

109

Introduction

The small ruminant industry of Jordan has until recently been operating in a subsidized environment, and has enjoyed stable and expanding domestic and export markets. Flock numbers have been allowed to expand unchecked, and production has tripled in the last 15 years. The effect of these policies has been to damage the productive efficiency of the industry as well as the environment in which it operates, and the industry is today under transformation.

In 1996 input subsidies were lifted, the feed and veterinary supply industries moved further toward privatization and the industry has found itself under increasing market pressure both domestically and abroad. The traditionally transhumant, rangeland oriented production system is becoming less dependent upon natural grazing, and increasingly characterized by high production costs. Producers will have no choice in the coming years but to adopt a more efficient and competitive approach to production and marketing, while those that cannot adapt will be forced out of production.

One third of small ruminant production in Jordan is based in the north east Badia. The changing economic climate will have a fundamental impact upon the Badia livestock industry and the community that relies upon it. The ability and speed with which Badia producers are able to adapt will be determined by the economic and policy environment in which the industry operates. This report assesses the major macro-economic and policy issues that are likely to have most impact upon the Badia livestock system in the coming years, in the context of the production and marketing parameters that define that system. Thus the analysis and conclusions focus upon implications for Badia based production, not livestock production in Jordan as a whole.

Section One assesses the production environment for small ruminants in the north east Badia. Part 1.0 outlines the production parameters and micro-economic characteristics of the Badia livestock system. Part 2.0 highlights the main constraints and opportunities that determine the current system and will have impact upon the future development of that system. Inputs to the system are discussed including animal feed sources, nutrition, health, management and productivity, labour, credit, water and government services. Part 3.0 looks in more detail at the policy environment affecting livestock production.

Section Two discusses marketing systems for Badia livestock products. Part 4.0 analyses the meat market and its potential, focusing on domestic and international trade in live animals. Part 5.0 assesses the marketing of sheep milk and milk products and the constraints and opportunities facing these markets. Finally part 6.0 briefly appraises the markets for wool, hair and hides of small ruminants.

Methodology

The research upon which this report is based comes from a wide variety of sources. The structure of the report is based upon a review of available reports, papers and statistics relevant to livestock production and marketing in Jordan, and the economic and policy environment affecting the industry. This secondary data has been clarified and up-dated by

a series of informal interviews with government and non-government officials and key informants between August and December 1996.

The report draws heavily upon research conducted in the Jordan Badia Research and Development Programme (JBRDP) Area shown in Figure 1, page 10. Various sections of the report should be regarded as a review of recent livestock related studies conducted by researchers from the Programme, including work on livestock production, health, product marketing and producer decision-making. In addition the report uses information obtained during research conducted in the first half of 1996 by the author, on livestock trading and feed issues.

It is in the context of this up-to-date information, related specifically to the north east Badia, that the more general information from other sources has been assessed. Indeed a primary aim of the report has been to highlight the unique nature of the Badia livestock system and the way in which the broader policy and economic environment interacts with it. The specific policy needs of the Badia livestock industry was a focus of a recent workshop held by JBRDP on Population and Livestock Related Studies in the Eastern Badia of Jordan (September 21-2, 1996). A number of issues raised at the workshop but given insufficient time for discussion are analyzed further here.