

## **Fodder Innovation System brings New Hope to Goat Farmers in Ikire of Nigeria – What a galore of Success Stories!**

By: - Babajide Stephen and  
Ogunrinde 'Dayo (JDPC, Ibadan, Nigeria)

Generally, in Nigeria, goats are reared in two ways: pastoral system where goats are reared along with cattle and sheep; free range system/semi-intensive system of rearing. Neither zero grazing system of rearing, nor intensive system of rearing is popular in the country. In western and eastern parts of the country; free range system is popular while pastoral method is prevalent in the northern region.

Ikire is one of the major cities in Osun state, in the western region of Nigeria. The city falls within JDPC's (Justice, Development and Peace Commission) Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan mandate area. People of the city are predominantly farmers, and are known for crop farming especially oil palm, plantain and cocoa plantation. However, they also keep large numbers of goats on free range. Most households in Ikire and the Ikire Township keep goats.

### **The beginnings of change..**

The FIP (Fodder Innovation Project), a collaborative initiative between ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute) and JDPC is being implemented in 4 Ikire communities namely: Oloowa, Ayetoro, Gedegbe-Olugun, and Alahun. The farmers' groups in the zone initially were not very enthusiastic about the project, as they did not see fodder scarcity as a bottleneck, as their goats graze freely on natural vegetation. However, as they started taking to intensive goat rearing as an income generating activity, this necessitated increased demand for goat feeds– both in quantity and quality, hence the need to grow more fodder crops of dual-purpose crops became a necessity. Given this situation, the Fodder Innovation Project came at an opportune time for all farmers in the participating communities.

Since the inception of the FIP in those communities, farmers changed from their traditional orientation of keeping goats for home consumption and cultural purposes, to rearing them for commercial purposes. The farmers now have access to new knowledge through periodic trainings on rearing the goats in confinement; all necessary actors (i.e. stakeholders) are usually brought together, to jointly take decisions toward the development of goat farming in the project sites.

Before the intervention of FIP in Ikire, there had been no experience of individuals rearing goats coming together to jointly own animal farm (i.e. group farm). But now, it is happening – what a new orientation! What a break-through story!

One group farm was set up only 6 months after the commencement of FIP in the project sites. An additional four have come into existence making a total of 5 group goat farms now – another success story to tell.

### **Now comes the big “break-through” story...**

Since the beginning of the project, the goat farmers have been faced with many challenges, and most of which, MSF (Multi-Stakeholder Forum) have proffered solution to. However, the most challenging recently has been the housing problem. The goat house initially constructed by farmers was made-up of 100% local materials. Such a house had short durability and required yearly repair. This posed a big challenge to the project sustainability.

At a time when the participating farmers reached a stage of disinterest, the FADAMA III (a World Bank project to promote multi-season farming through irrigation), promised to support the construction of modern goat house of long durability (say 10-20years).

FADAMA III apart from making pledge to construct standard goat house for farmers groups has also promised to acquire processing machine (i.e. palm kernel oil extractor) for other farmers' groups that are engaged in agro-enterprise of oil palm processing. **Indeed, this is a success story to tell.**

This experience proves that, coming together of different actors to form a network , to pursue a common goal that all participating actors will directly or indirectly benefit from, can result in amazing positive results (i.e. outcomes).

Kudos to facilitators of such network of actors! They have demonstrated a new approach to addressing challenges for uplifting of agriculture for improving livelihood of farmers in rural settings.

Photo: Ogunrinde 'Dayo



**One of the participating farmers feeding goats in confinement in Ikire of Nigeria**