



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Focus: Livestock and Climate change

Livestock are domestic animals raised on farm land for food and other commercial purposes like labour and transport.

In Zambia, the biggest livestock producing areas are Southern, Central, Western, Lusaka, Copper belt and Eastern provinces.

The most common types of livestock in Zambia are cattle, goats, pigs and sheep. Most of the areas where livestock production take place are also very vulnerable to climate change. The Southern province which has the largest number of cattle in Zambia, receives the most erratic rainfall.

Since most livestock are free range, the changing climate will have a negative impact on the quality of feedstocks and the availability of water.

The Weekly for Zambia

Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

The Problem: Poor Livestock Production

In Zambia, the demand for animal products for consumption outstrips production and supply. According to FAO, each person consumes an estimated 2.4 kg a year -- about half the average for Africa.

This is mainly due to a limited number of livestock available for processing into meat products.

Zambia spends substantial sums of money on importing milk, meat and related products. The changing climate is expected to lead to even more imports of meat products.

For instance, the rise in temperature is known to

reduce the amount of feed available for animals. Such a reduction will have negative effects on the quality and quantity of livestock products.

For instance, rising temperatures, flooding or droughts will affect the production of fodder for livestock feed.

In most rural areas during dry seasons or periods of water shortages animals walk long distances to find drinking water from communal ponds.

This, too, affects the quality of meat and also increases the chances of contracting livestock disease that can lead to sickness or even death.

Solutions: Activities for Journalists

Ask listeners how many have experienced livestock deaths due to water shortages. Ask listeners if they have to take their animals long distances to find water.

How did these water shortages affect their animals? Did the animals weigh less? Did any get sick or die?

Livestock is considered very valuable to small-scale farmers – and during hard times these animals can be sold for much-needed cash.

Ask farmers if they have been forced to change their prices due to low weight and poor quality of their animals due to the effects of climate change.

Livestock farmers need to start thinking of planting improved fodder for their animals near their homes. They also need to start investing in water harvesting methods and also technologies for pumping water for livestock use.

Farmers need to keep a close watch on their animals during stressful times to keep them safe from disease. For instance, farmers involved in livestock production need to consult the veterinary departments on suitability of certain species in these areas.

The Southern province of Zambia receives less than 800mm of rain and rainfall there is expected to continue to drop in the years ahead. Goat rearing has been promoted in drought-prone areas due to their high resistance to diseases and because they are more suitable to harsher habitats.

Mixed animal and crop farming is now encouraged as a good climate smart agricultural practice. Small-scale farmers are encouraged to have a combination of small to large livestock and a mixture of crop types to cope with climate change.

Small livestock, like goats, easily produce under difficult conditions and can be a good source of income. Chickens are also encouraged as a source of protein during hunger periods and they and their eggs are also good source of income.

The Golden Valley Agriculture station under the Ministry of Agriculture has done a lot of research on livestock breeds suitable for different agro-climatic conditions in Zambia.

Encourage farmers to attend agriculture shows where they can see different technologies suitable to different areas and climates. Ask the local agriculture officers to provide you with a calendar of agriculture shows in your areas. These are good places to exchange knowledge for both small-scale and commercial farmers.

Useful Links

Information about farming and the environment:
Chief Environment officer, Emphrain Shitima, email emshitima40@gmail.com

Mrs Glenda Mulenga Kasuba, Rainwater Harvesting Association. glendamm@hotmail.com

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, FAO Zambia, Zambia; Email: vinceziba@yahoo.com. Phone: 0966-246-924

Mwape Sichilongo, WWF Conservation Manager. Email: mwapesichilongo@wwfzam.org. Phone: +260 966442540

Information environmental degradation write to Irene Lungu of ZEMA on irlungu@zema.org.zm

Call Senior Forest officer Davies Kadhole on 0976059152