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Determinants of Farmers' Marketing Choices and Preferences under Communal Cattle Farming: Evidence from Mwenezi District in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT The challenges and constraints faced by communal cattle producers are detrimental to the growth of the sector. This study seeks to establish the factors affecting farmers' participation in livestock marketing. Questionnaires were administered to sixty (60) farmers randomly selected from Mwenezi District soliciting marketing information. Butcheries, abattoirs, speculators, private sales emerged as the main livestock value chain players, while auctioneers play an insignificant role. Farmers participate in both formal and informal livestock markets. Marketing challenges range from lack of market information, long distance to the market, low prices and poor condition of animals. Farmers' choice on whether to participate in the highly rewarding formal marketing channel was influenced by the animal condition ($p=0.004$), frequency of extension worker visits ($p=0.001$), buying price ($p=0.037$) and the age of the livestock owner. To operate efficiently, the livestock sector requires support systems that are capable of eliminating constraints and creating value for livestock farmers.