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Empowering Women, Nourishing Livestock:
AWARFA-N's Journey to Sustainable Feed and Fodder Model in Somalia



Preamble

The AWARFA-N Somalia Cooperative Ltd is at the forefront of transforming Somalia's livestock sector through a pioneering initiative focused on sustainable feed and fodder production. AWARFA-N Somalia is addressing the critical need for high-quality livestock feed, enhancing food security, and driving economic growth in rural communities, through empowering women and leveraging the potential of Somalia's wetlands. The project cultivates improved varieties of energy and protein-rich fodder such as Sugar Graze Sorghum, Improved Sweet Potato Vines, and Improved Napier Grass. These are preserved and sold to local livestock producers. Operating on 50 hectares of leased wetland, AWARFA-N Somalia employs modern agricultural practices and is gradually increasing mechanization to maximize productivity and efficiency. The organization is also dedicated to empowering women by prioritizing their involvement in all aspects of the business, from production to management. This focus promotes gender equality and enhances the economic independence of women in the agricultural sector. Through strategic partnerships with government agencies, local organizations, and international development partners, AWARFA-N is committed to building a resilient and thriving agricultural sector in Somalia, contributing to improved livelihoods, enhanced livestock productivity, and sustainable environmental practices. The project is projected to generate significant revenue, demonstrating its potential for financial sustainability and long-term impact, driving innovation in livestock nutrition and creating prosperity for rural communities across the region.

Key Terms: *Women in livestock feed sector Somalia, Feed and fodder production by women, Women-led sustainable feed and fodder businesses, Women's empowerment through feed and fodder initiatives, Market opportunities for women in feed and fodder production*

AWARFA-N Somalia revolutionizing feed and fodder production in Somalia

The AWARFA-N Somalia Cooperative Ltd is an ambitious initiative designed to revolutionize feed and fodder production in Somalia. With a strong emphasis on empowering women and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, the cooperative aims to tackle critical challenges in the livestock sector while simultaneously strengthening economic growth and enhancing food security.

Project Overview

AWARFA-N's central strategy involves the bulk multiplication of improved energy and protein fodder varieties within Somalia's wetlands. This includes the cultivation of Sugar Graze Sorghum, Improved Sweet Potato Vines (SPV), and Improved Napier Grass, all carefully selected for their nutritional value and adaptability to the local climate and soil conditions. Operating on 50 hectares of leased wetland, the project utilizes modern agricultural practices to ensure maximum productivity and efficiency. The cooperative model emphasizes member involvement and shared benefits, promoting social cohesion and collective action.

Key Activities

The core activities of the AWARFA-N Somalia's project include cultivating high-quality fodder crops to produce sustainable feed sources for livestock producers. The project also focuses on preserving fodder through implementation of effective methods such as silage production, which ensures year-round availability of feed. The organization is also involved in the sales and distribution of fresh fodder, silage, and planting materials directly to farmers, livestock marketers, dairy farmers, and feed suppliers. Furthermore, the project prioritizes empowering women through involvement in all aspects of the business, from production to management, to promote gender equality and economic empowerment.

Project Impact

The AWARFA-N Somalia project is designed to have a multiple impact on Somalia's agricultural landscape. The organization will enhance women's economic independence through provision of opportunities for women to lead and manage agricultural enterprises. The project is projected to generate $501,225 in annual revenue by the end of the first year. This indicates its potential for financial sustainability. The use of improved fodder varieties is expected to improve livestock nutrition, and thus lead to increased meat and dairy production. AWARFA-N Somalia aims to mitigate the impact of seasonal feed shortages and droughts, which are major challenges for Somali pastoralists through ensuring a consistent supply of high-quality fodder. Further, the project promotes sustainable wetland management through responsible land use and water-efficient irrigation systems, and integrates leguminous crops and implementing rotational grazing practices to improve soil health and reduce environmental degradation. AWARFA-N Somalia is also working towards a strong community relationships and partnerships, as this would ensure that the benefits of the project extend to a wide range of stakeholders.

Market and Industry Analysis

The livestock sector contributes significantly to Somalia's economy, accounting for

approximately 45% of the National GDP and 80% of the agricultural GDP. With an estimated annual growth rate of 5-15%, the livestock sector presents a strong and growing market for feed and fodder products. This growth is driven by increasing urbanization, and leads to higher demand for meat and dairy products. There is also a strong export market orientation, particularly towards Gulf countries, which indicates significant potential for AWARFA-N's products. The project operates on 50 hectares of land, allocated to Sugar Graze Sorghum (40%), Sweet Potato Vines (30%), and Improved Napier Grass (30%).

Production Model and Strategy

AWARFA-N Somalia utilizes a comprehensive production model that integrates optimal practices in agriculture and resource management. Diversification across three fodder types balances energy and protein content while mitigating risks from crop failure and market fluctuations. Suitable cultivation techniques are implemented for each crop type, including pest management and soil fertility maintenance. Land allocation is based on market demand and crop profitability, with the flexibility to introduce new varieties.

Sales and Marketing

AWARFA-N Somalia focuses on livestock producers, dairy farmers, and feed suppliers, utilizing direct sales to large-scale farmers and establishing distribution points in key livestock areas. The cooperative also collaborates with agro-dealers to expand market reach and ensure product availability. A strong brand identity is being developed that emphasizes quality, sustainability, and women's empowerment.

Risk Management

AWARFA-N acknowledges several potential challenges and has developed mitigation strategies. To address the critical need for securing adequate financing, which is essential for the project's success, AWARFA-N plans to explore alternative financing options and maintain transparent financial practices. To minimize the impact of water scarcity, the project will implement drought-resistant fodder varieties and develop efficient irrigation systems. To navigate potential disruptions due to political instability, AWARFA-N will maintain strong relationships with local communities and engage in political mobilization. To reduce the risk of crop losses from pest and disease outbreaks, integrated pest management strategies and diversification of product ranges will be implemented.

Sustainability and Growth

AWARFA-N is committed to long-term sustainability and growth through several key strategies. To improve efficiency and expand cultivated land, the use of machinery will gradually increase. To add value and increase revenue streams, opportunities to integrate fodder processing and feed formulation into the business model will be explored. Strong relationships with local communities will be maintained, and staff will receive continuous training to build capacity and ensure project success. To drive sustainable growth, profits will be reinvested into business improvements and expansion. AWARFA-N Somalia will diversify revenue streams through the sale of fresh fodder, silage, and planting materials and explore opportunities in carbon credit markets for sustainable practices.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

AWARFA-N Somalia recognizes several challenges that could impact the project and has developed mitigation strategies. Climate change, with its frequent droughts and environmental degradation, poses significant threats, which AWARFA-N aims to mitigate by implementing drought-resistant fodder varieties and water-efficient irrigation systems. To address competition from traditional grazing practices and imported feeds, the project focuses on high-quality, locally produced feeds and fodder. To combat challenges related to market access due to insufficient distribution networks in rural areas, the organization is establishing collection centres and distribution points in key livestock areas to improve market access.

Conclusion

The AWARFA-N Somalia Cooperative Ltd represents a significant and transformative initiative aimed at addressing the challenges facing Somalia's livestock sector. This project has the potential to transform rural livelihoods and contribute to the overall economic development of the region through empowering women, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and ensuring a consistent supply of high-quality feed and fodder. The project's focus on community involvement, environmental stewardship, and economic empowerment makes it a model for sustainable development in the region.

List of Abbreviations

- AWARFA-N: AWARFA-N Somalia Cooperative Ltd
- SPV: Sweet Potato Vines
- GDP: Gross Domestic Product
- USD: United States Dollar