

# A Review on Current Status of Small Ruminant Meat Production Comparison Yield and Carcass Characteristics in Ethiopia

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## Abstract

The review assessed the small ruminant meat production, comparison on yield, carcass characteristics and marketing opportunity and challenge with the aim of delivering summarized and synthesized information for the beneficiaries and user. The livestock subsector has an enormous contribution to Ethiopia's national economy and livelihoods of many Ethiopian farmers in the various farming system and serves as a source of food, traction, manure, raw materials, investment, cash income, foreign exchange earnings and has social and cultural values. The sub sector contributes about 45% of the agricultural GDP, 16% of the national Gross Domestic Product and 15% of the export earnings. Sheep and goats also contribute a quarter of the domestic meat consumption; about half of the domestic wool requirements; about 40% of fresh skins and 92% of the value of semi-processed skin and hide export trade. Ethiopia can export 700,000 sheep and 2 million heads of goats annually the annual meat production from small ruminants is relatively small compared to the number of heads. There is high demand for live animals as well as meat from small ruminants by consumers in the Middle East and north and West African countries. However, the current levels of contributions of the livestock sector in Ethiopia, is very low. There are various factors that contribute for low productivity: health constraints, socio economic and technical limitations like inadequate feed quality and quantity, poor feeding and health management practice.

**Keywords:** Ethiopia, small ruminant, sheep transport, meat Consumption, meat quality.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The livestock population of Ethiopia is currently estimated at 57.83 million cattle, 28.89 million sheep, 60.51 million poultry, 29.7 million goats, excluding nomadic areas (CSA, 2015/16). The livestock subsector has an enormous contribution to Ethiopia's national economy and livelihoods of many Ethiopian farmers in the various farming system (Belete *et al.*, 2010) and serves as a source of food, traction, manure, raw materials, cash income, foreign exchange earnings and has social and cultural values. The sub sector contributes about 45% of the agricultural GDP and 16% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (IGAD, 2010). It also contributes 15% of the export earnings (Behnke, 2010). Sheep and goats contribute a quarter of the domestic meat consumption; about half of the domestic wool requirements; about 40% of fresh skins and 92% of the value of semi-processed skin and hide export trade. Ethiopia can export 700,000 sheep and 2 million goats annually It is estimated that 1,078,000 sheep and 1,128,000 goats are used in Ethiopia for domestic consumption annually (Adane and Girma, 2008). (FAO, 2009) reported that animals are also sources of powers for cultivation and, for crop threshing and are also essential for transportation of families and agricultural products to the markets. Live stocks are also important source of farmyard manure which helping to improve soil fertility and used as a source of energy (CSA, 2006). As a finding of (Tembely 1999; Addisu, 2015) reported that small ruminant are the major sources of livelihood for landless farmers in rural communities comparing to other livestock species. Whereas ILRI (2011) reported that sheep are mostly kept by smallholders and the rural poor including women headed household Nevertheless, the annual meat production from small ruminants is relatively small compared to the number of heads. There is high demand for live animals as well as meat from small ruminants by consumers in the Middle East and north and West African countries. However, the current levels of contributions of the livestock sector in Ethiopia, is very low. The levels of foreign exchange earnings from livestock and livestock products are also much lower than would be expected, given the size of the livestock population (Berhanu *et al.*, 2006). There are various factors that contribute for low productivity: health constraints, socio economic and technical limitations like inadequate feed quality and quantity, poor feeding and health management (Markos, 2006; Tsedeke, 2007; Berhanu, 2007). Other contributing factors also include low genetic potential policy issues (Zinash *et al.*, 2001) marketing and infrastructure that affect the livestock potentials (Desta, 2000; Mengistu, 2000; Addisu, 2015) Institutional problems and problem of credit facilities, extension, and others (Berhanu *et al.*, 2006; Yilkal, 2015).

## 2. REVIEW

### 2.1 OVER VIEW OF SHEEP AND GOAT PRODUCTION SYSTEM IN ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, various sheep production system categories are practiced, namely highland sheep-barley system,

mixed crop-livestock system, pastoral and agro-pastoral production system, ranching, and Urban and peri-urban (UPU) sheep production system (Solomon *et al.*, 2008). The mixed crop-livestock production system is based on limited communal and/or private grazing areas and the use of crop residue and stubble. The pastoral production system is based on extensive communal grazing whereas agro-pastoralists are characterized by a combination of both pastoral and mixed crop-livestock production (Asfaw *et al.*, 2011). While contributing significantly to meat production in Ethiopia, present production levels of sheep from such subsistent type of production systems is far below their potential. As a result, meat production is estimated at about 3.5 kg per sheep per year in the population and 10 kg per sheep slaughtered. Both values are very low when compared with those in neighboring countries that have small ruminant population's 50–75% less than Ethiopia Amha (2008). Likewise, The average carcass weight of Ethiopian sheep and goats is 10 kg which is the second lowest in sub Saharan Africa And also according to the report of Solomon (2014) goat production system in Ethiopia similar with sheep production system, is classified in mixed crop-livestock system, pastoral and agro- pastoral system urban and peri-urban production system.

## 2.2 FEED RESOURCE FOR SMALL RUMINANT IN ETHIOPIA

According the reported of (Adugna *et al.*, 2012) Feed resources can be classified as natural pasture, crop residue, improved pasture and forage and agro industrial by-products namely noug seed cake , soybean meal, wheat bran, etc of which the first two contribute the largest share. The fibrous agricultural residues contributes a major part of livestock feed especially in densely populated areas where land is prioritized for crop cultivation. The same authors reported that crop residues contribute about 50% of the total feed supply in Ethiopia. Similarly, the naturally occurring grasses, legumes, herbs, shrubs and tree foliage are used as animal feed ( Adugna, 2008). The availability of feed resources in the highlands of Ethiopia depends on the mode and intensity of crop production as well as population pressure Seyoum *et al.* (2001). Crop residues represent a large proportion of feed resources in mixed crop-livestock systems (Malede and Takele, 2014).

## 2.3 CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL RUMINANT IN ETHIOPIAN ECONOMY

Small ruminants, found all over the world, are particularly concentrated in dry areas such as the sub tropics and seasonally dry tropical regions and make a significant contribution to the farm economy in mixed farming systems. In rural areas, which are too dry for cropping, where steppes and ranges are found, they are the main source of income for the population (Rodriquez, 1997, Belete, 2013). According to Hirpa and Abebe (2008) Small ruminant contribute a quarter of the domestic meat consumption about half of the domestic wool requirements about 40% of fresh skins and 92% of the value of semi processed skin and hide export trade of the country. They represent only 7% of the average total capital invested in livestock in the mixed crop-livestock production system, while they account on average for 40% of the cash income earned by farm households 19% of the total value of subsistence food derived from all livestock production and 25% of total domestic meat consumption. Sheep and goats production is an important activity for smallholders, particularly for resource poor farmers in many parts of Ethiopia. They are widely reared in a crop-livestock farming systems and are distributed across different agro-ecological zones of the country. They provide their owners with a vast range of products and services such as immediate cash income, meat, milk, skin, manure, risk spreading or management and social functions (Adane and Girma, 2008). According to CSA (2015), the main sheep and goat producing regions are Oromia (34.2%sheep and 27% goats), Amhara (33% sheep and 20% goats), SNNP (16% sheep and 17.5% goats) and Tigray (6.2% sheep and 15% goats). Small ruminants are mainly kept for income generation in many parts of Ethiopia to obtain cash income for household expenses, such as buying grains for household consumption, buying agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and seed and paying the medical and school expenses of household members They are also considered as investment and insurance to provide cash sources for purchase of farm inputs and house expenses (Tsedeke, 2007; Getahun, 2008; Belete, 2009; Urgessa *et al.*, 2012; Zemed, 2016).

## 2.4 MEAT PRODUCES IN ETHIOPIA AND COMPARISON WITH OTHER COUNTY

According to FAOSTAT (2013), total meat produced in 2012 reached 659,305 tones, indicating a compounded annual growth rate of 2.3 percent between 2000 and 2012. Despite the fact that Ethiopia has the tenth largest livestock population in the world, the production of meat is still low and contributed only about 0.2 percent of the world total meat production, of which most is sheep and goat meat. This ranked Ethiopia the 55th largest meat producing country in the world. According the report of (AACCSA, 2015) the reasons behind the low rate of meat production and processing in Ethiopia are multiple including:

- ✓ Low off-take rates owing to low domestic consumption of meat (9kg/head/annum)
- ✓ large numbers of live animals that by-pass abattoirs and are exported on foot,
- ✓ low supply of animals owing to lack of commercial orientation of animal producers as a result of which they sell only in need of cash or when draught animals get too old,

- ✓ Limited capacity of meat processors in meeting international market requirements & limitation in fulfilling international industry standards.

#### 2.4.1. MEAT CONSUMPTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRY

Demand for food of animal origin in developing countries is expected to double by the year 2020 (Delgado *et al.*, 1999). Enhanced by increases in urbanization, population and income growth, such demand will create markets for animal products and encourage commercialization of livestock production (Delgado *et al.*, 1999). The extent of this commercialization depends on the consumption of the products by consumers. Meat consumption behavior is the deciding factor for the development of the livestock sector in general and small ruminants in particular (Thammi Raju and Suryanarayana, 2005). Consumer tastes and preferences are reflected in the market that are revealed through purchase decisions and price premiums that consumers pay for both visible (Langyintuo *et al.*, 2004) and invisible characteristics of meat. Consumption of sufficient meat is a rare extremity in most developing countries. Developed countries consumed a consistent level of 77 kg of meat per capita annually, while developing countries struggled to maintain a diet with only 25 kg of meat per capita annually. Ethiopians remained slightly below the meat intake of all low-income countries consuming 9kg per capita annually (FAOSTAT, 2004; Abbey, 2004; Tesfaye, 2007). Beginning from ages of comparable 6.2 and 6 months, respectively male goat and sheep are slaughtered for family consumption. According to the finding of (Tsedeke, 2007) 7.1 and 7.7 month respectively for kid and lambs are slaughtered for family consumption. And also Meat processing industry is on the rise in Ethiopia even though the sector is still much less than it should be given the resource potential. Currently there are about 15 export slaughter houses including 8 under establishment and more than 29 abattoirs serving the local market (AACCSA, 2015).

**Table 1: Meat consumption trends in Ethiopia by type in tons**

Meat types	Year						
	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Beef	294000	352500	336000	374000	380000	420000	338150
Sheep meat	36000	47720	60409	79000	81500	86000	86000
Goat meat	25560	32725	44180	55000	64600	66300	68000
Pig meat	1440	1495	1615	1665	1665	1780	1875
Chicken meat	37600	54064	47096	45200	48589	59200	60480
Camel meat	11050	13430	13940	12750	28900	31450	19800
Total	461297	571276	578240	646615	688254	749430	659305

Source: FAOSTAT 2013.

#### 2.4.2. MEAT QUALITY AND CHEMICAL COMPOSITION

Meat quality is important for consumers when it comes to making purchasing decisions, the quality is a combination of chemical, microbial and sensorial attributes (Madruga *et al.*, 2009). Meat from goats has gained acceptance mainly because of its lower fat content than beef and lamb meat. Therefore, it requires low-heat and slow cooking to preserve tenderness and juiciness (Madruga *et al.*, 2008). There is a general conception that goat meat is inferior to other species meat in tenderness (Lee *et al.*, 2008). Compared to sheep, goat meat tends to be less tender, with high shear force values and collagen content (McMillin and Brock, 2005; Webb *et al.*, 2005). High pH values (>6.00) for goat muscles compared to the pH values of muscle from other species, have been found in many studies (Webb *et al.*, 2005). Carcass composition is another important aspect of meat quality and is normally assessed by amount of physical dissected tissues (muscle, fat and bones) or chemical analysed constituents i.e. protein, fat, water and ash (Moran and Wood, 1986). Several studies have been conducted to compare chemical composition of sheep and goats at the same slaughter weight, age or under similar feeding management (Babiker *et al.*, 1990; Sen *et al.*, 2004; Santos *et al.*, 2008). It has been found that, goat meat is characterised by low intramuscular fat and higher moisture content (Babiker *et al.*, 1990; Mahgoub and Lodge, 1998) at comparable ages and slaughter weight. Generally key determinant of meat quality is pH. The ultimate pH is determined 24 hours post-slaughter, using a pH meter. Good quality meat usually has a pH of 5.4–5.7. The muscle of a living animal has a pH of 7.1. The extent to which pH is lowered after slaughter depends on the amount of glycogen in the muscle prior to the animal's death. And Meat color is an important parameter in meat quality. Color is also greatly affected by muscle pH. At a high pH, muscle has a closed structure and, hence, appears dark and the meat tends to be tough. Meat color is also affected by diet (Ameha, 2006).

#### 2.5. SMALL RUMINANT MARKETING IN ETHIOPIA

Potential production and market opportunities for small ruminant meat have not been exploited because of scant knowledge of small ruminant demand patterns (Ehui *et al.*, 2000). An important aspect of production and its response to demand and supply is knowledge of markets and marketing systems. To shift production from subsistence to a more commercial outlook is especially important to describe and intervening aspects of marketing infrastructure and facilities, market channels and outlets, buyer preferences for live animals and their

meats, major market players, government intervention and role of the private sector (Devendra, 2007). There is an increase in demand of Ethiopian small ruminants both for local and export markets (Azage *et al.*, 2006). Recent studies showed that smallholder farmers mainly keep small ruminant as a source of income (Markos, 2006; Endeshaw, 2007; Tsedeke, 2007; Getahun, 2008) which may indicate higher demand for small ruminants. The main actors of the 1st tier are local farmers and rural traders/rural assemblers who transact at farm level. Those small traders from different corners bring their animals to the local market (2nd tier). Traders/wholesalers purchase a few large animals or a fairly large number of small animals for selling to the secondary markets. In the secondary market (3rd tier), both smaller and larger traders operate and traders (wholesalers or retailers) and butchers from terminal markets come to buy animals. In the terminal markets (4th tier), big traders and butcher (wholesalers or retailers) transact larger number of mainly slaughter type animals.

### 2.5.1. STATUS OF SMALL RUMINANT EXPORT MARKET

**Preferred small ruminant breeds:** According to abattoirs and live animal exporters, the Ethiopian sheep and goats breeds most preferred in the Middle East market are the Black Head Somali and Afar sheep. The Borena/Somali and Afar are among the most preferred goat breeds. The preferences to these breeds may have been due the breeds' lowland background, their adaptation of the buyers to the conformation of the animals and the taste of the meat. However, when there is high demand and the abattoirs are unable to fulfil orders for specific breeds; other breeds of small ruminants are also slaughtered and exported (ESGPIP, 2011).

**Operational export abattoirs:** As of early 2011, there are seven functional export abattoirs involved in exporting small ruminant chilled meat. Two abattoirs (HELIMEX and ELFORA) are located in Debre Zeit, 45 km from Addis Abeba and three abattoirs (Luna, Modern and Organic) are located in Modjo, 85 km from Addis Abeba. The ELFORA abattoir in Metehara is located (170 km from Addis Abeba) and the Abergele abattoir is in Mekele, 700 km from Addis Abeba (EMDTI, 2010; ESGPIP, 2011).

Major competitors of Ethiopia for the Middle Eastern market are shown in Table 3. Though most of these countries are very far from the importing countries, their volume of export is increasing. This increase is mainly due to the countries meeting export sanitary/ requirements, better economies of scale of livestock production, and well-informed, capable value chain actors able to take advantage of the current market more so than traditional exporting countries such as Ethiopia.

**Export destinations:** Small ruminant meat and live animals from Ethiopia are mainly exported to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Yemen and Qatar. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are the largest importers of live animals and chilled small ruminant meat (EMDTI, 2010; ESGPIP, 2011)

**Table 2: Major competitors in the Middle Eastern market**

Export type	Competitor	Remark *
Live Sheep	Australia	Exported 3.8 million sheep to middle East in 2007
Beef	Brazil, India, Argentina	
Sheep meat	Australia, New Zealand	
Sheep and goats	India, Iran	

Sources; FAOSTAT, 2007

### 2.5.2. SMALL RUMINANT EXPORT

Livestock and livestock products export are among the major earners of foreign exchange for the Ethiopian economy. Of the total number of live animals exported 19% was sheep. In shoat marketing system, 95% of the exported animals were sheep (Hailemariam, 2009). Nearly all Ethiopian live sheep and goat are exported to Saudi Arabia. This indicates live animals export from the country lack diversified export destinations. Additionally, Ethiopian market share and absolute exports to the Saudi market have declined in recent years while the share of the competitors increasing. Ethiopia's current share in the global market is very limited. In 2004, the share of Ethiopia was only 0.23% of global (FAO, 2005). As the country has the largest number of livestock in Africa, It has much to gain from the growing global market for livestock products. The proximity of Ethiopia to the Middle East and their adaptation to the indigenous animals are some of the advantages for the Ethiopian export market (Belachew and Jemberu, 2003). However, the international market for meat has become more competitive and the meat traders have had to adopt improved practices in production, processing and packaging of meat. Market requirements also differ both in sizes of carcass and the level of fatness of the carcass. Thus the legal export of both live animal and processed meat is thus constrained due to shortage created by the illicit export. According to Workneh (2006); Daniel, (2008) the estimated annual illegal flow of livestock through boundaries reaches as high as 320,000 cattle. This being the potential for export, the actual performance has remained very low, leaving most (55 to 85%) of the projected livestock off take for the unofficial cross-border export and the domestic market. According to the finding of Legese (2008) a large percentage of the live shoat and meat exported from Ethiopia originates from Afar pastoral area Ethiopia's export of meat of which most is chilled sheep and goat carcasses in 2011 was much less than 1% of the total volume of global meat exports, which was estimated at USD 105 billion (USAID, 2013). However, this is the result of the last decade in which time the country has built markets in several African and Middle Eastern countries including, United Arab

Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Angola, Egypt, and Bahrain.

**Table 3: Meat yield, Slaughter weight (kg) and dressing percentage (%) of indigenous sheep and goat in Ethiopia**

sheep type	Sheep		Sources	Goat type	Goat		Sources
	*SW	**DP			SW	DP	
washera	24.3	37.9	Anteneh et al.(2015)	Long eared Somali	20.0	43.7	Ameha et al., 2007
Washera	22.2	47.2	Abebe et al. (2011)	Central high land goat	18.38	42.5	Ameha et al., 2007
Washera	21.3	43.4	Yilkal et al. (2014)	Afar	17.95	44.6	Ameha et al., 2007
Arsi-Bale	27.8	36.1	Wondwosen et al. (2013)	SEA	14.8	43.3	Safari et al., 2011
Arsi-Bale	21.1	46.0	Girma et al. (2014)	Borana	27.34	44.5	Hailu et al., 2005
Afar	20.9	44.0	(Awet and Solomon, 2009)	Abargale goats	18.5	39.7	Aberra et al., 2016
Farta	22.5	42.8	Aschalew and Getachew (2013)	Short-eared Somali	24.2	48.2	Solomon and Simret, 2008
Menz	23.1	48.2	Meron (2016)	Sidama	20.3	51.6	Wondwosen et al., 2010

\* SW= slaughter, DP \*\* Dressing percentage

## 2.6. OPPORTUNITIES OF SMALL RUMINANTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS PRODUCTION IN ETHIOPIA

Meat type sheep and goats consume 3% dry matter of their body weight (Alemu, 2008). Sheep and goats have higher survival rates under drought conditions compared to cattle. Moreover, because of their reproductive rates, flock numbers can be restored more rapidly. Sheep and goats are widely adapted to different climates and are found in all production systems. They also have lower feed requirements compared to cattle because of their small body size. This allows easy integration of small ruminants in to different farming systems (Adane and Girma, 2008). Small ruminants have short generation cycles and high reproductive rates, which lead to high production efficiency.

## 2.7. CHALLENGE OF SMALL RUMINANT PRODUCTION IN ETHIOPIA

In central rift valley, feed shortage was reported as one of the limiting factors in small ruminant productivity (Abule, 1998). In these areas where there are few rainy months with limited rainfall of erratic nature feed production for small ruminants is inadequate. According to Belete (2009) feed shortage in both seasons (dry and wet) limits productivity of small ruminants and it was further worsened due to the absence of awareness and practice of feed conservation techniques. Moreover, forage development has been given less attention in most part of Ethiopia. According to Belete (2009) diseases and parasites hamper small ruminant production by causing high mortalities especially among suckling animals. Diseases and parasites cause reduction of productive and reproductive performance of small ruminant production. According to Belete (2009) water shortage and drought occurs due to relatively smaller rainfall and shorter rainy seasons in most of goat producing areas of the country. The major problems are the traditional management systems which are not market oriented, underdeveloped marketing systems poor infrastructure, poor financial facility and presence of cross-border trades (Azage *et al.*, 2006, Berhanu *et al.*, 2007).

## 3. CONCLUSION

The livestock subsector has an enormous contribution to Ethiopia's national economy and livelihoods of many Ethiopian farmers in the various farming system and serves as a source of food, traction, manure, raw materials, investment, cash income, foreign exchange earnings and has social and cultural values. The sub sector contributes about 45% of the agricultural GDP and 16% of the national Gross Domestic Product. It also contributes 15% of the export earnings. Sheep and goats contribute a quarter of the domestic meat consumption; about half of the domestic wool requirements; about 40% of fresh skins and 92% of the value of semi-processed skin and hide export trade. Ethiopia has the potential to can export 700,000 sheep and 2 million goats annually. The annual meat production from small ruminants is relatively small compared to the number of heads. There is high demand for live animals as well as meat from small ruminants by consumers in the Middle East and north and West African countries. However, the current levels of contributions of the livestock sector in Ethiopia, is very low. The levels of foreign exchange earnings from livestock and livestock products are also much lower than would be expected, given the size of the livestock population. There are various factors that contribute for low productivity: health constraints, socio economic and technical limitations like inadequate feed quality and

quantity, poor feeding and health management. In Ethiopia, various sheep production system categories are practiced, namely highland sheep-barley system, mixed crop-livestock system, pastoral and agro-pastoral production system, ranching, and urban and peri-urban (UPU) sheep production system. Meat consumption behaviour is the deciding factor for the development of the livestock sector in general and small ruminants in particular. Consumer tastes and preferences are reflected in the market. These are revealed through purchase decisions and price premiums that consumers pay for both visible and invisible characteristics of meat. Consumption of sufficient meat is a rare extremity in most developing countries. Meat quality is important for consumers when it comes to making purchasing decisions. Potential production and market opportunities for small ruminant meat have not been exploited because of scant knowledge of small ruminant demand patterns. Livestock and livestock products export are among the major earners of foreign exchange for the Ethiopian economy. In shoat marketing system, 95% of the exported animals were sheep. Live animals export from the country lack diversified export destinations.

Goats have ecological benefits and allow efficient utilization of natural resources. The migrating flocks of goats and sheep are often used overnight to fertilize crop land, and crop farmers pay relatively high prices or give cereals in return for their service. Meat type sheep and goats consume 3% of their body weight dry matter. The benefit of Sheep and goats have higher survival rates under drought conditions compared to cattle. The constraints of small ruminant meat production are inadequate feed quality and quantity, diseases, poor breed potentials, and inadequate policies of credit, extension, marketing and infrastructure that affects sheep performances of Ethiopia.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ The meat produced from small ruminant is not proportional to the number we have so the government and other stakeholders should collaborate to solve the identified constraint within the sector to boost the meat production
- ✓ Establishing marketing channel should be necessary to paramount the production and productivity of small ruminant meat.
- ✓ Live animals export from the country should have diversified export destinations.
- ✓ Integrating small ruminant with crop production should be necessary to increase the productivity of the soil.
- ✓ Strict quality control measures to meet specific export market demands need to be implemented and establishing of export control mechanism.
- ✓ To enhance the productivity of the small ruminant supplementation of feed should be necessary

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