysis of the Sample Census of Agriculture, coupled with findings from the National Panel Survey data released in October 2010 – i.e. household surveys data collected through interviewing a nationally representative sample of about 3,300 households on a multiplicity of their characteristics - may help identify efficiency and equity-enhancing investment opportunities in the livestock sector.

On the one hand, household survey data allow exploring and identifying linkages and causalities between livestock-related variables and some household livelihood parameters. On the other hand, census data provide detailed livestock-related information up to Region and District Level, thereby allowing identifying areas where public and private sector livestock sector investments are expected to generate handsome returns.

In Tanzania, the Livestock Data Innovation Project collaborates with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development as well as with the National Bureau of Statistics to analyze a variety of livestock-related data, including census and household survey data, with the objective to identify priority areas for investments in the livestock sector, which promote both economic growth and poverty reduction.

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