

Challenges of Small Ruminants Production in Selected Urban Communities of Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Livestock production has become a common trend in urban communities whereby a number of people reared farm animals such as sheep and goats for social and economic reasons. Notwithstanding the associated advantages of livestock production, effective urban production of the small ruminants is greatly challenged by a number of factors. Based on this, the study was conducted with a view to identifying factors that challenged effective sheep and goat production in selected urban communities of Abeokuta, Ogun State. From the selected 12 urban communities where sheep and goats were reared, a total of 217 rearers were non-randomly selected using snow balling sampling method. A reliable and validated interview guide was used alongside field observation to obtain information on challenges to sheep and goats production in the urban areas. The results showed that the challenges were feed, health/disease, environmental, marketing and routine management related. All the respondents (100%) experienced challenges such as high cost of feeding, theft of the farm animals, problem of off -season feeding and problem of sourcing feed variety for the animals. The chi-square test showed that a significant relationship exists between the respondents' socioeconomic characteristics (sex: $\chi^2 = 21.06$, $df = 4$; age: $\chi^2 = 43.26$, $df = 16$; education: $\chi^2 = 78.09$, $df = 12$; occupation: $\chi^2 = 62.57$, $df = 16$; income: $\chi^2 = 56.35$, $df = 16$) and the encountered challenges ($p < 0.05$). Based on this, it was concluded that the identified challenges to urban sheep and goat production remained serious issues in the study area. It was thus recommended that conscious efforts should be put up by rearers of the small ruminants to ensure safety of their animals and good feeding routine for increased productivity and beneficial returns.