



Livestock

Increasing the productivity and market options of smallholder beef cattle farmers in Vanuatu



Overview

About 17,000 households (50% of rural households) in Vanuatu raise cattle. Despite favourable agro-climatic and market settings for beef cattle production, turnout has substantially declined in the last decade, leaving butchers and abattoirs unable to meet the increasing demand for meat.

This is widely attributed to decreased on-farm productivity of smallholder farmers, the costs of accessing formal markets and low prices for slaughter cattle.

Increased on-farm productivity and increased cattle sales through accredited abattoirs is vital to increase national beef production and meet expanding market opportunities.

Improved on-farm production and marketing practices will provide opportunities for increased household cash flow and access to goods and services that improve livelihoods.

KEY FACTS

ACIAR Project No. LPS/2014/037

Duration: October 2015 to September 2019 (4 years)

Target areas: Vanuatu

Budget: A\$1,850,876

Project Leader

Simon Quigley, University of Queensland

Key partners

- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland
- Southern Cross University
- Department of Industry, Ministry Trade, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Vanuatu
- Department of Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity, Vanuatu
- Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Training Centre
- Vanuatu Agricultural College

ACIAR Research Program Manager

Dr Anna Okello

Objective

The project's overall aim is to increase the productivity and marketing options of smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu; contribute to increases in rural household incomes and livelihoods choices; meet undersupplied existing and emerging beef markets; and develop the national beef industry.

The project's specific objectives are to:

- Describe the economic, policy and social settings within which smallholder cattle farmers operate and their livelihood objectives and strategies.
- Sustainably increase beef production of smallholder households through change in on-farm management practices.
- Increase returns to smallholder cattle farmers through whole-farm and cattle enterprise economic analysis, business training and marketing interventions.
- Create pathways to sustain and extend project outcomes and impacts beyond the scope of the current project.

Expected scientific results

- Collection and analysis of data to describe the biology (reproduction, liveweight gain, health, feeds and grazing management) that underpins cattle production systems within Vanuatu.
- Development of on-farm management strategies and future research activities.
- Generation of data on outcomes of various on-farm production and marketing interventions implemented with farmers.

Expected outcomes

- Increased capacity of project partners, farmers and private industry to ensure they have the necessary skills to implement and build on improvements.
- Increase cash incomes to rural smallholder households raising cattle in Vanuatu through higher turnoff of cattle, increased cattle sale prices and off-farm employment opportunities.
- Improved livelihoods through increased financial savings, opportunities for alternative on-farm or off-farm investments, access to health and education services, labour savings and increased confidence to implement practices that result in improved whole-farm performance.
- Opportunities for women to get involved in project activities and share in benefits of increased income and livelihood improvements.

