



South Sudan

LIVESTOCK

CRISIS

AUGUST 2015



The livestock crisis continues to deepen and spread in South Sudan. Last December, FAO warned of a “silent emergency” as the ongoing conflict and instability undermined the livelihoods of the country’s agropastoral communities. Today, continued massive displacement and recurrent insecurity, disrupted markets, reduced trade, soaring food prices and a widespread economic downturn have been detrimental for livestock owners.

Intensive and abnormal migrations due to insecurity have seriously depleted the health conditions for animal health throughout the country. It will take years for these communities – representing an estimated 65 percent of South Sudan’s population – to rebuild and strengthen their herds. By December 2014, when FAO first issued a Livestock Alert for South Sudan, the dynamics for the deteriorating livestock situation

had already been set into motion. The conflict divided the country into affected and less affected areas, the majority of livestock were in the hardest hit areas and their movement into more peaceful locations turned the situation into a **nation-wide emergency**.

In 2015, Greater Equatoria and Greater Bahr el Ghazal regions have faced rising pressures and heightened tensions, with disease outbreaks, cattle raids and tribal conflicts reaching alarming rates.

METHODOLOGY

Over the past six months, FAO South Sudan livestock teams have conducted dozens of disease investigations with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, including in hot-spot areas and rapidly responded with interventions across all ten states. FAO teams engaged in participatory data collection with communities, conducted focus group discussions with pastoralists and collected livestock blood samples for laboratory testing.

DISEASE OUTBREAKS



Even before the current crisis, South Sudan's herds were susceptible to a number of prevalent diseases, including: foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), East Coast fever, *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR), contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP) and trypanosomiasis. Abnormal migration patterns and the concentration of high numbers of livestock in condensed areas for prolonged periods have made the spread of diseases unavoidable.

These endemic diseases, were previously confined to specific areas and have now crossed into new territories and infected healthy herds. For example, East Coast fever, – a disease transmitted by ticks – was once contained in Greater Equatoria, but has now spread into livestock populations in Jonglei and Lakes States, causing a devastating number of deaths.

Even more alarming is the discovery of a new FMD serotype (SAT3), identified through FAO's extensive field assessments and investigations. The new strand of FMD spreads more quickly and can wipe out entire herds with overt disease, reinforcing the importance of livestock disease control throughout South Sudan. This year, outbreaks of FMD have been reported by FAO and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Industry in Eastern Equatoria and Lakes States. Although not practiced in South Sudan, controlling FMD requires identifying the strand, conducting regular vaccinations and treatment with antibiotics – an enormous task in a context where veterinary services were extremely limited before the current crisis. Further outbreaks are anticipated later in 2015 in conflict affected areas, where livestock

populations cannot be reached with vaccination and treatment services.

FAO has scaled up efforts to control FMD and other trans-boundary animal diseases. Diseases such as Anthrax and contagious caprine pleuropneumonia, occur frequently in South Sudan, largely during uncontrolled livestock



trade at border areas. A regional initiative launched by FAO mid-2015 has helped to establish joint efforts to control the spread of cross-border diseases between South Sudan and Uganda using a regional approach to combine efforts to control livestock trade. FAO trained 30 people on risk-analysis and transboundary animal disease control, from all livestock check points, including the Nimule and Uganda border and Juba International Airport.

In many areas of South Sudan, livestock populations are decreasing significantly, as reported by pastoralist groups in Upper Nile State. This is exacerbated by a continued inability of veterinary services to access livestock in hot-spot areas, combined with the





lack of cold chain facilities for vaccine storage and delivery. These factors are placing an untenable strain on the livestock population.

RISING SOCIAL TENSIONS

The annual movement of South Sudan's estimated 12 million cattle, in search of grazing areas and water resources, has always stirred controversy. Inevitably with seasonal transhumance patterns, migrant pastoralist groups come into violent clashes with each other and with settled farming communities. Since the onset of the conflict in 2013 and linked proliferation of small arms, cattle raids and clashes have rapidly intensified with a rising death toll.

Pastoralists fleeing areas of insecurity have sought refuge in areas perceived to be less volatile, but the impact of this massive displacement of cattle and people has undermined the stability of areas less affected by the wider political conflict. Although mirrored in other parts of the country, this is most pronounced in the eastern counties of Western Equatoria State. In 2014, large numbers of cattle keeping communities from Jonglei and Lakes States migrated into the area. Traditionally, this movement occurs during the dry season and the cattle -keepers then return to their areas of origin. However, the conflict has forced many livestock owners to extend their normally temporary stay and moved deeper into Western Equatoria State. Tensions between pastoralists groups and farmers have boiled over, leading to a Presidential Decree ordering all cattle keepers to leave the Greater Equatoria region and return to Jonglei and Lakes States by 8 May 2015. Despite the expulsion orders, civil unrest between communities continues to escalate.

In Mundri West County, widespread clashes from 22 May resulted in a large number of civilian fatalities, according to a report by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. Additionally, recent clashes have reportedly led to the displacement of at least 25 000 civilians around Ibba, Maridi, Mundri East, Mundri West

and Yambio counties in Western Equatoria State.

Inter-communal conflicts rooted in tribal and ethnic associations are on the rise due to changes in local power structures and the existence of factional militia in some areas. In competition for pasture, elevated levels of inter-communal tensions took place in Lakes and Warrap States and the Equatoria region since January 2015. A deadly cycle of revenge killings spiraled through May and June in Lakes State, leaving many dead, or displaced and destroying farmland. As large numbers of pastoralists continue to move into other territories, levels of mistrust and violence continue to grow with irreversible consequences.

FOOD INSECURITY

The livestock crisis is contributing to deepening food insecurity in South Sudan, which has reached alarming rates in 2015. Devaluation of the local currency, soaring food prices and reduced food trade as a result of the conflict, are undermining the food security of cattle keeping communities.

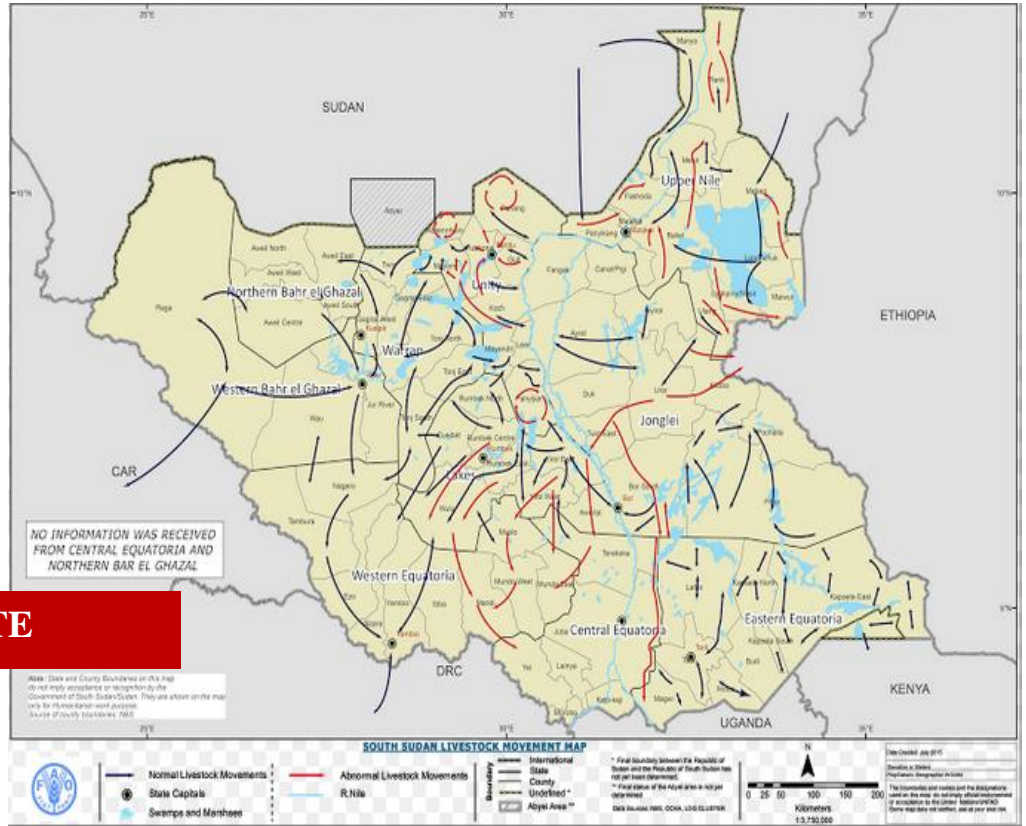
The current economic difficulties and disrupted livestock markets and trade routes have resulted in fluctuating prices for selling or exchanging cattle throughout the year. Livestock markets have been disrupted and are sparse. Before the crisis, selling cattle was traditionally reserved for dowries or paying off debts. Due to the worsening food security situation since the crisis, pastoralist communities have engaged in selling and slaughtering their livestock as a primary coping mechanism. South Sudan is wealthy in livestock, with the highest per capita ownership of animals on the continent, but relies on imports of livestock products from neighbouring countries. Since January 2015, the number of livestock imports from Uganda has decreased owing to economic issues and lower dollar exchange rates in the markets.



Milk is the main source of nutrition for families and children in cattle camp communities. The spread of diseases reduces milk production in cattle. Since December 2013, many pastoralists have depleted or lost their livestock assets due to the conflict. This greatly threatens their food security and it can take several years for a family to replace an animal able to produce milk if it dies of disease or has to be sold.

MIGRATION UPDATE

In 2014, FAO raised concerns about abnormal migration patterns attributed to insecurity, search for pasture and seasonal factors such as flooding and drought. The impact of massive abnormal livestock movements has resulted in extreme cases of cattle raiding, destruction of crops and deadly clashes over access to pasture and water. For example, pastoralists from Jonglei State, who traditionally migrate to Upper Nile State changed their route and headed towards Ethiopia to avoid insecure areas. Additionally, the movement of populations of cattle from Jonglei State into Western Equatoria through Mundri West and across Mundri East counties caused an enormous threat to the host



community, forcing them to move their cattle deep into villages in anticipation of raids.

Many traditional migrations took place in 2015, including the peaceful migration of livestock from Sudan through South Sudan. However, abnormal migration patterns will continue until security improves and pastoralists can return to their places of origin or move through traditional routes. With livestock populations and pastoralists scattered by insecurity, the challenges of reaching these herds for vaccination and treatment multiply.



WHAT IS FAO DOING?

FAO livestock teams remain on the front lines of the livestock crisis. Throughout 2015, direct interventions by FAO have been critical in keeping animals alive and productive as many partners fled highly insecure areas and access constraints persisted. To-date, FAO has reached over 3 million animals through a combination of vaccinations and treatment. Working closely with the Ministry of Livestock- at national and state levels, joint livestock teams continue to deploy across the country to investigate disease outbreaks, conduct disease surveillance and lead interventions in areas where no partners are operating. At the county level, FAO has trained more than 120 disease-reporting focal points. This year, South Sudan's disease reporting has improved as the country became a member of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and submitted reports for the first time.

FAO works side by side with community based animal health workers, who provide basic veterinary services to pastoralists. In 2015, FAO distributed emergency livestock treatment kits (with veterinary drugs), complemented by training for community animal health workers. Since January 2015, FAO has trained over 600 community animal health workers, offering refresher courses and new trainings. FAO continues to develop the self-reliance and sustainability of the community animal health workers system, and relies on their skills to reach animals most in need.

FAO is now scaling up ongoing efforts to strengthen the cold chain system for livestock vaccines. The central cold chain for the country in Juba has tripled in storage capacity since 2013. FAO has strengthened the cold chain hubs in Wau, Rumbek and Torit and has reached 15 locations in seven states with equipment, installations, repairs and maintenance. By advancing technologies and replacing kerosene refrigerators with solar-powered refrigerators, cold chain systems and facilities can operate through times of crisis and during fuel shortages. Over USD 1 million of cold chain equipment has been procured by FAO this year alone. In

July, ministry cold chain technicians and partners were trained on vaccine and cold chain management.

The situation remains of great concern, threatening the health and productivity of the national herd and tearing at the social, political and economic fabric of South Sudan. FAO will continue to scale up livestock interventions through 2016–2017 and **requires immediate funding of USD 600 000 to increase the supply of livestock vaccines and medicines and continue the vaccination campaign through 2015.**

