AWARFA-N Newsletter

Towards Equity in Investment and Governance in the Animal Resources Sector

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Background: African Women In Animal Resources Farming And Agribusiness Network (Awarfa-N)

AWARFA-EA President spells her vision as regional network is launched

Livestock Insurance: A sure bet in cushioning women from loss

Empowering pastoralist women to reap hugely from livestock trade

Contributors of Stories
Agnes Kirabo, President AWARFA-N Eastern Africa; Cecilia Rague Co-Founder and CEO Underwriting Africa Limited Kenya; Chantal Marie Nyirakamineza MD Rutsiro Honey Limited Rwanda; Frances Naiga Mwonge, Mwonge Organic Farm Uganda; Dr. Duriya Farah Ahmed Training Coordinator on Animal Reproductive Technologies at Sudan French Institute for Animal Reproductive Technologies Sudan and Sadia Musse Ahmed PENHA Country Representative for Somaliland and Somalia, Sudan.

Disclaimer:
The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the position of AU-IBAR. The contributions are primarily to galvanize information and experience sharing and to foster discussions.

@AU-IBAR, 2020

Contact & Connect With Us:
African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)
Kenindia Business Park, Westlands Road.
P. O. Box 30786, 00100, Nairobi Kenya.
Tel: +254203674000
Email: ibar.office@au-ibar.org
Twitter: @au_ibar
LinkedIn: Https://www.linkedin.com/in/au-ibar-3463b715b
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb3byV6rS9KzdNUEuvaRBwg
Website: www.au-ibar.org

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AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

EUROPEAN UNION

Welcome Note

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the African Women in Animal Resources Farming and Agribusiness Network (AWARFA-N) Newsletter. This publication is a testimony to the invaluable contribution of women in animal resource development, food and nutrition security, and poverty alleviation.

In line with AWARFA-N's mission of helping members increase their on-farm profits by building their capacities to increase production, enhance market linkages, improve agripreneural skills and reduce farming costs and risks, this publication will serve as a platform for women to exchange information and ideas on animal resources development.

We will endeavor to infuse expert views and analysis on challenges and opportunities in the livestock sector to personal accounts of women who are benefiting and impacting communities through agri-business. We believe this will help to promote competitiveness of Africa's animal resource value chains and quality of animal-based products from the region.

The publication focuses on women pursuing innovative and competitive agri-business models and ideas across high priority value chains that are impacting communities within the region. This will not only help members acquire pertinent information to address challenges affecting their participation in animal resources development but also tap abundant opportunities presented by a fast growing African population, regional economic integration and agro-industrialization models being pursued by governments. The launch of this first edition of AWARFA-N Newsletter coincides with the inauguration of the network's regional chapter for Eastern Africa as it is at the core of the strategy that includes changing the narrative to bring to the fore the dominant role of women in animal resources development . As a communication tool, it will give women a platform for their voices to be heard by policy makers to appreciate why this segment of the population needs to be supported to participate effectively in the value chains.

From organic poultry farming in Uganda to beekeeping in Rwanda and reproductive beef technologies in Sudan to pastoralist women in livestock trade in Somaliland, it has covered stories of excellence and struggles to overcome barriers that have hindered women's progress in development of animal resources.

The women featured in this edition are largely from the Eastern African region and whereas we would have liked to highlight stories from as many as possible we can only do as much content as a single publication can allow.

We trust that readers will find this Newsletter an invaluable resource for learning from those who have achieved various levels of success despite numerous odds stuck along the way.



AFRICAN WOMEN IN ANIMAL RESOURCES FARMING AND AGRIBUSINESS NETWORK (AWARFA-N).

Theme: Towards Equity in Investment and Governance in the Animal Resources Sector.

BACKGROUND

Seventy women from thirty-two Member States of the African Union were convened by the African Union-InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) under the Live2Africa Project with funding from the European Union (EU) to establish the African Women in Animal Resources Farming and Agribusiness Network (AWARFA-N). Countries represented were Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Egypt, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Also in attendance was the Union Maghreb Arabe (UMA), African Agribusiness Incubation Network (AAIN) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Participants were drawn from stakeholders across the sector including farmers, processors and traders, financial and insurance actors, service providers, government officials, advocacy and lobbying interests, development partners, academia and research, lawyers, among others.

The meetings held in Safir Hotel, Cairo Egypt commenced with Regional Consultative Meetings on 23rd and 24th July, under the theme 'Towards Equity in Investment and Governance in the Animal Resources Sector'. This fed into the Pan-African Conference on Veterinary Education Establishments, Veterinary Statutory Bodies and Agri-Business Networks of Women and Youth in the Animal Resources Sector on the 25th to 27th July, that met under the theme 'Unifying Africa to Drive a More Dynamic and Inclusive Animal Resources Sector for a Prosperous Future'.
The AWARFA-N meetings were informed by and built on the deliberations at an Expert Meeting, and the Declaration and Action Plan from the continental Dakar workshop convened on the initiative of the West African Women's Association (WAWA) with support of AU-IBAR under the VetGov Project. The Dakar Declaration focused on the Dairy Sector, AWARFA-N builds on this initiative to expand the scope into the breadth of the Animal Resources sector.

Cognizant that the animal resources sector, as articulated in the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa, has the potential to deliver both the agricultural led growth and the socio-economic transformation as envisioned by African Union Heads of State and Government in the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Africa Agriculture Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods; and cognizant that the animal resources sector was worth US $ 51 billion in 2005/6 and is expected to rise to over US $ 151 billion by 2050, presenting a powerful business proposition and opportunity.
Regional Committee office bearers.

Table 1: Central Africa office bearers.

NAME	POSITION	NATIONALITY
Beyene Ateba	President	Cameroon
Biuma Ilunga Rosalie	Vice President	DRC
Ngo Ongla Annie	Secretary General	Cameroon
Emma Koninga	Treasurer	Chad
Mansoura Yamssa	Head of Advocacy	CAR

Table 2 : Eastern Africa office bearers.

NAME	POSITION	NATONALITY
Agnes Kirabo	Chairperson	
Willimena Asekon Lokalei	Treasurer	
Cecilia Rague Kaisha	Secretary	
Debora Ossiya	Partnerships	Uganda
Marygoretti Kamau	Youth Representative	Kenya

Executive Committee Members.

NAME	NATIONALITY
Christine Kalui	Kenya
Lovin Kobusingye	Uganda
Monica Kagya	Tanzania
Hardera Gebru	Ethiopia
TBA	Somali
Eva Alexander	South Sudan
Shantal Nyirakaminza	Burundi
TBA	Djibouti

Table 3: Southern Africa office bearers.

NAME	POSITION	NATIONALITY
Anne Kabayi	President	Zambia
Charity Kruger	Vice President	Botswana
Patience Khesani	Secretary General	South Africa
Nalini Aubeeluck	Deputy Secretary	Mauritius
Jacqueline Gowe	Treasure	Zimbabwe
Daisy Manungo	Advocacy and lobbying	Namibia
Elizabeth Thandi	Advocacy and lobbying	Swaziland

Table 4: Northern Africa office bearers.

NAME	POSITION	NATIONALITY
Sonia Bedhiaf-Romdhani	President	Tunisia
Najla al Ahmadi	1st Vice President	Egypt
Massouda Rachid	2nd Vice President	Morocco
Dalia Abuhotum	General Secretary	Egypt
TBA	Vice Secretary	Algeria
Asma Lazhab	Treasurer	Tunisia
Reham Abdelkadder	Communication	Egypt

Table 5: West Africa office bearers.

NAME	POSITION	NATIONALITY
Khady Fall Tall	President	Senegal
Solange Zawadi	Advocacy and Lobbying	Senegal
Lydia Sesay	Public sector actors representative	Sierra Leone
Rukaiyah Yahaya		Nigeria
Lawal Gwamna		
Awa Djigal		Senegal
Kalssoumi Issa-Toure		Togo
Melrose V.Tucker		Sierra Leone
Dr.Chinyere Ikechukwu-Eneh		Nigeria
Fatoumata Thiam		Mali
Fatoumata Cheick Kamate		Mali
Khadydiouf Diop		Senegal
Celia Fiogbe		Benin
Gibbeh Bah		Gambia
Victoria Norgbey		Ghana

Continental committee office bearers.

NAME	POSITION	NATIONALITY	REGION
Sonia Bedhiaf	President	Tunisia	Northern Africa
Beyene Ateba	Vice President	Cameroon	Central Africa
Cecilia Rague	Secretary General		Eastern Africa
Reithabetse Makoa	Vice Secretary General Treasurer		West Africa

REGIONAL PRIORITIES.

Regional priorities were identified and informed the synthesis of the continental priorities, which were commuted into the five advisory/ Expert Committees as follows:

- Advocacy for Facilitative Infrastructure that is appropriate for women: Trust Africa (Continental) and CCARDESA (Southern Africa).
- Harmonization of policy, legal, regulatory, institutional/ implementation frameworks: Food Rights Alliance (Eastern Africa).
- Capacity Development, Incubation and Knowledge Transfer INRA Tunisia, North Africa Extension Institute, INRA Morocco, Maghreben Union of Apiculture, Union Apiculture Egypt and CORAF.
- Promotion of Intra and inter regional trade: Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF), BWA.
- Financing for Animal resources related initiatives: SADC and NEPAD.

Recommendations of key actions for the Post Cairo Road Map:

- Support for establishment of the national and regional networks from AU-IBAR and the REC's. The networks should also partner with existing similar and relevant networks and support institutions, and professional bodies.
- The Executive Committee will develop and integrate the input from the Constitutive General Assembly as an Action Plan for the next four years.
- Focused capacity building in agri-business and leadership skills.
- Support for gathering and analysis of data and information sharing.
- Sustained evidence based advocacy.

Key actions for Live2Africa (AU-IBAR) support:

The Network registered and endorsed by the AU Summit.

- A continental secretariat established and hosted by AU-IBAR.
- RECs supported to enhance their coordination role and backstopping to Member States.
- Governance and management meetings supported.
- Development of a five year Strategic Plan and an Action Plan supported.
- Development of an Advocacy Plan and a Resource Mobilization Plan supported.
- A continental database of women in animal resources farming and agribusiness, and a monitoring system developed.
- Capacity development of women in animal resources farming and agribusiness supported at all levels through sub-delegation.

Regional Logos

African Youth in Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture Incubators Network (AYL-FAIN)

BACKGROUND.

Live2Africa supported the establishment of a continental youth network that will be the leading forum for supporting investment and business start-ups in livestock, fisheries and aquaculture the African Youth in Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture Incubators Network (AYL-FAIN) meeting held from 25 to 27 July 2018 at Safir Hotel in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt commissioned its beginning.

This network is envisioned to contribute to reducing unemployment in a continent where 400 million youth make up the majority of the population, but over 40% are either unemployed or underemployed. Within the Network, there are already young people who are engaged in viable enterprises (e.g. in cattle rearing and ICT) that are creating jobs for other youths demonstrating that the possibilities for youth are immense.

Recommendations by the youth in AYL-FAIN:

- Respective Ministries responsible for Animal Resources should facilitate the establishment and official recognition of national AYL-FAIN chapters.
- The leaders of Veterinary Education Establishment should support the AYL-FAIN by providing a relevant and dynamic education and training that will enable youth competiveness for rapid transformation of the livestock sector.
- Veterinary Statutory Bodies to continue providing the enabling policy and institutional environments for inclusive integration of the youth into animal resource value chains.
- AU-IBAR and partners to support the establishment of Regional Incubation hubs and Small Scale Incubation Hubs across the continent to drive the job creation agenda of AYL-FAIN.
- Development partners to engage and support the youth in business Incubation, value addition and access to markets.

Key actions for Live2Africa (AU-IBAR) support of AYL-FAIN:

- The Network registered and endorsed by the African Union Summit.
- Youth desks/ secretariats established and operationalized at the continental and regional levels.
- Governance and management meetings supported.
- Development of hubs and national networks supported in 15 Member States.
- The development of a five year investment plan and strategy supported.
- Development of technology platforms supported.
- A database of youth in agribusiness established.
- Capacity development supported through sub-delegation.

The Results Oriented Monitoring Mission for the Live2Africa Project overview.

European Union commissioned a Results Oriented Monitoring Mission to assess the implementation arrangements and progress made by Live2Africa.

The Consultant gave a debrief, which highlighted the need to further elaborate Live2Africa's Theory of Change, to enhance the convergence of activities under each Result, providing clear justification for the specific activities, and how they join up together; conceptualization of the linkages between the Results;
clarity on the roles of Regional Economic Communities, articulation of a framework for the Member State Focal Persons; development of a Gender Strategy; rationalization of the M&E indicators to create a monitoring system that works for decision making; and refinement of the subsidiarity principles to define ways of working with weak and strong partners.

AWARFA-EA President spells her vision as regional network is launched



When the story of the transformation of the livestock subsector in Eastern Africa is written, one of the dates that will feature prominently on the timeline is November 2020. The date is significant as it marks the launch of a regional network to promote transformation and greater investment in women led animal resources farming and agribusiness.

In normal times, such a milestone would be celebrated at an event filled with pomp and fanfare but the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for members of the African Women in Animal Resources Farming and Agribusiness Network (AWARFA-N) in Eastern Africa opportunity to meet. But the significance of launch held virtually is in the unveiling of fundamental infrastructural aspects of the network. These are the strategic plan which give direction and leadership at the regional level, and the statutes that will provide the legal framework to define the rules of the game for the 11 member countries. The launch has also been defined to enable conversations that will help create linkages and partnerships.

Understanding and elevating the welfare and contribution of women in animal resource development is the key to transforming agriculture.
– Kirabo

At the core of AWARFA-N EA's ambitious three-year strategic plan is mobilization of women to change the narrative which for long has focused on male dominance while ignoring their contribution to the subsector. Through the implementation of the plan, it is expected voices of the women in animal farming will be heard so that people appreciated why they need to support their value chains in the subsector. The person charged with providing strategic leadership for the network at the regional level is Ms. Agnes Kirabo who was elected the President of AWARFA-N EA in July 2018 at a forum in Cairo, Egypt. The network brings together stakeholders across the sector including farmers, processors and traders, financial and insurance actors, service providers, government officials, advocacy and lobbying interests, development partners, academia and research, lawyers, among others.

In an interview ahead of the launch, Kirabo notes that understanding and elevating the welfare and contribution of women in animal resource development is the key to transforming agriculture. The sector, she says can be a powerful driver in reducing poverty, addressing hunger and malnutrition, if more attention is paid to the livestock subsector and women who are the dominant players.

"AWARFA-N was born out of the need for a network of women in Africa that can provide capacity building through cross-learning, a network of women that can aggregate animal products, attract investments and add value to what they are already doing in the subsector to address food security and malnutrition, reduce poverty and increase incomes," she says.

Challenges

Women's contribution to the sub-sector has, however, been beset by lack of financial resources to boost productivity across the value chain. This means minimal access to veterinary services, quality feeds and technology for increased production.

Given that many women are involved in animal production at the small-scale level, there is lack of organization among them. This can only happen when there is significant investment in the subsector so that they can rally together to address challenges affecting that and maximize their returns. To steer the regional network to success, Ms. Kirabo who is also the Executive Director for Food Rights Alliance (FRA), Uganda, will focus on linking up women in animal resource development to potential partners for resource mobilization, market linkages and research to help them develop viable agri-businesses.

"AWARFA-N was born out of the need for a network of women in Africa that can provide capacity building through cross-learning, a network of women that can aggregate animal products, attract investments and add value to what they are already doing in the subsector to address food security and malnutrition, reduce poverty and increase incomes"

Apart from investment, she believes that a proper value chain for women involved in animal production has been the other missing link in the development of the subsector. Once this is plugged the livestock subsector will have the potential to deliver both the agricultural led growth and the socio-economic transformation needed in the region.
"Women are operating on various segments of animal resources value chain but they are not working as a chain since they are not talking or listening to each. They don't have a sense that there are other women working on the same chain and AWARFA-N is here to build a platform through which we can appreciate ourselves holistically and there is no other better model to value chain development than building the real chain," she says.

Kirabo will build onto her work as a policy advocate and an activist to influence favourable policies that will create an enabling environment for all stakeholders in the subsector to play and benefit equitably.

She identifies a growing population and an integrated market in Africa which creates demand for animal products as opportunities of growth for women investing in the subsector. "Countries are adopting agro-industrialization, which will mean increased production and productivity, value addition to farmers' products, jobs creation and food security and these offer a huge market for the sector."

With Africa increasingly becoming an investment destination to multinational firms, Kirabo believes women in animal resource development need to position themselves to benefit from the opportunities that will come about. As the person at the helm of regional network's leadership, her task will be to provide strategic direction create a body of women who can aptly negotiate for investments and get their fair share of benefits from such opportunities.
"My role will be to work with other actors to promote more meaningful and beneficial participation of women in animal resources for resilient and sustainable livelihoods, and to drive a greater orientation of women into competitive and profitable agri-business," she says.

Livestock Insurance:

A sure bet in cushioning women from loss



Access to livestock insurance is a challenge to women because they do not own land and majority participate in small scale production yet the cover is designed for large scale farmers, says Underwriting Africa Limited Co-Founder and CEO CECILIA RAGUE in an interview with AWARFA-N Newsletter.

Here are the excerpts:

What is your view of women's involvement in development of animal resources in Africa?

About 70pc to 80 pc of animal resource production in the world is by women, but this is mainly for subsistence and by poor sections of the population. The challenge is how to get women to play a bigger role by harnessing these resources so that there can be a greater impact on the economy. Women have a big impact on economic growth, human nutrition and wellbeing but if we don't harness this and support their investment in farming then we will won't achieve much from this segment of the population. For women to participate fully we need to deal with the socio-economic, gender aspect and the constraints that hinders their participation women in animal production.

What kind of support can insurance offer to women to boost their involvement in animal production?

Insurance is a risk mitigation tool and when you look at agriculture as an enterprise whether at a micro or large scale level, the question is what risk we are trying to mitigate for women. First we look at the animal, which is the asset or tool of trade that actually creates the financial benefit for the women. Then we must also take care of the women who carry out the business so that when you cushion them from risk to their animals as well as themselves then you can create sustainable growth in the sector.

For example if I am a farming concern with two or three animals and one falls sick and I have to put it down it means I have lost that livelihood and there is no replacement other than buying another animal. That is a capital which could have been applied elsewhere as well as loss of income and a loss of economic benefit. If I am sick, I probably have to sell that animal to seek treatment. Insurance, particularly micro insurance secures the enterprise holistically by protecting the asset and the human capital, thereby improving productivity and when you increase productivity people are no longer interested in farming for subsistence, but also for marketing. The role of insurance, therefore, is cushioning these vulnerable groups so that they can participate effectively in animal production as an economic activity.



CECILIA RAGUE: Underwriting Africa Limited Co-Founder and CEO

What risks does a basic livestock insurance policy cover?

At Underwriting Africa Ltd, we facilitate and develop programmes for livestock insurance which covers the loss of the animal in the event of a catastrophe like flooding, windstorm or loss from injuries brought by the farmer. It also takes care of illnesses or diseases, epidemics like when there is an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in a region and in emergencies like an order for slaughter of animals or complications like death of an animal while giving birth.

There are certain animals that are more difficult to cover such as poultry and also because of the cost of covering individual animals, insurance is structured mainly for large scale farmers. In countries like Kenya the insurance is pegged on catastrophes like drought therefore it is index based and not specific to the animal.

What does one need to take a livestock insurance cover?

All that is required is a certificate from a qualified veterinary officer for the animals to be insured. The animals are also supposed to be identifiable, then one needs to fill in the forms and make premium payment.

What is the major constraint that makes it difficult for women in animal production to access insurance services?

Livestock is the simplest way to own an asset for a woman, but then again because they are most likely not living on their own land but the husband's so every time they try to enlarge their stock they are seen to be going into competition with the men. This becomes a challenge because women participate more in small scale livestock farming and as noted before it is difficult to insure individual animals.

How then can women involved in small scale livestock farming be assisted to benefit from insurance?

If women come together in the form of a co-operative or under a network like AWARFA-N, then they can benefit from economies of scale and benefit from insurance services in a more simplified process.

Two common types of livestock insurance are "Stand alone" insurance, which covers mostly cows and goats and the Weather Index insurance, which mainly targets farmers in the semi-arid regions and is pegged on external factors such as drought or drop in rainfall patterns. The challenge for AWARFA-EA is to develop products that can be rolled out to its members that do not only cover larger livestock, but also smaller ones like poultry.
Secondly, women can access insurance through credit facilities, therefore AWARFA-EA can facilitate creation of credit products which improve the quality of livestock and increase productivity and access markets and create sustainable businesses. In doing so, create insurance products that can protect the women and their livestock alongside the financial interventions.

Comment on the rate of adoption of livestock insurance in Africa.

Livestock insurance primarily designed for large scale farmers unless a small scale farmer has a loan from a financial institution that has the insurance component. The rate of adoption is therefore very low bearing in mind that the rate of insurance as a whole about 2.5% in Kenya, 0.5% in Tanzania and 1% in Uganda. Most providers and users give priority to other assets like buildings and cars and the animal is still not seen as an asset yet its loss means loss of income or equity.

Is it true that women are the best clients for livestock insurance?

Women are also the best clients for credit and insurance is usually given against loans so by extension they become the best clients. Because their interest is in the livelihood of their families they are more likely to insist on insurance for all their assets and themselves and their families. They also understand better the implications of insurance including loss of income and inability to provide for their families nutritional or educational needs.

What does your partnership with AWARFA-N entail?

As part of AWARFA Network, our role is to increase productivity of women in animal resource development. We want them to participate in all activities within the value chain not only at the farm level, but also at the decision making level. Which means facilitating access to credit. There is a saying; "*if you want to walk fast walk alone, but if you want to walk further walk together*".

AWARFA is a network of all groups involved in the animal value chain and it brings all these women groups together and gives them a bigger voice for themselves at various forums and increase their productivity and access to markets.

Underwriting Africa Ltd is a specialist insurance broker for credit, political risk and micro-health insurance services.



How One Woman is Redefining Male-Dominated Beekeeping in Rwanda

Beekeeping in Rwanda has traditionally been a male-dominated activity practiced mainly for subsistence with the main product honey being used households as food and medicine or mixed with fermented sorghum and millet to brew traditional liquor. For many years, the production process also remained highly traditional with basic harvesting and processing techniques.
One woman is, however, redefining beekeeping as an agribusiness by bringing to it a more feminine and modern touch, and using it as a tool to enhance food security, reduce poverty and protect the environment.

About 15 years ago, at the age of 29 years old, Chantal Marie Nyirakamineza had already smelt the sweet potential of beekeeping and with an investment of 1000USD in five traditional hives, she began her tumultuous journey into the sector.
Today Chantal, 44, is the managing director for Rutsiro Honey Limited (RHL), which boasts of more than modern 50 hives producing high quality honey, beeswax and body creams with an annual turnover of 100,000,000USD. The company employs 6 people who are involved at various stages of the honey value chain.

RHL is located in Rutsiro district, Western Rwanda, close to the sprawling Gishwati-Mukura National Park which is home to the chimps and hundreds of birds' species. This strategic location allows for free movement of bees and provide a wide range of melliferous plants from which bees can collect pollen and nectar and use it in the conversion process of honey and pollen.

The park once had a flourishing eco-system, extending all the way up to the Volcaones National park but following the tragic events of the 1994 genocide, large numbers of the population flowed back into the country and set up new farms and homes for their families in the forest. Trees were felled, natural resources extracted, and exotic species introduced - all shrinking the forested areas, pushing them beyond their means and threatening their survival.

To forestall rapid deforestations, the government launched a program to encourage locals to desist from logging and embrace alternative environmental friendly alternative livelihoods. This program provided the much needed boost to farmers like Chantal who are raising bees as a promising agribusiness to effectively boost reduction of poverty in rural area while simultaneously checking the degradation of the forests ecosystem.

"Under the program, we have benefited from training and networking opportunities with other bee keepers. The government has also been providing us with modern hives and bee keeping equipment that has improved the quality of honey and other products," says Chantal. Application of modern bee keeping

techniques and exposure to new markets through national exhibitions has ensured increased incomes and better living conditions for farmers.
Statistics from the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB) indicates that the total national honey production amounts to 4,500 tonnes, while the total national demand of honey is about 16,800 tonnes. They are about 83,000 beekeepers but only 45 per cent of these are active.

The bulk of the market for Chantal's produce is from hotels, supermarkets and neighbouring households. Achieving this level of success in a male dominated industry has, however, not been easy for Chantal. To ensure she remains competitive and satisfies the needs of discerning consumers, she continuously invests in appropriate production equipment, modern harvesting techniques and steady supply of raw materials for quality honey.

RHL stakes a lot of premium on appointment of a highly skilled and competent management and technical staff and has voted a lot of money for research and development in honey production and processing into value added products.

"Our ultimate goal is to be the leader in the production of high quality honey and other hives products in the region and to achieve this we must strive to maintain the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in all of our endeavors,"

"Our ultimate goal is to be the leader in the production of high quality honey and other hives products in the region and to achieve this we must strive to maintain the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in all of our endeavors," she notes.

Chantal cites access to credit and high cost of beekeeping equipment as some of the setbacks that has affected her journey to the tip of success in the sector.

A member of the AU IBAR-led IWAFAR-N, she believes women's involvement in agribusiness especially animal production should be supported for the region to become more food secure.

Women, she says are good farmers but lack the means to obtain credit for business development from financial institutions as they are not landholders or owners of property like cars that can be used as collateral.

"With support from governments and non-governmental actors, women can perform well in agribusiness. Unfortunately they have been consigned to the sector as small-scale farmers who only raise sheep, goats or poultry for subsistence," says Chantal.



Muwonge's organic farm a source of nutritious diet for Ugandans

"Sorry, I had to log on at 5pm…I know you were ready a little earlier but I am a businesswoman and today it rained the whole morning, and still had to do routine inspection of chicken houses and handle all these deliveries….. With the border boda curfews starting at 6pm everything is hectic here in Uganda," sputters a deep female voice with heavy English accent from the other side as we settle down for a virtual interview, giving a glimpse into Frances Naiga Muwonge's world.

Muwonge's day begins at 5am (East Africa Time) in the morning when she logs onto the internet to go through orders and arrange logistics for supply and deliveries of eggs and chicken meat to clients. She then heads to the farm where she spends more than an hour meeting her staff and interacting with her most precious assets – chicken and then heads to the stores where she goes through the records to establish delivered and pending. In the afternoons she visits clients to make delivery and follow up on more orders.

"From the routine daily inspection of the birds you develop a relationship with them. You get to know them well and they know you too because there are living animals. When you observe them you can tell when they are happy, sad, hungry or feeling cold. Our chicken are free range and when we visit and stick with them we have a great time together," she says.
Muwonge is the owner of Muwonge Organic Farm which is a specialized poultry farm rearing layers for eggs and broilers for meat.

As a young African girl growing up in America, Muwonge's dream was to come back to her motherland, Uganda, and help exploit its abundant agricultural potential for the benefit of communities. However, it was not until 2013 that her wish was finally granted when her parents retired to the East African country and bought a piece of land in Mityana district, some 63km west of capital Kampala.
A year later, Muwonge who was practicing law in West Africa after completing her Law degree in the US returned home too and joined her parents. With some 600 chicken, Muwonge Organic Farm started as a family farm with Muwonge as the sales and business development manager and her mother heading production. Today the expansive farm with more than 5000 layers and broilers.

"We had kept chicken before and having been raised in a family of nutritionists and fitness experts, I already had a strong understanding of nutrition and diet…the philosophy of eating nutritious diet for health and avoiding sickness had been embedded in my mind and when I came back and saw how the quality of food eaten in Uganda had deteriorated from what was there when we were growing up I started wondering what was happening," says Muwonge, explaining what inspired her to venture into organic poultry rearing.

With the help of her mother whom she says is the architect of nutritional component for rearing chicken, she set on an arduous mission to provide high quality and nutritious poultry products to meet the demand that existed in the market. Mu-

wonge caters for various price points as she believes nutrition should not be just for the rich.
The farm has carved a niche for itself in poultry farming by producing eggs and meat that are 100 free of chemical and hormones. All the inputs used at the farm have no artificial chemicals like pesticides antibiotics, chemicals and hormones. Unlike many farmers who spray chemicals to control weeds and rodents, which have residual transfer to the food processed at the farms, weeding at the farm is done manually by hand and rodents controlled through creative techniques that are devoid of any chemicals.

The farm has an outdoor made of chain link mesh with an iron sheet roof where broody chicken (layers that refuse to leave their eggs) are isolated for two or three days, until they start to lay again.

Although organic farming is more expensive and intensive, Muwonge says it is worth in the long run as the produce that gets to the market is more nutritious and attractive to consumers who are willing to pay premium prices.

"Many unscrupulous farmers will use hormones that accelerate growth to shorten the feeding period for chicken and save on cost of foods but at our farm we feed the birds on a vegetarian diet that comprises largely of fruits and vegetables plus some grains and concentrate to complete their diet," she says adding that her chicken live the full cycle and grow natural muscle that is five weeks much longer. On maturity the meat is tasty and the hens produce rich yellow, orange yolk eggs which are highly nutritious.

For unique farm products like organic poultry where the production cost is often significantly higher than standard fare, Muwonge says the ability to create markets that can accommodate the price. For her and other farmers in Uganda, this has come in the form of the Farmers Market, an idea that she pioneered with a small network of like-minded artisan farmers to help them bypass middlemen and sell their produce directly to consumers at competitive profit margins.

She says the Farmers market, which is run by the 7 Hillf Farmers Market Association where she serves as the secretary is social, fun and more personal than traditional markets. The market is held in Central Kampala. "Here we take the market to the consumers who understand better nutritional and economic value of fresh farm produce. Farmers share their personal stories and receive instant feedback from a rich clientele of consumers which include supermarkets, schools, butcheries, hotels and restaurants.

Muwonge's mantra is that business and pleasure go together. "It is both work and play. When I am not in the farm you will find me attending activities organized by other farmers' networks, like field visits by goat farmers. I learn a lot by visiting other people's farms and these are like a whole day affair where we have a lot fun interacting and roasting goat in open fire."

On other occasions you will find Muwonge, who boasts of two short stories to her name and a novel in the pipeline as a writer, on a road trip driving for leisure and visiting new places to explore opportunities for new markets.

Muwonge's contribution to the development of agribusiness in Uganda has not gone unnoticed. In 2019, she was nominated for the Best Farmer award – an initiative of the Uganda's leading media house, Vision Group in partnership with dfcu Bank, the Netherlands Embassy in Uganda and KLM Airlines. Nominees enjoy editorial coverage in the groups media outlets winners benefit for a SH150m (4000USD) trip to the Netherlands.

While she stakes a lot of premium on client relations, which has to nurtured and grown for the business to expand, she also in the community's welfare. She runs a gift coop, where she keeps chicken to give out to her workers and members of the community on special days, such as Ramadhan, Easter and Christmas.

Her deep voice, mixed background as a Ugandan who has lived abroad many years coupled with her heavy American English accent adds a very interesting dynamics to her business which she sometimes uses to her advantage.
"Sometimes when people hear me talk on phone they think I am a *mzungu* (white) man and in this part of the world there is a way that they look up to whites and would always want to do business with them," explains Muwonge.



Empowering pastoralist women to reap hugely from livestock trade



The story of pastoralist communities and livestock production has largely been centred on men who own land and the animals. The men feature prominently as herders and traders who sell milk and meat. In this narrative, women have largely been ignored yet they are the custodians of small animals like sheep, goats and chicken which are kept in the homesteads. At the farm level, they are also tasked with grazing and watering animals, processing milk and ghee, and construction of the kraals where livestock are kept.

And their contribution extends to livestock markets where they dominate as brokers, buying cattle from the countryside and delivering to the market.

The perception that men are the ones playing a significant role in livestock production is, however, fast changing as the value of livestock in women's lives and the crucial role the gender plays in the value chain is being thrust into the limelight thanks to efforts by various non-governmental organisations.

One such organization is the Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa (PENHA), which is dedicated to eliminating poverty among pastoralists in the region by empowering communities and fostering sustainable and diversified livestock-based and non-livestock-based livelihoods.

PENHA was established in 1989 to counter the narrative that that was being peddled by regional governments that pastoralism is not a viable economic activity and needed to be destroyed and communities practicing it settled down.

The organization operates in the IGAD region of the Greater Horn of Africa - Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Somaliland, and Uganda.

Since its inception, the organisation has been in the forefront advocating for pastoralist livelihoods as a sustainable and productive way of life through

awareness raising at all levels to change misconceptions and negative attitudes towards pastoralism by providing up to date, concrete, strong and holistic information and data.

According to PENHA Country Representative for Somaliland and Somalia, Sadia Musse Ahmed, women are a focal group through which the organization hopes to achieve its mission of empowering pastoral communities and enhancing rural development in the region. "We are equipping women with business and production skills, and by promoting their access to rural finance providers as well as to their access to markets for their produce. We believe this will help the beneficiaries to engage in economic activities that will boost rural economies," says Ahmed.

This has hugely impacted pastoralist women involved in livestock trade. In livestock markets women operate in large numbers but mainly as brokers who buy animals from the countryside and sell to other traders at the market at a profit. They are also those who buy and slaughter the animals then sell the meat at the market.

With the credit that they are able to obtain from financial institutions the women have increased the number of animals available to them for trade, hence benefitting from economies of scale which has led to increased incomes.

"We also facilitate a lot of financial literacy trainings for the women so that they are able to keep proper records and participate effectively in savings and credit schemes. We also link them to the market chain," says Ahmed.

The women traders are also empowered through provision of market information to help them understand the dynamics of the market and reap hugely from livestock trade.

In countries like Uganda and Somaliland, PENHA has also initiated a project through which women are given credit facilities to buy young goats which they fatten and later sell to the market during peak seasons when there is huge demand and prices are high.

The project runs like a revolving fund where beneficiaries who sell their goats return the money back and is given out to the next group for the same thing. To ensure the success of the project, the women are trained in best practices on goat husbandry, savings and credit to build their capacities in managing the goats.

This has tremendously enhanced their living standards as they are able to provide for their family's basic needs like food and school fees and at the same time reduce domestic conflicts.

However, their performance in livestock trade is beset by numerous challenges related to access to credit, climate change, competition from companies that buy animal from same farmers at higher prices for export and the labourious work that sourcing for the animals in the rural areas and taking them to the market entails. The Covid-19 pandemic that has seen various measures such as lockdowns, night curfews and social distancing to check the spread, has in recent times taken a huge toll on the trade. "The livestock market is currently suffering from depression and animals are nit fetching good prices for the traders. Sometimes they are forced to sell at lower prices since they have financial obligations to meet," says Ahmed.

Ahmed believes livestock trade can play a major role in improving livelihoods and boosting regional economies, but this will require more goodwill and deliberate policy interventions by governments. These include harmonization of trade regulations and non-tariff barriers among various countries to enhance movement of livestock within the region.

PENHA is partnering with AWARFA-N to support women's efforts to develop their own enterprises and participate more broadly in livestock trade. This include provision of credit, value addition, access to markets and training on business management.

The network, Ahmed says, has an invaluable role to boost women's involvement in development of livestock resources by promoting livestock ownership and influencing policies by regional governments to ease cross-border livestock trade.



ARTs offer farmers a lifeline in livestock production

Livestock remain an important element in livelihoods, food security and nutrition, income generation and the contribution of the agricultural sector to national economy. However, maximizing productivity in the sub-sector remains a challenge due to the slow adoption of animal reproductive technologies by farmers, especially women who operate on a small-scale level.

According to Dr. Duriya Farah Ahmed, the training co-ordinator on animal reproductive technologies at Sudan French Institute for Animal Reproduction Technologies (SFARI), efforts to disseminate existing technologies among livestock farmers have largely been affected by lack of finance and technical capacity.

However, the situation is fast changing as more farmers begin to realize the importance of these technologies in achieving desired productivity in both dairy and beef production.

Dr. Duriya says unless the pace at which these technologies are adopted in the region is increased, transforming agriculture into a central tool that can contribute more to the national economy, human welfare and livelihoods will not be an easy feat to achieve.

"Africa has succeeded in using technology in various aspects of life and the livestock subsector should not be an exception. We need to follow the example of developed countries which have successfully maximized returns from their animals through use of technologies at all levels of production.

Although there are many animal reproductive technologies available for the region some like genomics and cloning have never been used in Africa. The most popular technologies in the region are the Artificial Insemination (AI) in goats, cows and sheep using laparoscopy and pregnancy diagnosis using ultrasonography and embryo transfer.

Laparoscopy is used in sheep to give early conception rate and ultrasonography for detecting the sex or number of embryos in expectant cows within 19 to 25 days as opposed to traditional methods which take two months.

Embryo splitting, multi-ovulation and embryo transfers are used to get more embryo from animals and multiply stocks at a faster rate. A cow that gives one embryo, for example can produce more than 50 embryos in a year.

Dr. Duriya is vouching for increased adoption of ARTs as they cannot only be used to enhance genetic gains in animal breeding programmes but also to help farmers make decisions much faster and save on time and production costs.

"ARTs give accurate results, help multiply stock faster and allow farmers to make quick decisions when it comes to seeking treatment or managing fertility of the animals. All that every farmer wants is to maximize returns by saving on resources and time when it comes to production," says Dr. Duriya.

Dr. Duriya who is an expert in animal reproductive physiology with a Bachelor's Degree focused in Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Science from Alexandaria University – Egypt is certain that Africa will fully adopt these ARTs in the near future as more efforts are made to build capacity of farmers and veterinary personnel to adopt these technologies.

She cites the example of the SFARI Institute which continues to witness increased enrolment of students for courses in animal reproductive technologies since it was established in 2016. Currently the institute

conducts 18 training sessions on use of ultra-sound machine, each having about 15 students.

And the impact of these capacity building sessions is being felt in the field as demand for the services has increased. "There are enterprising individuals who have seen business opportunity in the ultrasound machines and have bought them to offer services for farmers and they are earning good money from their investment."

Dr. Duriya's main worry is the ability of women in animal production to benefit from opportunities that reproductive technologies present to the subsector. She says that unless women, who are the dominant players in the subsector are supported through increased access to credit they will continue giving such technologies a wide berth due to costs involved.

"In areas like Darfur there are tribes where the main gender in charge of animal husbandry especially goats and cows is the woman. Women are also the ones who process animal products such as milk and yoghurt but their contribution to the value chain is limited due to lack of resources," she says. "We need to support these women so that they can harness the potential of the subsector to help in poverty reduction and address issues of hunger and malnutrition."

Dr. Duriya says there is already a lot of interest from women with many making inquiries on which technologies are best and available for certain complications, like infertility in their animals. The women would also like to use technology to determine which animals to buy for breeding.

For her, the livestock subsector offers women a huge potential for wealth creation and all they need is to organize themselves into groups to be able to access various services and market opportunities that are not available for those operating on small scale level.

"Creating regional networks such as AWARFA-N EA will give women a platform to exchange information and ideas on best practices so that they can build on each other experience and support each other." She says.



Editorial Team
Executive Editor:
Prof. Ahmed Elsawalhy, Director, AU-IBAR,

Editorial Team:
Mrs. Patricia Lumba, Senior Knowledge Management Officer, AU-IBAR
Dr. Sarah Ashanut Ossiya, Project Officer Live2Africa Project & Coordinator AWARFA-N Secretariat
Compiled by Patricia Lumba, Senior Knowledge Management Officer, AU-IBAR
Produced for AU-IBAR : Participatory Communications Network

Photo Credits, Illustrations and Layout
Participatory Communications Network; Mr. Fahim Kremier

Graphic Design: Partipatory Communications Network, AU-IBAR



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