

Making the Case for Livestock:

GENDER



Compared to other wealth and income opportunities, livestock are **inflation-proof**, self-perpetuating assets that **women** can own and benefit from. In addition to wealth accumulation, they provide **income** and **nutritious food** for their families.

While women assume much of the responsibility for raising livestock in many developing countries, they often face **financial and cultural barriers** to maximising this potential. By **investing in women farmers**, women, their families and communities can benefit.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISES

- Livestock are critically important for women and women are critically important for livestock.
- Two-thirds of the world's 600 million poor livestock keepers are rural women who do most of the day-to-day farm animal management as well as the processing, marketing and selling of animal produce. But due to social norms, women's control over the income generated often remains substantially less than men's.
- Increasing the control that livestock-keeping women have over productive physical and financial assets is key to realizing the full socio-economic potential of urban and rural communities, now and in the future.

Women's contributions to the management of livestock and its role in their economic empowerment should be recognized in the design of gendered services and policies. Investments in livestock improvement and technologies should be gender-sensitive to address the specific constraints faced by women.

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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

- **Women who access and control livestock assets improve the health, education and food security of their households. 90% of income under the control of women is channeled back into their households or local communities, compared with only 30-40% for men.**
- **Livestock provide women with a scarce renewable resource that ensures the well-being of whole households and is a means to improve their own economic status.**
- **Livestock-keeping tends to help equalize the ownership of household assets by women and men.**



Because livestock are often the first stepping stone towards women's economic empowerment, policy and legal environments should recognize and protect women's ownership of livestock. Livestock development programs should use a gendered approach that empowers women to own and manage livestock and have control over the accruing economic benefits. Such programs will also enhance more equitable benefit sharing.

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WOMEN AND HOUSEHOLD NUTRITION

- **Women's decisions about what they themselves eat while pregnant, and what food they provide their young in the first 1,000 days of their lives, generates lifelong health, growth and cognitive benefits or costs for those children.**
- **Empowering women with livestock will contribute directly and significantly to better household nutrition.**

Because women manage food consumption decisions in their households, greater ownership and management of livestock and animal-source foods by women contributes to better household nutrition. In addition, awareness creation programs among women on the nutritional value of animal-source foods, especially for infants, would improve household nutrition.

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