Livestock Data Survey of participants in the 12th Livestock Donor Group Meeting

The Livestock Data Innovation Project conducted an online ‘data’ survey among participants in the 12th Inter-Agency Donor Group meeting, held at AU-IBAR, Nairobi, on 10-12 May 2011. Participants in the meeting included donors, NGOs, international organizations, university / research institutions and some private companies and consultants.

The objective of the survey was to identify the concerns of users of livestock-related data / indicators, including what types of data they use and where the strengths and gaps in the available livestock data exist.

34 participants in the Donor Meeting responded to the survey, of which 42% were from international organizations, 18% from universities / research institutes, 14% from NGOs and about 12% were donors, with the remaining working either in the private sector or for some regional institution.

Overall, whilst the availability and quality of livestock data / indicators in Africa is rated as ‘very important’ by 79% of respondents, more than 90% of them ‘don’t agree’ that available livestock data are sufficient for their livestock-related activities.

Use of livestock data

Participants in the survey were asked to rank their four top uses of livestock data / indicators: project formulation and implementation is the most frequent use of livestock-related data (71% of respondents), followed by monitoring and evaluation (59%), and research & analysis and programme formulation and implementation (56% each).

Livestock stakeholders use primarily regional and national level data, as well as community and household level data. District level data are the least used, though they are critical to design projects, programmes and policies in the livestock sector. For instance, unless information is available on the distribution of cattle across districts of a country, it is difficult to plan and implement any animal vaccination campaign.

Over 50% of the respondents use livestock data / indicators either on a daily or a weekly basis, while another 21% use them at least once a month. Overall, 84% of respondents use livestock data on a regular basis, and only 6% of them use livestock data occasionally.

Sources of livestock data

Ad hoc reports, papers and articles as well as international databases, such as FAOSTAT or the World Animal Health Information System of OIE, are the major sources of livestock data / indicators, being used by 89% and 85% of respondents respectively.

Data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture / Livestock and by the National Statistical Office are also widely used, by 67% and 53% of the respondents respectively. However, only 18% and 6% of the respondents indicate the Ministry of Agriculture / Livestock and the Statistical Office as their primary source of data. This highlights issues in livestock data communication and dissemination at national level, as international databases – which are the first source of data for the majority of respondents – are populated with data collected by national authorities.

Gaps between demand and supply of livestock data

Answers to the survey indicate a consistent gap between the use / demand of livestock data and their supply / availability.
Production and productivity data are most in demand (rated as most useful to their work by over 68% and 59% of respondents respectively), followed by livestock inventories and input data (both >40%). Between 20% and 35% of stakeholders use animal disease, marketing, consumption, price, natural resource-related and trade data, while only 12% state that breed data are ‘most useful’ to their work.

However, the ‘most useful’ data/indicators for stakeholders are not always available and, when available, rarely they are of good quality, which highlights a major gap between the demand and supply of livestock-related data.

The graph below shows the proportion of stakeholders that consider relevant livestock data /indicator as: (1) not available / poor (darkest segment of the bars); (2) available but of low quality; (3) available and good (lightest segments).

Lessons and the way forward

The results of this survey are not necessarily representative of overall stakeholders data concerns, as they are based on a small and non-random sample of livestock data stakeholders. However, they definitely support the idea that, whilst livestock data / indicators are essential for the largest majority of stakeholders, rarely the available data / indicators are sufficient for efficiently formulating and implementing projects and programmes as well as for conducting research.

The Livestock Data Innovation Project, in partnership with the African Union - Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), has been facilitating cooperation and collaboration between major livestock data users and suppliers – in Niger, Tanzania and Uganda – to contribute to enhancing the quantity / quality of livestock data / indicators available for public and private sector decision-making.

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