

PATTERN OF SMALL RUMINANTS OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT BY AGRO-PASTORALISTS WITHIN PERI-URBAN KANO, SEMI-ARID, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

A diagnostic survey using the multi-stage sampling technique based on high concentration of agro-pastoralists was used to elicit information on the demographic characteristics of agro-pastoralists, small ruminant ownership and production systems in semi-arid, Nigeria. A total sample size of two hundred was used. Results revealed most (88%) of the farmers were males within the ages of 21 to 30 years. Production experience was acquired mainly through inheritance, however evidence of diverse occupations among the respondents was observed. Semi-intensive system was practiced and choice of management attributed to convenience (28%) and low management cost (22%). The major sources of sheep and goat acquisition were through purchase (61% and 38% respectively) and gift 14% and 28% for sheep and goat. Reasons for rearing were to meet supply during festive periods (45%) and relative high demand of sheep while for goat was due to ease of rearing (61%). It is concluded that small ruminant rearing is practiced by all age groups and gender. Thus, opportunities for testing improvement intervention are to be targeted at all age groups and gender since the younger generation will inherit the production practices along with any improvement technology. It is however recommended that livestock improvement strategies for sheep should be propagated during festive periods while that on goat could be year-round.

Key words: *small ruminants, agro-pastoral, management, semi-arid*