

How does livestock farming support gender equality?

The livestock providing families in lower income countries with income and nutritious food are rare examples of inflation-proof, self-perpetuating assets that women can own and benefit from.

FACTS

While women do most of the feeding of and caring for livestock in many developing countries, financial and cultural barriers often exclude them from making strategic decisions about how to manage the household animals.

Investments in women livestock farmers and herders benefit not just women but entire families, communities and nations.

The following are just a few research examples of the wide range of livestock-related interventions that have been shown to benefit gender equity.

A project among Kenya pastoralists found that increased women's participation in decision-making leads to better management of livestock for drought risk. A project that provided pigs to poor households in the conflict-ridden Democratic Republic of Congo demonstrated that livestock asset transfer programs can also improve gender equality. Directing training and development efforts specifically towards women can also lead to positive outcomes.

In an extensive area of Tajikistan, a project found that targeting livestock interventions to female-headed households can increase their income and lead to greater participation in decision-making. In some parts of East Africa, where smallholder dairy systems are already well established, it was demonstrated that new investment in capacity development and awareness can increase benefits to

women. Women dairy cooperatives have generally been found to improve opportunities for the rural poor.

An example from India shows that dairy cooperative membership can improve income and employment among women, and those outcomes were found to benefit entire households. Another important livestock enterprise for women has been poultry, given women's traditional roles in managing the small stock in many cultures. In Bangladesh, it was demonstrated that small-scale poultry development can be particularly important to women, enhancing not only their livelihoods but also their social status.

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