Executive Summary:

At the 4th LPP workshop on small stock held in Masaka, Uganda the delegates identified the need to produce an aide memoir for the effective design and execution of experimental projects involving nutritional studies with animals. The essential components of a well conducted study were identified by a sub-group of the collaborators at a workshop held in York, UK during March 2005. Various formats were then developed by the UK team and following consultation with LPP participants in target regions a checklist approach was adopted. This was then drafted and was the subject of further development at the AHAT/BSAS International Conference on ‘Integrating livestock-crop systems to meet the challenges of globalisation’ held in Thailand in November 2005. Following this the checklist was sent to the collaborators for further refinement. A sixteen-page booklet containing the checklist plus some suggested further reading was produced.
Background:

At the LPP workshops on small stock it became apparent there was a need to improve the effectiveness of nutritional studies designed to support the contribution of small stock to the well-being of resource-poor farmers and communities in the target regions. At the 4th LPP workshop on small stock held in Masaka, Uganda the delegates identified the need to produce a precise and easy-to-use aide memoir.

Project Purpose:

To facilitate effective design and execution of nutrition related studies designed to provide information to benefit discreet groups of landed and landless livestock keepers. The initial beneficiaries were identified as researchers and development workers concerned with designing and executing nutrition studies, including on-station and on-farm trials. The ultimate aim of the checklist (decision making tool) was to enhance the contribution of development studies to the well-being of resource-poor communities in the target regions. The need for such a check list was highlighted by the delegates at the LPP 4th International Small Livestock Workshop, in Masaka, Uganda (15-19 November, 2004). The delegates developed the concept and suggested various potential formats.

Research Activities:

The essential components of a well conducted study were identified by a sub-committee of the participants held in York during March 2005. Attempts were made to produce a truly generic decision tool applicable for development studies; however all drafts were found to be difficult to use and of little value. Thus the decision was made to confine the decision tool to nutrition studies. Various formats were then explored by the UK team and following consultation with LPP participants in target regions, a concise checklist approach was adopted. Investigations of the readily available literature also showed that while there were textbooks on experimental design etc. there was not an easy-to-use and concise checklist specifically designed for development studies. The decision tool (checklist) was then drafted and was the subject of further development at the AHAT/BSAS international conference on ‘Integrating livestock-crop systems to meet the challenges of globalisation’ held in Thailand, in November 2005. Following this the checklist was sent to the collaborators for further refinement. A sixteen-page booklet was produced which contained the checklist plus some suggested further reading. The intended outputs were thus achieved.

Outputs:

A decision making checklist for designing appropriate nutrition studies to improve productivity of animals kept by resource-poor livestock keepers was developed, validated and disseminated.

The checklist is designed both for experimentalists and for research managers. In addition to the checklist the document suggests further reference sources. It has purposely been kept short, a feature identified during consultations.

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A copy of the document is appended.

Contribution of Outputs:

The checklist has been produced and distributed particularly to LPP project members. It will also be placed on the LPP website and offered to other organisations e.g. BSAS, FAO. The decision tool is also to be included in the proceedings of the 5th Link workshop held in Howick, South Africa:

This decision tool will improve the quality and effectiveness of nutrition related studies designed to improve productivity of animals kept by resource-poor livestock keepers. A check on the effectiveness of the decision tool will be assessed by questioning the recipients of the list later in 2006.

Further opportunities to disseminate the document need to be explored. It would also be useful to explore the possibility of developing similar checklists for other types of studies, a point identified by the collaborators in the target regions. As indicated above attempts were made to produce a truly generic decision tool applicable for all development studies, however, the drafts were found to be difficult to use and of little value. There are at present no funds available to develop this approach.