

Sheep Fattening Enterprise as a Strategy for Poverty Reduction: A Case Study of Some Key Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Niger State

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KEYWORDS Small Holder Farmer. Livestock Enterprise. Profitability

ABSTRACT A study was conducted in four key LGAs of Chanchaga, Bosso, Paiko and Kafi in Niger State, in the Guinea Savanna zone to assess the role of sheep fattening, a common practice amongst rural farmers in Niger State, as a strategy for poverty reduction. A total of 80 scheduled interview questionnaires, 20 questionnaires per LGA, were designed and administered to elicit information on various parameters including aim of the enterprise, period of sales of fattened sheep, cost of investments and benefits derived there from. The respondents were randomly selected for interview on face-to-face basis. Results obtained revealed that fattening for sale only and for sale and family consumption were popular in all the LGAs. Differences in the frequency of sales amongst the LGAs were not significant ($P>0.05$). The cost of feed inputs were, however, significantly higher ($P<0.05$) in the more urbanized LGAs of Chanchaga and Bosso than Paiko and Kafi. Market prices of similar sizes of sheep in the four LGAs were significantly different ($P<0.05$), being higher (₦6,000.00 per 30-40 kg sheep) in Bosso LGA and least (₦1,500.00 per 15-19 kg sheep) in Paiko LGA. Significantly ($P<0.05$) higher profit margin (₦1,790.00) was obtained for Kafi LGA as compared with ₦1,220.00, ₦1,013.00 and ₦398.00 for Bosso, Chanchaga and Paiko LGAs respectively. These results indicate that sheep fattening as an enterprise by the small holder farmer, apart from providing job opportunity, can be employed to cushion the effect of poverty amongst the rural poor.