



LIFE NETWORK SIDE EVENT

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Community Documentation and Conservation of Indigenous Breeds

Case of the Ankole Longhorn Cattle of South Western Uganda”

ELIZABETH KATUSHABE,
PENHA-UGANDA (penha@infocom.co.ug)
SUPPORTED BY;

1. LIFE Network Africa (www.lifeinitiative.net)
 2. League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous
Livestock Development (www.pastoralpeoples.org)
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Content



- The Ankole cattle
- Problems and threats
- Opportunities
- Herders' information on their cattle and its management
- The way forward
- Possible actions

The Ankole Longhorn cattle.....



- Local breed in Uganda
- Other names: Nyankole, Sanga or Nsagalla
- Colours: red, fawn, black and multi coloured (pied)
- Relatively large with small humps
- Long, white horns
- Breed well adapted to harsh conditions and dry areas
- Milk production relatively high for local breed
- Genes are important asset in light of climate change and changing needs and should be preserved
- Breeders: Bahima community of former Ankole Kingdom of the south western part of Uganda



Ankole longhorn cattle threatened with extinction

Factors threatening Ankole:

- Population growth and culture change
- Reduced access to grazing land
- Indiscriminate crossbreeding
- Inappropriate livestock policies



Indiscriminate crossbreeding reduces number of Ankole purebreds

- Since 1994, the proportion of exotic dairy and beef crossbreds is rapidly increasing; e.g. now more than 30% crossbreds are found in western and southwestern Uganda – the original home of the Ankole Longhorns
- Number of Ankole purebreds declining, threatening the breed

Population growth and other factors reduce access to grazing land



Consequences

- Grazing land turned into agricultural land and wildlife reservations
- Bahima forced to sedentary lifestyle
- Pastoral communities start selling off significant portion of their Ankole herds
- Clearing of bush land to graze smaller herds of exotic breeds and hybrids, which can be managed on a small acreage and produce more milk
- Loss of culture, indigenous knowledge about animal breeding and survival skills for harsh environments

Ankole Longhorn cattle in Sanga sub- county being loaded on a truck for sale to Kampala city abattoirs



Policies and other factors contribute to the decline of Ankole cattle



- Policies favor intensification and make it difficult for pastoralist to continue mobile pastoralism
- Though modern education, social change and economic diversification have brought significant social benefits, but they also mean fewer people depend on Ankole cattle for their livelihoods and a diminished appreciation of their value.



Opportunities

- Ugandan government recognizes problem and interested in conserving Ankole
- Poorer pastoralists still maintain herds of pure Ankole cattle
- Ankole cattle is resistant to disease and capable of mobility over long distances in dry seasons and times of drought
- There is a potential conservation through development of niche market for meat and other products e.g. to tourists, experts and abroad.

Opportunities (cont...)



- Exotics have many disadvantages
 - vulnerable to harsh environments
 - need special fodder and care
 - have high management costs
- Ankole Longhorn cattle offers opportunities for
 - food security in marginal areas
 - climate change mitigation

But how do we capitalize on these opportunities?

- Community based Documentation, awareness raising.
- Supporting livestock Keepers rights through development of Bio-cultural Protocols and Code of conduct (CoC)
- Influencing National breeding programmes and policies to support conservation

This paper gives a case study of a
Community Documentation Exercise



Project: herders document Ankole Longhorn cattle

Spring 2009

- Project of Penha, LPP and LIFE Africa assisted Ankole herders to document their Ankole longhorn cattle

Method:

- LIFE breed documentation method that documents breeds and breeding from the perspective of the communities.

Outcome:

- Booklet *“Ankole Longhorn cattle sustain our life and livelihood: we have to conserve them”*



Project: herders document Ankole Longhorn cattle (cont...)

Objectives

- Document the role, value and significance of the Ankole long-horned cow and its keepers
- Document the views of herders and their families on their future
- Sensitize the pastoralists (keepers of the Ankole long-horned cattle) and others about the importance of the cattle and other indigenous resources
- Come up with suggestions for local leaders, policy makers and other stakeholders on how best to support the keepers of Ankole Longhorn cattle to conserve the breed and its environment
- Save the Ankole Longhorn cattle from extinction by strengthening the indigenous communities who are the managers of the breed



Project: herders document Ankole Longhorn cattle (cont...)

Tools used

Workshops with herders and other local stakeholders

- School visits

- Field visits

- 1) Government conservation farms and Animal

- Genetic Resources and Data bank Centre

- 2) Pastoralists farms

- 3) Higher institutions of learning

- 4) Existing publications

Herders discuss during documentation workshop



Herders' information about Ankole cattle:

Social & cultural context



Cultural & religious ties

- Ankole cattle was created by God and the first breeders of these cattle were Ba Chwezi, our ancestors and founders of the former “Nkore” kingdom
- We use them for social – cultural ceremonies like payment of dowry, strengthening friendship and cleansing sins.

Livelihood Significance

- The Ankole cattle provide for us food like milk, meat and ghee.

Medicinal uses

- Urine and milk mixture is used to relieve constipation and dung and water mixture to stop lactation

Economic uses

- Cash income through sale of live cattle, dung for manure and biogas, horns and hides for different items.

Herders' information about Ankole cattle: Social & cultural context (continued...)



Education

- We sell cattle to send our children to school

Agriculture

- Dung is used for manure and urine as a pesticide



Herders' information about Ankole cattle: Feeding and rearing

In the morning, we take the cattle to the bush to **graze**

- We **provide water and salt licks**
- We **bleed ill cattle and use traditional medicine** for most illnesses
- We light a **smouldering fire** from dry cow dung for warmth and against wild animals and flying insects.
- We **care with a lot of love** for our cattle and **stroke** them (okuzagaaga)
- We keep the cattle's **environment clean**
- We **clean or groom (okwiragaza) them** using a piece of brush /rug (enkuyo) made from sisal or gauze.



Ankole longhorn cattle out in the bush grazing





Watering is normally done from
troughs made out of brown soil from
an ant hill



Provided with salt from wooden troughs





To conserve Ankole cattle, herders request

Access to land

- More land would allow herders to rear both Ankole and exotic cattle

Conservation of culture through creation of cultural farms

- Farms managed by livestock keepers through de-gazetting part of the National Park and fencing it off. This helps improve eco-tourism, incomes and eco-system conservation for communities' livelihood.

Full participation in government conservation programmes

- Government should collaborate with herders as equal partners in conservation programmes; this means herders should be involved in selection of breeding animals with the goal to distribute improved animals or their semen to the communities.

The way forward



- Ankole cattle offer great potential for sustainable livelihoods:
 - adapted to local environments,
 - produce on local resources
 - Enhanced resistance to local diseases
 - Good milking ability
- The continued sustainable use through Bahima herders helps conserve it.
- Herders have detailed knowledge on their cattle. They should be consulted for any programmes for their cattle.
- Herders need to become aware about the significance of their indigenous breed for food security. They should do away with the corrupted attitude that e.g. our Ankole longhorn cattle is equivalent to poverty!



THANK YOU

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- Report on Breed Documentation in Nyabushozi [by PENHA, 2009].

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