

Beef Cattle Fattening Practices and Marketing Systems in Gondar Town, Amhara, Ethiopia

Habtamu Ayalew*, Genzeb Tamru and Desalegn Abebe

College of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences, University of Gondar, Gondar, Ethiopia

Abstract

The objective of the study was to describe the cattle fattening practices and the existing marketing systems. For this study, four farmer associations were selected on purpose. From each PA, 20 respondents (a total of 80 HH) were randomly selected from owners who practice fattening cattle and the data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and observation. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS version 20 software. In the study area, the food resources used for their fattening cattle were 67.5%, 17.5% and 15.0% of wheat and corn bran, bean and rice bran and the mixture of bean + peacock + hay as feed for their fattening cattle without scientific formulation, respectively. The sources of water used by respondents were 72.5% and 27.5%, respectively, for river and strip water. The finding revealed that majority of fatteners were select cattle based on phenotypic characteristics of the cattle by body frame (58.8%), glossy coat color (31.2%), wide/deep body condition (7.5%) and thick neck (2.5%). The survey result indicated 65.0% and 35.0% of respondents used trekking and vehicle (trucking) transporting practices, respectively. Even though, weight measurements had not practiced in the area, 87.5% respondents price set factor were depending on live weight of animals. The current study showed that the main constraints of beef cattle fattening practices in Gondar town were feed cost increase (30.0%), lack of credit (12.5%) and absence of market information (16.2%). In general, the fattening practices of beef cattle in the study area were constrained by various challenges and not supported by improved fattening technology. In order to increase the profitability of feeders, the provision to farmers of adequate training and extension services on improved livestock fattening technologies, key management practices and market information should be mandatory. In Ethiopia both farming and pastoral household's largely dependent on livestock for their livelihood system. Livestock have diverse function in the live hold systems of Ethiopia farmers in the various farming system and serves as a source of food, traction, manure, raw materials, cash income foreign exchange earning social and culture identity. In terms of contribution to national economy, livestock contribute about 16.5% of the Gross domestic product (GDP) and 35.6% of the agriculture GDP and currently the subsector supports and sustains livelihoods for 80% of rural population. Cattle fattening is one of the newly incipient activity. The sector is an emerging for employment and income generation for urban and pre-urban dweller, particularly, for those vacant farmers due to urbanization and cattle fattening association organized at small scale micro finance level.

Cattle fattening is an effective tool for poverty reduction and simultaneously becomes an important commercial sector, attention must focus on small livestock feeders as well as the private sector as engines of economic vitality. In Ethiopia, governmental and non-governmental organizations are currently promoting the emergence of small farms as well as commercial fattening operations and sector support establishments in cooperative or private form. However, there is little information on their constraints, opportunities, challenges, economic efficiency, production potential and performance of beef cattle in this sector. Beef cattle are one of a few agriculture commodities in Ethiopia for which the country earn foreign currency through both live and process forms of the commodity exports and also most of rural poor are engaged in rearing it to fulfill their daily needs and economy gaps. Though, the town is characterized as huge number of indigenous Fogera cattle population, meat demand and the presence of large abattoir owners are not getting enough benefit from there fattening activities. Moreover, there might be a number of challenges which limits profitability of beef cattle fattening systems in the area. So, conducting research and raising appropriate improvement strategies of cattle fattening have to be mandatory.

References

1. Ehuni S, Li PH, Mares V, Shapiro BI (1998) The Role of Livestock in Food Security and Environmental Protection. *Outlook in Agriculture* 27: 81-87.
2. Belete A, Azage T, Fikadu B, Berhanu G (2010) Cattle milk and meat production and marketing systems and opportunities for market orientation in Fogera woreda, Amhara region, Ethiopia. IPMS (Improved productivity and market success) of Ethiopia farmers project working paper 19. ILSRI (International Livestock research Institute), Nairobi, Kenya, p: 65.
3. Metafaria F, Cherent T, Abenet F, Ali J, Guliant W (2011) Review to improve estimation of livestock contribution to the national GDP. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and Ministry of Agriculture. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
4. Bezahegn A (2014) Small Scale Beef Cattle Fattening Practices on farm Performance Evaluation and Opportunities for Market Orientation in Western Hararghe Zone, Chiro District. Haramaya University, Haramaya, Ethiopia.

E-mail: habtish.ayu@gmail.com