

ENACT CATTLE RANCHING LAW TO BOOST CATTLE PRODUCTION IN GHANA



BACKGROUND

Pastoral herdsmen, mostly from the Sahel regions of West Africa, move their livestock into the country in search of pasture and water mainly during the dry season when these commodities are in short supply. Movement of some the herdsmen and their livestock are poorly controlled leading to destruction of crop farms and conflicts which often result in fatalities of herdsmen, crop farmers and community members. ECOWAS International Transhumance Protocol that regulates transhumance practice in West Africa is not strictly adhered to in Ghana and as such pastoral livestock enter the country not only through the approved entry points with quarantine stations but a large number of them enter the country through unapproved points. The country does not have demarcated corridors nor grazing areas specifically allocated for use by pastoral livestock and as such the herds often move through farm lands causing damage to crops. The domestic production of animal protein is inadequate to meet the national demand, and as such large quantities of meat and dairy products are imported annually to supplement domestic production. The gap between national demand and domestic supply of meat could be partially filled through increased supply from pastoral livestock.

Cattle production in Ghana is a major source of income and employment for many. It also helps to reduce the import bill by serving as an import substitution industry to reduce live cattle, and beef imports. Cattle production experienced a marginal increase from 1,543,000 cattle in 2012 to 1,727,000 in 2015, which is far below potential production levels (SRID, 2015). This slow growth is due to a myriad of problems plaguing the industry. Cattle production in Ghana is characterized by free range and semi-intensive methods of cattle rearing. This means cattle are partially enclosed and provided with some minimal feeding and care, or allowed to roam in search of food. This mode of rearing cattle presents numerous challenges that negatively affect the growth and development of the industry.

Contribution of Agriculture and Livestock to the GDP of Ghana

National GDP	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*	2014*	Average
GDP at Current Market Prices by Economic Activity (GH¢ Million)							
Agriculture	11,343	12,910	14,155	16,668	19,969	21,642	16,114
Livestock	729	873	1,004	1,162	1,346	1,448	1,094
Share of Livestock (%)	6.43	6.76	7.09	6.97	6.74	6.69	6.8
Distribution of GDP (at Basic Prices) by Economic Activity							
Agriculture	31.8	29.8	25.6	22.9	21.6	19.9	25.3
Livestock	2	2	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.7
Share of Livestock (%)	6.29	6.71	7.03	6.99	6.94	6.53	6.75
GDP at 2006 Prices by Economic Activity (GH¢ Million)							
Agriculture	6,129	6,453	6,507	6,657	7,003	7,369	6,129
Livestock	502	526	552	581	612	644	569
Share of Livestock (%)	8.19	8.15	8.48	8.73	8.74	8.74	9.28
Growth Rates of GDP at 2006 Constant Prices (Percentage)							
Agriculture	7.2	5.3	0.8	2.3	5.2	5.2	4.33
Livestock	4.4	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.3	4.97

Source: GSS (2015); *Revised; Current US\$1.00 = GH¢5.30

Situations that Led to Conflict between Herdsmen and Farmers

- The contamination of river bodies by pastoral cattle has been a source of conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. The herdsmen send their cattle to drink in water bodies and in the process pollute the water with their faecal matter and secretion from the mouth.
- Spraying of farms is a way of controlling weeds and pests. Farmers normally spray their farms with weedicides and insecticides to enhance crop yield. However, herdsmen see this as a counter move to deny them of pasture and deliberately kill their cattle through poisonous chemicals.
- Destruction of farms and farm produce by transhumance cattle. This is as a result of the inability of the herdsmen to control the movement of the herds coupled with the large number of cattle under the care of a few herdsmen making the destruction of farms inevitable.

- No regulations governing cattle rearing in the country is hampering the livelihoods of cattle and crop farmers.

Impact of conflict situations on the Farming Community

- Chaos and riot between farmers and cattle ranchers in communities such as Afram Plains, Agogo and Kintampo led to the destruction of property and loss of lives. Some farmers in the affected communities have had to vacate their original place of settlement due to the conflict. Some have also abandoned their farms for fear of being attacked and possibly killed.
- Some women have become widows and single parents as a result of the conflicts.
- Significant decline in food and livestock production in and the affected communities.
- Some farmers have lost their source of livelihood leading to rise in unemployment.
- Others are saddled with debts due to their inability to pay back credit and loans they took from banks.

Cattle Ranching Law in Perspective

Among other benefits, the cattle ranching law will:

- Empower public institutions to develop and enforce by laws for peaceful co-existence between crop and cattle farmers, and the protection of lives and property.
- Provide clear guidelines on the production of cattle in Ghana to boost output of beef and live cattle.
- Minimize pollution to water resources and the environment due to cattle rearing. These are in the form of bush burning, overgrazing and defecation into water bodies by cattle.
- Improve and transform the existing pastoral production systems to enhance production, productivity and income of stakeholders in the pastoral value chain including small scale crop farmers.
- Strengthen overall animal health cover for pastoral herds through early warning system, prevention, control and eradication of disease.
- Support training, research and development initiatives on issues pertaining to pastoral sector for improving livestock production, productivity and health as well as the profitability of the entire pastoral livestock value chain.
- Improve the production and productivity of pastoral livestock by promoting and disseminating technologies developed by the research system.

- Increase availability of feed and water resources to meet the requirement of pastoralists to attain optimal productivity.
- Create an enabling environment to attract investment and finance for improving livestock infrastructure, production, processing, value addition and marketing.
- Eliminate herder-crop farmer conflicts and strengthen synergy between crop and livestock farmers for mutual benefits.

Solutions & Recommendations

- Establish ranches and grazing reserves in hot spot areas such as Kintampo, Afram Plains, Agogo to control the movement of cattle from moving willy-nilly to destroy crops.
- Empower and resource the already established Ghana Cattle Ranching Committee, whose core mandate is to provide sustainable proposals and strategies to resolve the challenge of transhumance and improve domestic cattle production with all logistics and financial support for them to effectively execute its mandate.
- In the absence of the Cattle Ranching Law, there is the urgent need to develop an action plan and a map out a clear road map to provide dispute settling mechanism.
- Municipal, District and Metropolitan Assemblies should come up with by-laws in the absence of the national law to regulate and sanitize the industry.
- Intensify education and sensitization for both crop farmers, cattle farmers and the general public.
- Call on the police and other security agencies to enforce all criminal laws to sanitize the industry in the absence of the law.

Status of the Ranching Policy and Law

- The draft policy on cattle ranching has been presented to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) to use in their engagement with the Attorney General's Department to draft the cattle ranching law. This was done in the first quarter of 2018.
- A work plan and implementation strategy has been developed for the cattle ranching law.

Action

- Parliamentary select committee on Agriculture and Cocoa affairs and Local government will be engaged to facilitate the passage of the law.
- Government must ensure the passage of the ranching law before the next general election in 2020.



C/O PMB 56, KIA-ACCRA
House Number E261/17
Abavana Junction (Maamobi Polyclinic Road)
Digital Address: GA-022-2111
TEL: +233(0)552 663 648

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