

Improved goat keeping among smallholders for a nutritious diet and increase food security

Presently, goat production in Lao PDR is very extensive with the current market price of goats being between 4.4 and 5.6 USD per kg live weight, which is higher than that for cattle and pigs (2.1-2.3 and 2.0-2.4 USD per kg live weight, respectively). In Savannakhet province, bordering with Vietnam, there is a high potential to improve production and increase the number of goats. There is a large demand for goat meat in the country and a big part of the meat produced in Lao PDR could be exported to Vietnam. However, low growth rate, poor production and high morbidity and mortality rates are common challenges in goat production in this province as well as in the whole country. The main reasons are related to feeding and management. Almost all goat production is performed based on the traditional raising and feeding system with feeds derived from available native pastures, such as grass, browse and fodder trees, no feed supplementation and non-well health care. In general, traditionally managed goats are susceptible to disease and parasites, and feed shortages are commonly found in the dry season. Knowledge of smallholder farmers about feeding and care; and how to use the feed resources as a dietary supplement for livestock is limited.

The overall aim with this project is to improve goat keeping among farmers in South East Asia, using Lao PDR as an example, to increase food security and income generation. By improving quality and increasing quantity in the goat production, the smallholder farmers will get possibilities to increase their livelihood, which also will benefit animal welfare and health. Improved access to markets will help the farmers to get better returns for their investments. The project will be implemented in two provinces in Lao PDR, Vientiane capital and Savannakhet province.

In this project, a wide range of actors are included, for example farmers, extension officers, policy makers and practitioners. The following activities are included: 1) training for best practice on goats farming will ensure that at least 120 smallholder farmers will get access to new knowledge and skills on goat farming ; 2) establishment of farmer group/farmers field school will help farmers to solve challenges related to techniques, materials and investment cost or/and funding resources; 3) new technical working group/extension group will support goat farmers; and 4) stakeholders and policy makers will be involved to raise the awareness of the potential of goat keeping for both domestic and export market.

The Theory of Change pathway will be used to increase the impact of the project.

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Partners:

- Department of Technical Extension and Agro-Processing, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR
- Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office in Savannakhet province and in Vientiane capital, Lao PDR
- District Agriculture and Forestry Office, Lao PDR
- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden