

Assessments of Current Practices and Problems in the Management of Livestock in Selected Human Shelters (Refugee Camps) in Ethiopia

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Abstract: The objective of the study was to investigate the current practices and problems in the management of animals in selected human shelters (Refugee camps). The study was conducted in three districts of Western Ethiopia namely, Sherkole in Komosha, Tongo in Mao-Komo, and Bambasi in Bambasi districts. Secondary data, desk reviews of different documents, focus group discussions, key informants interviews and field observations were used as the study methods. The findings of the study confirmed that eight humanitarian organizations operate in the refugee camps, namely ARRA, ICRC, UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, NRDEP, WFP and RADO to supply and manage humanitarian aids. However, the livestock emergency response intervention such as health, feed, water and other conditions of animal management is not represented and documented. There is no animal welfare organization /humanitarian organization working on animal management in refugee camps. Following the culture of their ancestors and their experiences, some Sudanese refugees have brought their animals to Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the Ethiopian government do not have regulations that protect the entrance of animals with refugees. Even though the number and types of animals entering with the refugees are not well known, different species of animals are found in all the visited refugee camps. Some have brought them from their origin of country and others restocked it in the host country, Ethiopia. The major livestock species found in the refugee camps include cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys. There is no specific management given for the animals in the refuges except that the regional government provides vaccination and other veterinary services to protect the transfer of cross-border disease from the displaced to the local animals. Some of the hosting community leaders around Tongo and Bambasi are also expressing their frustration on the refugees' livestock, mentioning that the refugees are allowing animals to graze on their crops and private grazing land deliberately. Some livestock owners confirmed that they are using traditional (herbal) medicines for disease prevention. The refugees strongly expressed the importance of regular vaccination and animal service program for their livestock. There was also interbreeding among Ethiopia and Sudanese cattle as they share the same grazing land. Zoonotic diseases are also a fear for the refugees. All the respondents explained that there are no clearly defined funds for the management of livestock in the refuges.

Keywords: Bambasi, Livestock management, Refuges, Sherkole, Tongo



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1. Introduction

Livestock play a crucial role in people's livelihoods throughout the world, and when humanitarian emergencies arise rapid assistance is needed to protect and rebuild the livestock assets of affected communities (LEGS 2009). Although the importance of livestock in food security and disaster coping is understood and acknowledged by experts and animal welfare organizations, livestock-keeping in many refugee-camps faces implementation problems both from the host country and the humanitarian organizations. An evaluation report by Action Against Hunger (AAH 2007) revealed that a large proportion of people in the country in the refugee camps owned livestock, but that disease was a major cause for livestock loss as animals were managed in very close quarters.

While general Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) for the design, implementation, and assessment of livestock interventions to assist people affected by humanitarian crisis exists, it is not known where and how these guidelines are practiced and what problems arise in the management of animals in shelters (LEGS 2009). At present, there appear to be no best practices in managing livestock

in human shelters (refugee camps). Furthermore, there are limited literature and case study works that demonstrate current practices and problems in the management of animals in human shelters (refugee camps) globally with a broad geographical focus. Therefore, investigating the scale and type of problems occurring with animal management in human shelters (refugee camps) and matching available practical solutions from other areas of animal management and veterinary sciences would mean a significant improvement in the tools that humanitarian agencies have available for the care of livestock in camps. A number of concerns came to the fore in refugee operations, particularly in situations where refugees bring their livestock herds with them. These concerns varied considerably depending on the local situation – mainly with regards to local ecological conditions, social systems and existing stocking practices such as depletion of water resources, disruption of traditional livestock production patterns, competition for rangelands, conflicts with local population and impacts on public health (UNHCR 2005).

Therefore, the objective of this study was to investigate the current practices and problems in the management of farm

animals in human shelters (in specific Refugee camps) in Ethiopia.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Description of the study areas

This study was conducted in three 'Woredas' (administrative districts) in Western Ethiopia in 2013. The selected refugee camps assessed were Sherkole in *Komosha Woreda*, Tongo in *Mao-Komo Woreda* and Bambasi in *Bambasi Woreda* (Figure 1).

Sherkole is the oldest refugee camp opened in 1997 and currently hosts around 10,011 refugees (UNHCR 2012) from different ethnic tribes such as Mabaan, Funj, and Uduk who have fled fighting and insecurity in the Blue Nile province of Sudan. The refugee's camp is located in Komosha wereda, 720 kilometers away from Addis Ababa and some 50 kilometers east of the Ethio-Sudan border. The local inhabitants are the Berta communities who depend mainly on agriculture and a little trade. Berta cattle have been destroyed by the tsetse fly and as a result, they can no longer rely on animal traction, which has a serious impact on their agricultural production and productivity.

Initially, refugees stayed close to the border, hoping to return soon. However,

due to the conflict in South Sudan, Tongo camp was reopened in October 2012, 200 km far from the border. About 12,952 refugees (UNHCR, 2012) have been moved from way stations and Adamazin Transit Center to Tongo Camp.

Bambasi is the third refugee camp in the region opened to accommodate the refugees from the Blue Nile province of Sudan who has been affected by the new conflict. The camp began receiving refugees back in June 2012 after Sherkole and Tongo - reached maximum capacity. As of 31 October, 2012, about 12,284 refugees were in Bambasi who relocated from Ad-Damazin transit center (UNHCR, 2012).

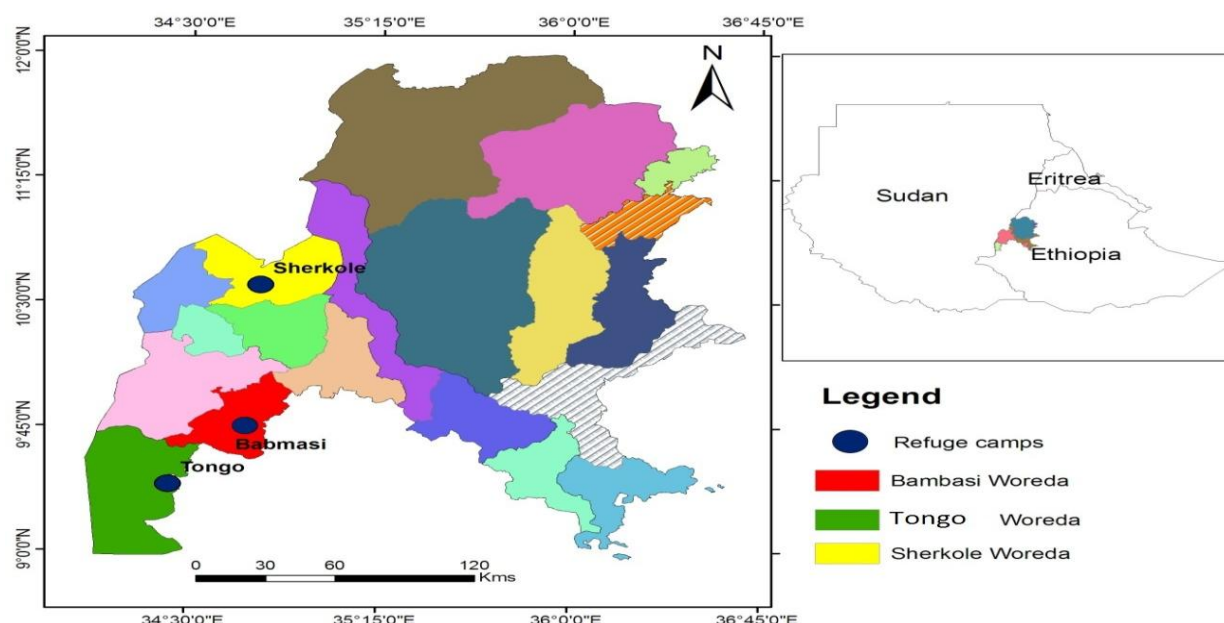


Figure 1: Map of the study areas

2.2. Data collection and sampling techniques

The study was conducted using multi-stage approaches to gather important information on current practices and problems in the management of animals in human shelters namely Tongo, Bimbasi and Sherkole refugee camps. The data was collected using purposive sampling techniques by selecting individuals who have relationships with the refuges and those refugees came with their domestic animal to the camp. Collection of secondary data, desk reviews of different documents and studies, focused group discussions, key informants interviews and field observations were made up on the schedule.

The focused group discussions were made by selecting pertinent individuals from GOs, NGOs, communities, individuals or livestock keepers in the refuges (community leaders in the refuges). Three focused group discussions were conducted at each selected refugee camps (one for each). Each focused group discussion composed of about 12 members consisting of males, females and livestock owners in the refuges, and community leaders. Personal interviews were also conducted with individuals selected by the communities in the refuges. The in-depth information was collected using interviewing key informants who have deep knowledge on current practices and problems in the management of animals in

human shelters (refugee camps) in the area. Field visit or direct observations of the problems were employed and the situations observed were photographed and recorded in the format pre-prepared. The data collected by the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS (16, 2017). Descriptive statistics (percentile) was used to quantify the determinants for human and livestock management in the refugees.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Management of refugee camps

While forced displacement is often linked to a single proximate cause such as a war or natural disaster, the historical struggles happened between racial and ethnic groups, access to natural resources and livelihoods, environmental change or degradation, and political dynamics at local, state, and international levels is becoming fundamental. While there has been some development of a structure of international norms through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the complex overlapping of issues imply that each situation has its unique set of issues and concerns that must be addressed. The Somali refugee camps in Northeastern Kenya are one of the cases in this regard

(Asefaw and William, 2014). The results of this assessment also revealed that eight humanitarian organizations namely ARRA, IRC, UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, NRDEP, WFP and RADO are operating in the refugee camps in supplying and managing humanitarian aids. However, these organizations missed the livestock emergency response intervention such as health, feed, water and other conditions of animal management. There is no animal welfare/humanitarian organization working on animal management in refugee camps.

The management of all refugee camps in Ethiopia is led by a government organization – Administration for Refugees and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). The role of ARRA is facilitating and supporting the actors and the communities for effective management of refugee camps. According to ARRA officials, multiple organizations were providing support to refugees with different services. For example, WFP is responsible for food distribution; UNHCR provides nonfood items; ARRA is responsible for health services through temporary clinics in the camps; IRC and WVI are providing water, sanitation and hygiene services; and UNICEF is supporting education services. However, none of these organizations is

working on animal management in the refuges. However, all the discussants including the government officials are very concerned on how to integrate emergency animal management responses in the emergency preparedness plans. Particularly, government experts stated that they are committed to delivering veterinary and other animal management services if favorable working arrangements are created by the concerned bodies.

3.2. Livestock ownership movement with refugees

The result also showed that some Sudanese refugees brought their animals. However, the Ethiopian government doesn't have regulations that protect the entrance of animals with refugees. During the assessment period, food assistance, remittances, petty-trading and animal husbandry are the main sources of the livelihoods in the refugee camps. Sudan refugees or their ancestors were pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. The pastoralists depend primarily on livestock or livestock products for income and food, while the agro-pastoralists derive their income from both livestock and non-livestock sources. It was also reported that some refugees have been benefited from gardening with the delivery of selected

seeds and farming tools distributed by ARRA and UNHCR.

Currently, the Ethiopian government doesn't have regulations that protect the entrance of animals with refugees. Following the culture of their ancestors and their experiences, some Sudanese refugees have brought their animals. Even though the animal population size entering with the refugees are not known, in all the visited camps the refugees have managed different kinds of animals around the refugee camps. Some have brought them from their origin of country and others restocked it in the host country, Ethiopia. The main livestock species found in the refugee camps were cattle and goats, sheep.

3.3. Current livestock management in the refugee camps

It was also important to note that there is no specific management given for animals in the refuges except that the regional government is providing vaccination and other veterinary services to the refugee's animals to protect the transfer of cross-border diseases from the displaced to the local animals. Some of the hosting community leaders around Tongo and Bambasi were also expressing their frustration on the refugees' livestock,

mentioning that the refugees have been grazing their crops and private grazing land deliberately. Some livestock owners confirmed that they are using indigenous traditional herbal medicines for disease preventions.

The refugees coming with their animals use fences and open shelter for keeping their animals at night. Most of the refugees use open grazing, however, some of the refugees who have restocked in Ethiopia have reported that they buy forage and cereals for their sheep and goats. All of the refugees are using river water for drinking their animals. All the discussants particularly animal management experts and government officials revealed their concern about the unsafe conditions of animal management in and around refugee camps both to the refugees and the host community. Animal veterinary experts have expressed their discontent that the refugees' animals are entering to Ethiopia without quarantine service at the border and are causing a new drug-resistant animal disease for the host communities' livestock. It is reported that approximately 2000 individuals, along with an estimated 8000 livestock are living amongst the local community (UNHCR 2012) which may have a disastrous effect for host

community as well as the refugee livestock.

It is mentioned that the refugees used host communities' crops and private grazing lands deliberately. Experts from the district agricultural office explained this is because that the refugee community could not differentiate the Ethiopian crop, particularly millet from other grasses. Both government officials and the community also mentioned that dogs brought by the refugees usually bite the host community's cattle and caused human health risk because of rabbis. Some experts are also being indecisive that increased concentration of livestock in the future is likely to have a localized negative environmental impact on the area.

The refugees, on the other hand, express the problem of animal management services such as lack of animal medications and grazing areas. The UNHCR (2012) report documented that many of the refugees opted out of the relocation because of a lack of grazing land in Bambasi. Some livestock owners confirmed they are using indigenous herbal medicines and sometimes buy drugs from drug shops and strongly expressed the importance of regular vaccination and animal service program for their livestock.

Different issues of managing animals at the border were raised. All the respondents replied in the same manner that there are different animal species in Sherkolle, Bambasi, and Tongo Camps. These animals include cattle sheep, goats, donkeys, and dogs. There is no controlling mechanism when animals enter into the host country and leave for their country during repatriation. Particularly stressed that “though we know that there is a trans-boundary disease, we can’t control or stop the animals’ movement or entering with the refugees. This is because there is no national or international regulation that

forbids animals entering without being quarantined or vaccinated at the border or entry point. As the country has no controlling mechanism during entrance and repatriation, there is an expectation that indigenous Ethiopian breed could go out of the country without any genetic inspection. There is an exchange of animals between the local community and refugees and no controlling mechanism at the border when the animals are entering into the hosting country, it is difficult to identify whether these animals are coming from the outside or bought from the local community (Figure 2).

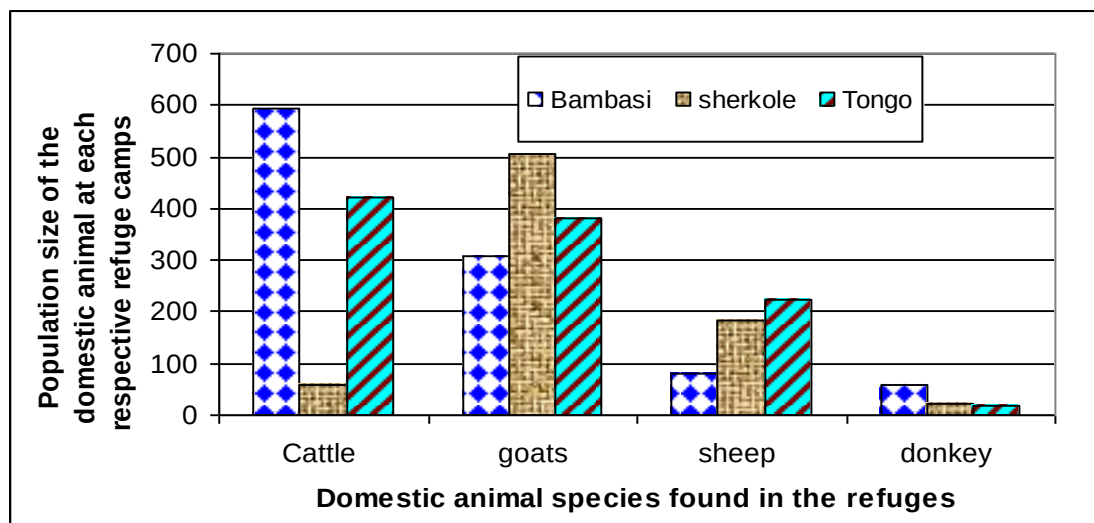


Figure 2: Livestock species and population number at the refuges of Bambasi, Sherkole and Tong

ARRA officers were at the border of Sudan and Ethiopia to know the number of people entering to the refugees while we

were collecting data at Sherkole refugee camps. The officers confirmed that the numbers of domestic animals waiting for

entrance with people at the Papararo and Homba entrances were greater than the number of people which are indicated in Figure 3.

About 88.2 % of the respondents/ migrants in the refugee camp explained that there are no clear regulations and guidelines for management of livestock both for hosting

community and refugee population. Most of the local community (71.7%) also support the idea of the migrants. All the respondents in the refugee camp (migrants) and the local community agreed that except ARRA, all other international organizations do not allocate funds for livestock management in the refuges (Table 2).

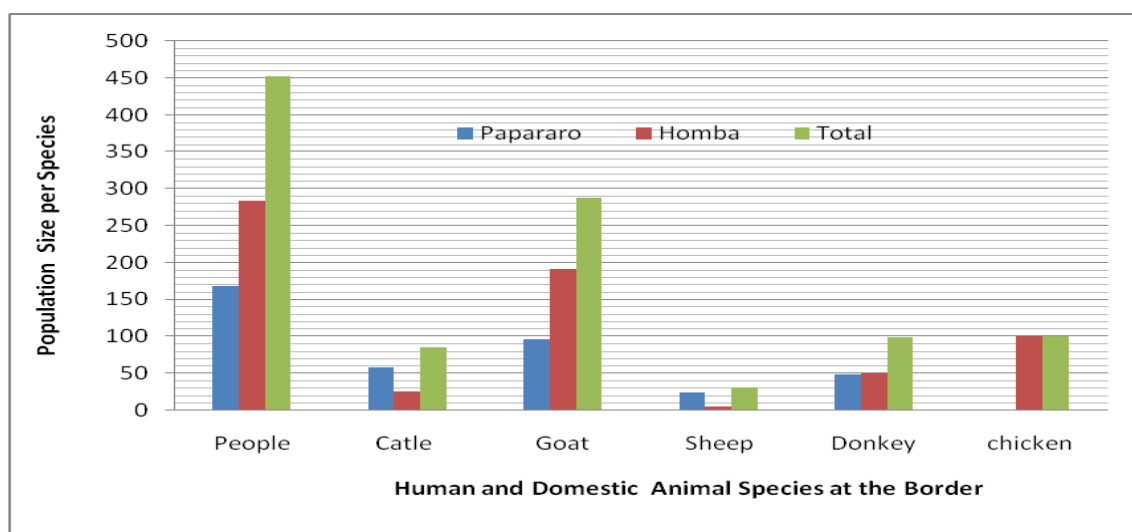


Figure 3: The number of people and domestic animals waiting for entrance at the border

Table 2: Key unresolved determinants for human and livestock management in the study refuges

No	Key determinants for human and Livestock management	Responses of the respondents (Migrants No = 85 and local community = 92)					
		Migrants			Local community		
		Yes	No	Do not know	Yes	No	Do not know
1	Are there any clear regulations and guidelines for management of livestock both for hosting community and refugee population?	0 (0%)	75 (88.2%)	10 (11.8%)	0 (0%)	66 (71.7%)	26 (28.3%)
2	Do the refuges and local communities know the number and type of livestock came with the refuges?	22 (25.9%)	40 (47.1%)	23 (24%)	0 (0%)	71 (77.2%)	21 (22.8%)
3	Is there a national Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards?	0 (0%)	73 (85.9%)	12 (14.1%)	0 (0%)	25 (27.2%)	67 (72.8%)
4	Is there any livestock grazing conflict management guideline in the camp?	0 (0%)	79 (92.9%)	6 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	23 (25%)	69 (75%)
5	Is there any veterinary emergency response plans in minimizing livestock disease risks in the refuges?	5 (5.9%)	57 (67%)	23 (27.1)	0 (0%)	45 (48.9%)	45(48.9%)
6	Is there any control for trans-boundary human and livestock diseases?	0 (0%)	85 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	92 (100%)
7	Do the 8 Organizations* workings in refugee camps allocate money for livestock management? (* ARRA, IRC, UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, NRDEP, WFP and RADO)	0 (0%)	85 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	92 (100%)

4. Conclusions

Ethiopia does not have policies and regulations that control the entrance of animals with the refugees. Moreover, there is no livestock emergency response intervention and animal management. The critical problems encountered by animals in the refuges were feeding, interbreeding, prevention, and control of animal diseases. Hence, the involvement of hosting governments, animal welfare organizations, and humanitarian organization in the management of animals in the human shelter is crucial for safe health and food security in the refuges.

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