

Demonstration of Oxen Fattening at On-farm level

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Abstract

Participatory demonstration of fattening technology was conducted at Keta-Bareda kebele of Dodola district on six to eight years old Arsi oxen. The objectives of the study were to demonstrate oxen fattening technology and to analyze its profitability at on-farm level. Two farmer research extension groups (FREG) were formed in collaboration with development agents. Each FREG constructed animal shades near one of their member home. Mini field day was organized at the final body condition of the animals to collect farmers' feed backs. The body weights of animals were taken with fifteen day interval using heart girth chart tape. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Final body weights, total weight gains and average daily weight gains of the oxen were 292.5, 45.75 and 0.653 kg respectively. An average margin of profit of 3160.50 ETB was obtained per the experimental animal while the entire margin of profit of sixteen oxen was 50567.70 ETB.

Introduction

Ethiopia holds the largest livestock population in Africa, which is estimated at 59.5 million heads of cattle, 30.7 million heads of sheep and 30.2 million heads of goats. The livestock sector contributes about 15% of the total export earnings and 30% of agricultural employment. However, the livestock sector has remained underdeveloped and in many cases underutilized. For instance, Ethiopia's beef productivity per head/annual is 108.4 kg which is far less than 119 kg for Sudan, 146 for Kenya and 205 kg for the whole world. The current per capita consumption of meat is 13.9 kg/year, being lower than the African and the world per capita averages, which are 27 kg/year and 100 kg/year, respectively.

The meat currently produced from livestock production in the country could not satisfy the high increasing demand of people. On the opposite hand, the normal livestock practices aren't mostly market oriented. Cattle fattening practices by farmers in highland are mostly dependents on natural pasture and crop residues with few or no supplements. The practices did not also account for the nutrient

requirement of animals, the level of feeding being either above or below the animal requirements.

Modern cattle fattening is a newly growing activity in Ethiopia. It needs selection of animals, deworming and feeding effectively to achieve a considerable level of live weight gains for reach the target market. Fattening is relatively an easy and profitable system of rearing cattle to reduce poverty, unemployment and generate income for the rural people. In Ethiopia, meat demands mostly increase during Christen, Muslim and New Year holidays.

Conclusion

Participatory demonstration fattening technology was conducted at Keta-Bareda kebele of Dodola district on six to eight old age Arsi-oxen with the objectives of demonstrating oxen fattening technology evaluating its profitability at on-farm level. A total of sixteen Arsi cattle oxen were fed for 70 days. The demonstration result indicated that fattening six to eight years old Arsi oxen using ration composed of 65% wheat bran and 35% cotton seed cakes for seventy days is so effective and profitable.

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