



Success stories: W4EE Livestock feedlot pilot

300

Cattle, goats and sheep can be fattened annually in typical conditions

50,000

Forage seedlings and cuttings can be produced annually in the irrigated forage nursery built for the project - many have been transplanted into the rangeland, close to the settlements where they cultivate sorghum

KEY SUCCESSES

- + Demonstrated the potential for agro-pastoralist communities to get better returns for their livestock at market and more closely integrate with the nascent regional private sector
- + Introduced improved types of forage, including susbania, leucaena, alfalfa, elephant grass, and cowpea - allowing for more resilience to fluctuations in climate and rainfall
- + Involving members in the establishment and maintenance of the nursery and feedlot led to greater local ownership of project and long-term knowledge transfer which remains after project end
- + Provided evidence that such projects can, if adjusted to local circumstances, be replicated, scaled up, and implemented elsewhere Kapoeta State or across agro-pastoralist areas of South Sudan

Seeing is believing: the value of livestock fattening for pastoralists

The livestock feedlot pilot programme, located in Riwoto County, consisted of developing improved sources of forage for livestock (a precondition for the second component) and a programme to help pastoralists fatten their animals. Large numbers of livestock are kept by these communities, but are sold only when there is an urgent need. By producing fodder close to the feedlot and confining animals in a place with a varied diet of protein and energy (as well as access to water), it is possible over 60-90 days to sell them for a greater price, providing income and reducing pressure on the rangeland so it can be sustained.

It is important that the basics be available: a large enough plot of land, sufficient water, and the materials necessary for construction. Interested groups can be supported in acquiring these basics, but also contributing with the procurement so they take true ownership. Perhaps the biggest challenge is how novel and different these practises are to communities who have never worked with their livestock in this way.

The greatest success of the pilot project was thus in proving to the community that the work they put it was worth it - changing the mindset of the project participants. In this case, seeing is believing, and after project implementation wraps up, the nursery and feedlot will remain along with a newly confident group of pastoralists in the community who have adopted the techniques and seen the benefits. Though this was just a pilot project, it proved the viability of the concept for later (and larger) operations.

“The animals we fatten here are usually bulls, of good size, with good quality. One thing you cannot do is bring a sick animal. Even goats and sheep, you bring ones which are good-looking, the ones you want to sell. ... This is for us to grow something, to get profit out of it.”

Joseph Irama, Chief and Chairman of the feedlot



Healthy, fattened cattle can fetch a significantly higher price - up to 130,000 SSP (approx. 900 EUR), as opposed to 50,000 SSP (approx. 350 EUR) for an unfattened one, depending on the animal. By increasing the value of the pastoralists' livestock, it gives them greater economic security and the ability to plan for the future. Equally important, it establishes the basis for being able to improve and sustain the rangeland and increase carbon fixation by actually planting dry resistant fodder trees and grasses.

The project members have named the feedlot Kokorotuk, meaning 'source of water', and have chosen a slogan: **We believe in perseverance.**



Bringing livestock to market

One challenge facing pastoralists wishing to bring their livestock to market is the lack of good facilities for watering and storing their animals when they reach town. In Kapoeta, the municipal authorities agreed to be a part of the livestock feedlot pilot programme by agreeing on the concept of a confined livestock market yard with water to be provided by W4EE project and then they are taking on the ownership and management and also the construction of simple office and storage facilities, giving those wishing to sell their animals the confidence to bring them the distance from where they graze on the rangeland or are fed in a feedlot. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement: it helps the pastoralists to feel comfortable in making the trip to town, and it contributes to the nascent private sector. With high-quality local livestock available in the marketplace, money spent in the area stays in the area, building a foundation for future development, including the transit of high value livestock to Juba, Uganda and elsewhere.



Water, land, and willing hands

In this pilot project, the consultants assisted by facilitating community meetings to find appropriate land, sinking a borehole to ensure consistent water availability, and sought willing project members to join. Yet now that the success of the project has been demonstrated, many of these steps can be undertaken by communities or government without the need for outside consultants.

“This pilot project can mean so much for many pastoral communities in South Sudan and can be a cornerstone for developing future projects around the concept.”

Ole Stokholm Jepsen, Team Leader

Above: sesbania seedlings in the nursery which are transplanted around the feedlot, into the rangeland and around the homestead areas fast growing into dry resistant fodder trees, providing benefits for the soil, the animals and improved rangeland.

Below: the same animal before fattening with a weight of 196 kg looking malnourished (left) and after fattening for 60 days looking much healthier (right) with a live weight of 261 kg - a weight gain of 65 kg. This means over 1kg per day gain on fodder grown in the semi arid area of Kapoeta.

