

# THE GAMBIAN EXPERIENCE

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# COUNTRY BACKGROUND



The Gambia is situated in the Sahelian zone on the West Coast of Africa.

She is the smallest country on the African continent with a total area of 11 300 km<sup>2</sup>, of which about 20 percent is considered as wetland.

The Gambia lies in the Sahelian agro-climatic zone and its climate is characterized by two different seasons

Rainy season from June/July to October and a long dry period between November and May.

# COUNTRY BACKGROUND CONT.

The dry season is characterized by a hot, dry wind blowing southwards from the Sahara desert, which can bring sandstorms.

There has been a steady decline in rainfall from 1875 onwards which is causing increased salinity in the lowlands and increased aridity in the uplands.

Average annual rainfall is 836 mm, with a spatial variation from over 1 000 mm in the south to less than 800 mm in the north.

In the areas where there is less rainfall, it is generally more reliable. As much of the wet season the rain falls in short heavy storms, water conservation is essential to ensure crop security and livestock productivity.

However, there is a risk of washout due to the severity of the rainfall.

The average daily temperature is 30°C in the dry season and 27°C in the wet season.

# THE GAMBIA LIVESTOCK SUB SECTOR

The livestock sub-sector is an important component of The Gambia's agricultural sector and plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of the population.

The livestock sub-sector contributed 17% to agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 7.4% to national GDP in 2019 (GBOS, 2019).

The key livestock species kept in The Gambia are mainly cattle, sheep and goats (small ruminants), chickens, pigs, horses and donkeys.

# NATIONAL ANIMAL FEED POLICY

- ▶ The government recognises the need to increase efforts to improve the livestock sub-sector in terms of funding and policy
- ▶ Significant contribution to livelihood and economic wellbeing particularly of the rural population.
- ▶ Government further acknowledges that to increase livestock production and productivity, safe and quality animal feeds must be ensured.
- ▶ Hence the need for institutional and regulatory framework guiding the development of the feed sector.

# THE VISION

- ▶ A well developed and diversified animal feed base that enhances the availability and accessibility to quality feeds
- ▶ Thus contributing to increased and sustainable livestock production and productivity,
- ▶ Improve Income, food and nutrition security.

# OVERALL OBJECTIVE



- ▶ To promote increased and sustainable production of high-quality feeds and forages
- ▶ In order to enhance year-round access, and to increase livestock production and productivity for increased income, food and nutrition security.

# SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Promote the development and diversification of feed resources to reduce the gap between the demand and supply;
- ▶ Improve management of rangeland resources while promoting inclusive and participatory community/village land use planning;
- ▶ Strengthen human and institutional capacity for the development of the animal feed sector.



# POLICIES

- ▶ Promoting the development and diversification of feed resources, to ensure their sustainable management, and to support the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes.
- ▶ Ensuring the security of grazing lands and cattle tracts.
- ▶ Enhancing dry season feed availability through the development of strategic deferred grazing areas, cattle tracks and livestock watering points and promote the establishment of improved pastures.
- ▶ Developing strategies for better management and utilization of crop residues and by-products through research, innovation and development.

# POLICIES CONT.

- ▶ Assurance of quality animal feeds.
- ▶ Providing incentives for entrepreneurs, including individual farmers and farmer organisations, to engage in animal feed manufacturing, use and marketing.
- ▶ Strengthening capacities of value chain actors and institutions in the feed sector.

# DISEASE CONTROL INTERVENTIONS

- ▶ The Gambia continued to be affected by the effects of climate change by common livestock killer diseases and of recent concerns of Trans-boundary Animal Diseases of zoonotic nature.
- ▶ The Avian Influenza, LSD, FMD, NCD, PPR, RABIES among others is of public health and socioeconomic concerns.
- ▶ Interventions will be to improve the health conditions of the livestock especially cattle, small ruminants, poultry and dogs in the Gambia by increasing the overall vaccination coverage to 100% annually.

# INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Infrastructural investment aimed at improving the health conditions of livestock value chain in the Gambia:
- ▶ (ii) the construction of 70 boreholes and the development of 70 low-lying areas planned to ensure access to water for forage and feed production;
- ▶ (iii) the establishment and strengthening of Regional Diagnostic Laboratories and the Central Veterinary Laboratory at the Department of Livestock Services for effective disease surveillance and the monitoring of vaccinations,

# INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT CONT.

- ▶ (iv) the enhancement of cold chain maintenance for proper storage of vaccines, reagents and laboratory samples collected for confirmatory diagnosis.
- ▶ Fencing of holding grounds; provision of watering facilities, slaughter slabs and cold storage facilities;
- ▶ provision of market information systems in primary markets and terminal markets; and modernization of existing slaughterhouses.
- ▶ Improve biosecurity standards in the abattoirs and slaughter facilities country wide.

# CHALLENGES IN THE GAMBIA LIVESTOCK SUB SECTOR

- ▶ The livestock sub-sector continuous to be challenged by increased incidence of emerging and re-emerging animal diseases
- ▶ Deficiencies in animal feed both in quality and quantity; low genetic potential of the indigenous breeds;
- ▶ Inadequate infrastructure and financing; weak public sector institutions for animal health delivery, extension, research and technology dissemination.
- ▶ Feed resources are the main drivers of animal production but their inadequacy and poor-quality are the most important limiting factors hindering the development of the livestock sub-sector.
- ▶ Poor animal nutrition leads to nutritional stress, reduction in milk production, slow growth rates, decreased reproductive rates, loss of disease resistance, and increased mortality rates.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Genetic improvement, the construction of one AI centres and liquid nitrogen storage facility.
- ▶ Establishment and provision of equipment for veterinary/Livestock stations and improving the infrastructural conditions of veterinary/Livestock laboratories;
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