

Transforming livestock based value chains in Zimbabwe

Project dates: 1st February 2019 – 31st January 2023

CIPS Foundation report: 1st September 2020 – 28th February 2021



Sibongile is one of the smallholder farmers who have benefitted from a match funding initiative organised as part of this project. With the funding she was able to build a new housing structure for her goats. PHOTO: ActionAid

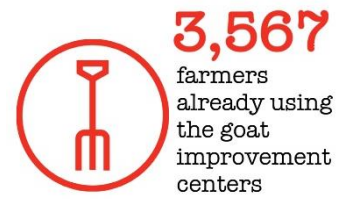
Project summary

With the generous support of CIPS Foundation, ActionAid is transforming Zimbabwe's livestock and meat industry value chains and contributing to the development of an inclusive, diversified and efficient agricultural sector.

This four-year project is taking place in 20 districts in Mashonaland, Manicaland and Matebeleland North and South provinces – 12 districts under the goat value chain and eight under the pork value chain. ActionAid is the leading member of a consortium implementing this project and we are working closely with government livestock ministries, private companies and organisations working within value chains in the livestock industry.

Despite challenges impacting project implementation including the global outbreak of Covid-19, the project has had a significant impact since beginning in 2019 and we are pleased to share some recent updates and highlights with you in this report.

Key successes



Progress against objectives

Objective one: Factors affecting the performance of the pig and goat value chain are monitored, analysed and better understood

- A **scoping study** on each of the value chains was completed earlier in the project and used to develop an **Upgrading Strategic Framework** which continues to guide implementation. Here you can access the [Pork Value Chain \(PVC\)](#) and [Goat Value Chain \(GVC\)](#) reports.
- During the reporting period, we continued to **monitor the performance** of registered champion, anchor and small to medium scale farmers¹. For example, we conducted a Performance Annual Survey with 141 farmers in the PVC and 245 in the GVC in nine randomly selected project districts. We also delivered four training sessions in Mashonaland East and West for 120 small to medium scale farmers (42 female, 78 male), enabling them to better track value chain performance and strengthen input and output marketing collective action at the local farmer and syndicate level. Lastly, we introduced weekly monitoring of Goat Improvement Centres (GIC) and breeding performance. This will track the condition of breeding stock, mortality and breeding rates, feeding, weight, marketing and asset/ stock inventory. A Business Development Officer will be responsible for tracking the performance of each GIC, and implementation strategies will be adapted in line with insights gained from this.
- We organised two **learning platforms** for Pork Production Business Syndicates (PPBS) members in Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West. 155 people took part including anchor and champion farmers, small to medium farmers, key private sector players and government officials. During the learning platforms, syndicate members shared information on best production practices, how to reduce feed costs and financing for PVC initiatives. The meeting also provided a platform for farmers to interact with input suppliers, output markets and policy makers.
- The project conducted 11 **look and learn visits** against a target of seven. Two of these took place at the provincial level and nine were local as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. These visits reached a total of 311 people (120 female, 191 male) including Agritex extension workers, anchor, champion and small to medium



Small to medium and anchor farmers pictured at a look and learn visit at Zvikomborero Farm. PHOTO: ActionAid

¹ The pork value chain includes champion farmers (50+ sow units), anchor farmers (25+ sow units) and small to medium farmers (5+ units). In the goat value chain, there are anchor farmers (15+ units) and small to medium farmers. The aim is to reach farmers operating at different levels of the value chain.

farmers. The project introduced a competition for high producers in the GVC and the best anchor farmers were selected to host six district level look and learn visits. 345 (142 female, 203 male) goat producers, stakeholders, integrator, and input suppliers participated. 123 farmers and stakeholders (74 female, 49 male) also took part in look and learn visits hosted by Zvikomborero Farms.

Objective two: Upgraded strategies are implemented to improve pig and goat value chain performance

- During the reporting period, we continued to work with key government departments including Agritex, Veterinary Services and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, to **select and register farmers taking part in the project**. A total of 11,181 farmers have been registered across both value chains. Within the GVC, 10,003 farmers have been registered – 1,010 of these are anchor farmers (475 female, 535 male) and 335 are small-medium farmers (234 female, 101 male). For the pork value chain, 1,178 farmers have been registered - 567 pig producers (172 female, 395 male) and 611 women and young people as part of the weaner to finisher scheme.
- We have made good progress on the **construction of 12 Goat Improvement Centres (GIC)**. Seven of these centres are now fully functional and final construction work on the remaining five centres will be completed by May 2021. GICs aim to provide business support for goat farmers and 3,567 people (2,794 female, 773 male) have already benefitted from services including dipping, mating, seed sales, collective marketing and accessing animal health products. In addition, the 12 GICs have cumulatively planted four hectares of seeds including velvet beans, sun hemp, lablab, forage sorghum and cowpeas. This enabled farmers to sell 250kg of fodder seed and generate 250 USD – revenue from this will increase as the the project progresses.
- We have now established and strengthened **12 district-level Goat Producer Business Associations (GPBAs) and two regional Pork Production Business Syndicates (PPBSs)** which represent pig and goat farmers. These associations will improve representation, production, productivity and marketing within the value chains as well as supporting farmers to move towards commercialisation. 10 new Goat Associations were formed, and two existing associations were strengthened. Two regional Pork Syndicates have also been set up to address barriers in the pork value chain and during the reporting period, we delivered a workshops for 86 Pork Syndicate members focusing on strategic business planning and capacity development. **Business Management Units (BMUs)** are currently being established for all Goat Associations and Pork Syndicates – these are expected to be functional by summer 2021. The units will focus on marketing and cold chain, transport and logistics, breeding and extension, collective action (input and output marketing), fundraising and resource mobilisation as well as providing services for members. The BMUs will be managed by technical specialists who will be supported by syndicate leadership and we will continue to strengthen the groups in the third year of the project.
- **Breeding improvements**
 - **Goat value chain:** At the start of this project, there were no certification standards for determining the quality of goats bred and sold by farmers. During the reporting period, we continued to work alongside the Goat Breeders' Association of Zimbabwe



Goat Improvement Centres making a difference for small and medium goat producers

(GBAZ) and other experts to **develop standards for local, indigenous breeds**. As detailed in the previous report, standards were successfully certified and adopted for South African Boer and Kalahari Red goats. We are pleased to report that standards have now also been developed for Matabele and Mashona goats. As a result, farmers can seek certification and increase their credibility as breeders. This will also ensure an adequate supply of quality assured pure local goat breeds.

- We imported an additional 88 purebred goats from Namibia including Boer, Kalahari Red, Saneen and Toggenburg, bringing the total to 312 against a target of 285. The target was exceeded as the supplier provided 17 replacement goats at no additional cost to offset mortalities recorded in the first year of the project, meaning that 10 additional goats could be procured with the savings. The **importation of purebred goats is now complete** and breeding stock has been fully insured to minimise any future loss.



We expect farmers to start accessing genetics at the end of 2021. Mating pens were also established across the Goat Improvement Centres, equipped with pure bucks to start breeding with does in the second quarter of 2021.

- **Pork Value Chain:** Earlier in the project we purchased and imported 244 pigs from South African breeder, DanBred. A total of 181 pigs farrowed 2,101 piglets with 565 mortalities. The biggest contributor to piglet mortality was the absence of farrowing crates which reduce crushing by limiting sow movement – these took longer to arrive due to global supply constraints induced by Covid-19. The Pig Industry Board and Veterinary Services Department are providing technical assistance to reduce similar cases in future farrowing batches. We also worked with an insurance company to ensure full coverage in the event of any mortalities in the parent stock. A mortality tracker has been developed to assess weekly mortalities and identify corrective measures.



- We have **registered 9,034 farmers on a database** which will track farmers' progress and enable bulk SMS messages, such as alerts and early warnings about diseases, to be sent. The target for this activity is to register 11,000 farmers and will continue to register participating farmers in the third year of the project.
- During the reporting period we continued to provide **training on good animal husbandry practices** for small to medium scale farmers in both value chains. For the PVC, we trained 732 farmers, bringing the cumulative total to 1,017 against a target of 1,060. The trainings were delivered to farmers in small groups to ensure compliance with Covid-19 guidelines and the remaining farmers will be trained in the third year of the project. For the GVC, 1,690 farmers were trained, bringing the total to 5,042 GVC farmers have now been trained against a target of 9,000 in years one and two - the remaining 3,958 farmers will be trained in year three. We also provided training for 188 goat anchor farmers, bringing the cumulative total to

1,000. For the PVC, we trained an additional 11 champion farmers and 46 anchor farmers (cumulative total of 16 and 71 respectively) as well as 67 government extension staff. Training covered topics including good genetics, management of breeding stock, animal nutrition and health, record keeping, leadership, business planning and syndicate development.

- **Goat Holding Centres** – we have completed the construction of strategic infrastructure for marketing goats at Matopos Research Institute (MRI), and a second structure will be set up at Henderson Research Institute (HRI) by June 2021. The goat holding centre at MRI has the capacity to hold 600 goats and work carried out included constructing six goat holding pens and loading ramps, rehabilitating an existing dipping tank, constructing feed troughs, and installing a water supply system in each pen. We also continued to strengthen GPBAs and marketing to increase the movement of stock through the holding centres to target consumers, butcheries and supermarkets which were identified through the meat market survey.
- The **participation of women** is critical in transforming value chains and through this project, ActionAid is targeting women in the pork value chain in particular as the gender split in goat farming is generally better. Within the target of 1,000 pig farmers reached through this project, 600 of these will be women and young people. We have now verified and registered 611 against this figure, reaching a higher number in case of any dropouts. We have also developed a **gender strategy** to increase the involvement of women and young people in the project. The strategy will be shared with CIPS Foundation once final approval has been granted. One of the activities being delivered is a ‘weaner to finisher’ scheme which will encourage involvement from young and women farmers by providing training on production practices, feed and medicines. This training started in March and weaners will be available from April following the arrival of breeding stock in April 2020. We are also exploring business partnerships which provide feed and drugs on credit to participants to reduce the impact which high feed costs have on production.
- Earlier in the project, we carried out a **Meat Markets Systems Analysis survey** covering 58 districts across all 10 provinces in Zimbabwe. The survey documented the volume of trade in abattoirs, licenced independent butcheries and large retail supermarkets. The results of the study will be critical in initiating direct marketing initiatives, benchmarking and tracking changes in the price of pork and goat meat; these activities will take place in year three.
- As part of this project, we are setting up two **meat processing, slaughter and cold chain facilities** for the pork value chain. In Mashonaland West, an infrastructural plan for the construction of Grade ‘B’ facilities² was developed and approved by the provincial Public Health Officer and Chegutu Rural District Council. Construction can now begin following an environmental and social impact assessment, and a joint venture agreement is being developed between investors, Pork Syndicates and the project team. In Mashonaland East, we will be upgrading an existing Grade ‘C’ pork processing and cold chain facilities into a Grade ‘B’. These improvements will enable the slaughter of 300 pigs per day in anticipation of



Letwinner, chairperson of one of the groups says there have been drastic changes since the group started working collectively, for example use of bulk procurement reducing waste. PHOTO: ActionAid

² Facilities are categorised according to slaughter capacity and carrying ratio. Grade A has a capacity of 1,000+ per day, Grade B is 300 per day and Grade C is 50 per day.

increased production from the Pork Syndicates. A Strategic Business Unit will also be set up to focus on meat processing and marketing and Syndicate members will be included as shareholders. Procurement processes for labour, building materials and equipment will take place in the first half of year three.

- We hired a private consultant to develop cost effective pig and goat housing designs and guidelines. These have now been finalised and shared with farmers and extension staff, enabling them to standardise pig sties and construct and renovate existing structures. Farmers also had an opportunity to see animal housing structures during look and learn visits. Construction of pig sties at Braford and Shamiso Farms has been affected by Covid-19 restrictions which disrupted work and material supply chains, but construction is ongoing.

Objective three: Local stakeholders and government technical ministries have developed innovative and low-cost solutions to ensure compliance with industry regulations

- An **advocacy strategy** has now been developed for both target value chains in consultation with the LMAC, PPAZ, GBAZ, farmer representatives and government ministries. A validation meeting was held for each value chain, resulting in the adoption of the strategies. A key focus of the strategy will be advocating for an improved domestic agribusiness environment through evidence-based policy work, with the aim of ensuring that national policy and regulatory frameworks are right for growth and development of the livestock and meat industry. We will also be engaging with key stakeholders to reduce the cost of compliance and production in the two value chains.
- During the reporting period, we held **three consultative meetings with key value chain stakeholders** in order to influence policy affecting the livestock sector. These meetings focused on reducing the cost of compliance and key advocacy actions to be taken for both value chains. Importantly, moving forward, the Goat Association and Pork Syndicate will engage with key stakeholders to influence desired policy change.
- As a result of restrictions in place due to Covid-19, we were not able to carry out **look and learn visits with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee** on Agriculture. Despite this, we were still able to share key policy documents and the scoping study reports.

Objective four: Improved access to financial services and business development support

- During the reporting period, we organised 10 planning and coordination meetings with Financial Service Providers including AgriBank, Empower Bank and Metropolitan Bank. Due to the ongoing economic impact of Covid-19 on financial institutions, no formal lines of credit were provided to goat and pig farmers. We will continue our work in this area, engaging with financial services organisations to unlock financing for small and medium producers.
- Earlier in the project, producers running pork and goat enterprises were invited to apply for **match funds from the project budget to support investments which will improve performance**. The 43 successful goat and pig farmers (20 female, 23 male) have now benefitted from the first phase of these small grants. We managed to procure materials and equipment linked to the farmers' investment projects and these materials have now been delivered. Successful projects receiving small grants are focusing on low-cost feed production, improving housing structures, genetics, clean energy solutions including solar energy and biogas, water efficiency technologies, feed formulation equipment and animal health.
- **Appropriate technologies:** The project procured Artificial Insemination equipment from South Africa for the PVC. A delivery schedule has been developed and approximately 400

semen doses will be available for Pork Syndicate members each month. We are also in the process of constructing two biodigesters which will enable environmental waste disposal. For the GVC, we procured a feed mixer for integrators which helps to reduce overgrazing and the cost of feed, as well as improving nutrition and goat health.

- During the reporting period, we conducted **gap analysis on key industry players** including PPAZ and four farmer unions to ascertain their current work, gaps in influencing policy and providing services to farmers. A consultant will be hired to undertake a capacity assessment and suggest the best way to address capacity needs.

Objective five: Strategies to produce animal feed locally are developed and piloted

- During the reporting period, we started **applied research** at the Pig Industry Board, MRI and Zvikomborero Farms to look into reducing dependence on maize and soya bean meal in pig diets and substituting this with pearl millet and sorghum (source of energy), and sunflower (source of protein). Shortage of maize and soya bean meal is a key challenge for farmers and this research will help to encourage increased use of **alternative feed sources**. We also procured two ten tonne trucks to enable collective feed procurement, making savings resulting from economies of scale.
- We organised six **platform meetings with a variety of stakeholders** in the PVC including producers, technology firms, input manufacturers, suppliers and output markets. The engagements enabled Pork Syndicates to understand the broad range of improved technology and products available for feed equipment, animal health and vaccine administration equipment. Feed companies expressed an interest in offering discounts for large purchases. The project will continue facilitating more engagement for Business Management Units, Pork Sydicates, Goat Assosiations, technologies and stockfeed companies in the third year of implementation.
- **Environmental management** is a key priority area, especially in the pork value chain, where small and medium producers have been non-compliant with waste disposal protocols and cutting down trees to provide heating for their units. The project is spearheading a *Fair Value Farm Branding* approach and adoption of green technologies to ensure compliance with environmental management protocols. For example, farmers are being encouraged to properly dispose of waste by installing biogas digesters and using the waste as manure. As part of the match funding initiative, some farmers have been supported to set up biogas digesters at their farms – this is acting as learning centres for other farmers.

Overview of project impact

- Throughout the project, training and extension services increased the adoption of best practices and profit margins for farmers.
- Procurement and the decentralisation of breeding supply, increased access to cheaper superior breeds for small holder farmers through, both through the sale of animals artificial insemination.
- The establishment of Pig and Goat Producer groups has assisted in the collective efforts such as buying inputs and joint marketing. This has resulted in increasing economies of scale at farm level.
- Increased networking between farmers, government actors and private sectors has led to increased direct service provision such as extension services, input supply and marketing arrangement.
- By providing smart subsidies and linking farmers to formal banks, small holder farmers have increased their access to finance.
- Framers have seen increased profitability from their farmer enterprises.

Project manager's notes and observations

Project manager Newton says, "The first six months of year two were characterised by Covid-19, requiring us to introduce new ways of programming in order to achieve project results in adherence with WHO and governmental guidance. Our duty of care to communities and staff members was a key priority. The team frontloaded activities which did not require physical gatherings and were able to carry out meetings virtually. Agriculture in Zimbabwe was classified as an essential service sector which enabled movement for project staff when needed. Construction was able to continue, ensuring social distancing and minimum contact.

We are delighted to have achieved so much in difficult and uncertain operating environments. Global supply chains and consumer markets were disrupted by the pandemic, including price per kg of meat tumbling due to the unstable and depressed economic environment. In an attempt to revive the economy, the government has now eased lockdown measures to enable some transactions to take place.



The next six months of the project are critical as we transition into a proof-of-concept phase, demonstrating the efficacy of the intervention. In the next six months we will start to see the breed improvement efforts yielding results in the GVC and PVC as farmers will now have access to improved genetics and semen. We also look forward to the finalisation of BMUs which will be key in driving backward and forward logistics, resulting in an increased in utility of all project investments."

Thanks to the support of Nikki from the CIPS Foundation Committee, ActionAid were introduced to Barefoot and were able to work on a joint bid for Agritech Catalyst Challenge, for wider work across Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, on this occasion our submission was unsuccessful, but we are very grateful for the networks that the Committee have opened up to ActionAid and we look forward to exploring future opportunities with them.

Key site visits and observations

During the reporting period we conducted several site visits to Goat Improvement centres (GICs), Integrators, Goat Holding Centres, GPBAs and PPBSs. We also carried out verification for women and young people involved in the weaner to finisher scheme under the PVC. Visits were conducted by government technical extension staff, research station staff and members of the project team. To improve production and productivity, we also carried out technical visits at the integrators who are housing and managing the breeding stock. Reports written following these visits have enabled us to adapt delivery as needed. For example, the project revised the intended site for the Goat Holding Centre from Grassland Research Institute to Henderson Research Station as we expected there to be lower outputs at GRI as it was outside of the goat production corridor promoted through the project. In addition, the plan and layout of the Goat Improvement Centres was continuously adjusted during the construction phase in line with recommendations made during monitoring and site visits.

Challenges

- As mentioned in the previous report, Covid-19 required the project team in Zimbabwe to re-think some planned activities, and how these could be carried out safely amidst the pandemic. Contingency plans were developed and these are regularly adapted to guide project implementation during this time. Initially the pandemic had an impact on input and output distribution and restricted the movement of farmers and goods. Some activities had to be postponed to curb the spread of the disease but many activities were able to be delivered virtually, for example engagements with consultants including interviews, document signing and reviewing progress. We continued to use digital methods of programming as much as possible during the reporting period and only carried out face-to-face meetings and

engagements where necessary as these required additional approvals. Agriculture is classified as an essential service meaning that programming could continue during the reporting period in line with prevention measures and safety protocols in place. Increased project activity was also able to take place when lockdowns eased. Throughout, we supplied PPE and other hygiene materials. We are continuing to monitor the impact of the virus and adapt activity plans accordingly.

- There is currently low availability of credit for farmers, as well as low loan uptake by farmers. We are developing engagement strategies and working closely with financial institutions to promote simultaneously beneficial relationships and unlock financing arrangements for small and medium producers.

Monitoring and evaluation

This project is overseen by a dedicated project manager and team in Zimbabwe, and quarterly monitoring is taking place to measure progress against baseline project data. ActionAid's Participatory Review and Reflection Process takes place annually to facilitate community feedback and ensure that the team are continually learning and adapting the project. We recently strengthened our M&E by developing production performance tools, weekly reports and carrying out a Performance Annual Survey. We also developed a tracker to monitor the functionality of GICs. Going forward, the project will ensure that data from GICs and performance production data from integrators is collected through a mobile app by production managers and analysed on a weekly basis. Remote monitoring will also be carried out through Business Management Units.

Lessons learned and ways forward

The establishment of GVC and PVC syndicate structures has had a significant impact in increasing collaboration between farmers and project partners. We will continue to strengthen this in the third year of the project by providing ongoing training and support and establishing Business Management Units. There is a need to establish a local monitoring and evaluation system which is led by farmers and extension staff; a framework has been initiated for this and it will form part of the operational plan for BMUs. As mentioned above, using virtual methods of delivery enabled us to reach and support farmers despite the restrictions put in place as a result of Covid-19.

Next steps

Below are some activities which we will be focusing on in the coming months:

- Continuous performance tracking and monitoring and evaluation
- Strengthening the Goat Producers Business Associations and Pork Production Business Syndicates as well as the Business Management Units
- Building the capacity of producer associations, enabling them to manage their associations and offer effective services to members during and beyond the project period
- Continuing to support young and women farmers
- Building links between farmers and technology development companies.
- Developing strategic infrastructure for marketing
- Piloting direct marketing with licensed independent butcheries
- Upgrading abattoir facilities and cold chain facilities
- Continuing to improve appropriate animal housing and farming structures
- Establishing win-win business partnerships between farmers, producer associations and public and private sector actors which allow the farmers to commercialise and increase their profitability
- Developing long-term Standard Operating Procedures for project investment which address ownership and access rights beyond the project period
- Capacity building for integrators
- Brokering partnerships with formal banks and input suppliers for the Weaner to Finisher scheme and farmer businesses financing
- Services provision to farmers including sale of breeding stock and collective action in input and output marketing

Procurement and supply best practice highlights

- **Importance of supplier site**

verifications visits: Two 10-tonne trucks were purchased from Willowvale Body Engineering following an open national tender advert in the national press and various online platforms. Nine bids were received, (Toyota Zimbabwe, Vaya Africa, Autoworld, Zimoco, Willowvale Vehicle Body Engineering, Indigo Travel & Tours, Swiss Motors, Sino Trucks and Faw). The adjudication and tender opening took place on March 16th in the presence of the bidders. Three suppliers were shortlisted (Toyota Zimbabwe, Zimoco and Willowvale Body



Engineering) based on budget availability as well as capacity to supply the truck as per specifications provided within a reasonable period of time. A supplier verification visit to shortlisted suppliers took place on March 18th; workshops and existing stock were inspected to determine suitability, and a follow-up report was developed and shared with the procurement team. The verification visit highlighted that two suppliers intended to outsource the goods, and this was not made clear in their bids. Willowvale had an operational plant and existing stock and the procurement team decided to move forward with this supplier. A contract was developed and signed by both parties.

- **Use of established suppliers:** We procured 88 goat breeding stock including Boer, Kalahari Red, Toggenburg and Saneen from 'Goats for Africa'. Requests for quotes were sent to Namibian goat breeders with specifications and clear terms of reference. Four quotes were received, and the bids were evaluated using scoring sheets to measure product quality in line with the terms of reference and budget feasibility. Goats for Africa scored higher than all other suppliers and the Procurement Committee recommended that they supply the year two goat breeding stock. Representatives from the GVC private integrators and research stations conducted an online verification as travel restrictions were imposed in response to Covid-19. After sale extension visits from the supplier are scheduled to take place in year three, to provide technical support to upscale breeding initiatives under the project. Goats for Africa is an established and registered goat farm and was able to successfully deliver the animals despite Covid travel restrictions in place as the animals passed through from Namibia to Zimbabwe. A lesser known or unregistered supplier would have faced major hurdles in obtaining permits required to move the animals successfully.

Stories of change

An update from Kimberly

Kimberly and her husband are champion farmers in Marondera district. They recently broke records when one of their sows farrowed 31 piglets in a single farrowing. They bought the 'Wonder Sow' from the Pig Industry Board, a public integrator which benefitted from breeding stock imported from South Africa. The sow mated with a boar which they also bought from the board.

"We have always been very careful with the genetics we select for our farm and decided early on to work with the Pig Industry Board (PIB) to procure quality breeding stock."

The decision to purchase high quality genetics has paid off for Kimberly and her husband. They are now working closely with PIB, Agritex and the Department of Veterinary Services to manage the piglets. Kimberly and her husband are members of a Pork Syndicate and have been actively involved in training programmes and meetings on commercialisation.

"The trainings on commercialisation we have participated in have been helpful in developing our skills in pig production. Our commitment is now to ensure that we harness the genetics for breeding to ensure that more farmers have access to them, especially those we are working with in the Syndicate."

This demonstrates the significant impact which the project is having. "This record breaking, and epoch-making feat speaks to productivity and production efficiencies that the project is encouraging from Small and Medium Producers", Samson Chauruka, Mashonaland East integrator. "Usually, we expect between 12 and 16 from these breeds, but what we have seen here is evidence of what the breeds are capable of," said Tamo Muza, the PIB Head of Training.



Lupane Goat Improvement Centre

Lupane Goat Improvement Centre opened its doors to goat farmers for the first time on 11th November 2020. Farmers can access a range of business support services at the centres including a goat dip tank, drug store, slaughter, stock aggregation pens, breed improvement, fodder seeds and crops, and practical training on commercial goat farming.

The first dipping service at the centre took place at Lupane GIC during year two and 1,643 goats were dipped on the same day.

"The dipping service is a game changer because the challenges we had with troublesome tick-borne diseases is now a thing of the past", Orchard Ncube – a member of the Lupane GPBA.

As well as dipping their goats, farmers can now also procure drugs and vaccines locally rather than travelling into Lupane town or Bulawayo, which was resulting in many farmers not vaccinating and treating their goats.



Goats being dipped at the first dipping session held at Lupane GIC. PHOTO: ActionAid

“As an association, we are working closely with the Department of Veterinary Services to ensure that we maintain good health for our animals by purchasing drugs and vaccines at competitive prices. Farmers do not need to travel long distances to access drugs and vaccines,” Thulani Shoko – Treasurer of Lupane GPBA.

The project has supplied the centre with breeding bucks for breed improvement and farmers wishing to have their does serviced pay a fee which is channelled into maintaining the centre. To address the challenges caused by high cost of goat feed, the centre has half a hectare of fodder crops including Lablab, Velvet bean and Sunhemp which grow under solar-powered drip irrigation.

Sibongile's story

Sibongile is a goat producer based in Chipinge district, Manicaland province. She started rearing goats in 2015 with five does and faced a range of challenges including difficulties procuring inputs, accessing viable markets, poor animal housing structures, limited knowledge of good husbandry practices and depleting grazing land.

Despite these challenges, Sibongile's herd grew and her goat pen became unfit for purpose. She wanted to improve the pen but didn't have enough resources.

Sibongile joined the VALUE project and successfully applied for a livestock matching grant to upgrade her goat pen. She was supported with 70% of the total cost of constructing the pen and contributed the remaining 30% herself. With technical support from the Department of Veterinary Services and Agritex, Sibongile was able to build a much improved pen for her goats.

“The project has made a huge difference in our lives and we are grateful for the support we received to build goat pens. The pens have better air circulation and a raised floor which makes it difficult for predators to kill our goats.”

Sibongile is just one of the 43 farmers who have benefitted from the match funding initiative organised as part of this project. She is now working with other smallholder farmers to procure lifesaving drugs and vaccines from the nearby Goat Improvement Centre, which offers business services such as animal nutrition, animal health and aggregation of stocks for bulk sales at competitive prices.



Sibongile is pictured with her new goat housing structure, made possible by the match funding initiative. The small brick pen on the left is what was previously used to house her goats. PHOTO: ActionAid

Conclusion

Despite the impacts of Covid-19 and other challenges contributing to an uncertain operating environment, the project has made significant progress since beginning in 2019 and we are delighted with what has been achieved during the reporting period. Thanks to CIPS Foundation and the European Commission, we are transforming Zimbabwe's livestock and meat industry value chains and contributing to the development of an inclusive and diversified agricultural sector.

Click below to access the latest from the project social media channels, including updates and videos:

