



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

AFRICA SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK 2050

The future of livestock in

NIGERIA

Emerging public health risks in
urban and peri-urban areas

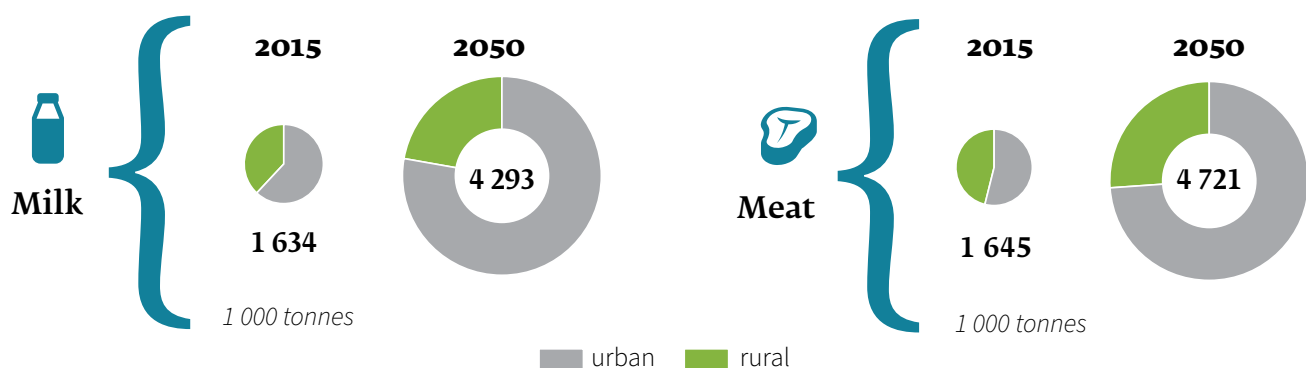
Nigeria's livestock sector growth and transformation

Population growth, urbanization and economic development will extensively transform Nigeria's society and its livestock sector in the next three decades. With the objective to guide policy decisions for a sustainable future, the government of Nigeria and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have joined forces to discuss the possible long-term development trajectories of the livestock sector and the associated opportunities and challenges for society, such as poverty reduction, increased food security, environmental degradation and food-borne diseases. One issue, currently at the margin of the policy debate, emerged during the discussion: the increased relevance of urban and peri-urban livestock operations and value chains, and the associated systemic risk of zoonotic diseases and livestock-driven antimicrobial resistance.

Public health threats amidst urbanizing livestock value chains

LIVESTOCK CONSUMPTION AND LIVESTOCK MARKETS URBANIZE

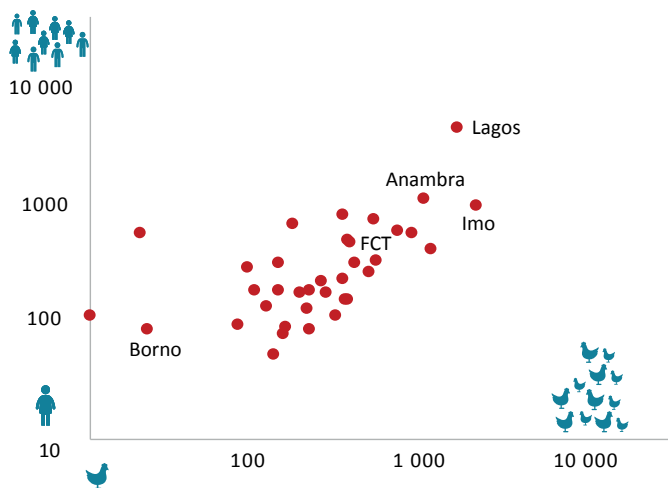
Between today and 2050, Nigeria's population will more than double and reach over 400 million people. Over the same period, the percentage of people living in urban areas will increase from about 50 percent to almost 70 percent, i.e. over 280 million people will live in cities and towns in 2050 as compared to about 105 million today. Meat and milk consumption will increase by about 3 075 and 2 660 thousand tonnes, respectively, and in 2050 urban consumers will contribute about 74 and 78 percent to total meat and milk consumption, respectively, as compared to 54 and 62 percent today.



Source: elaborated from projections of the FAO Global Perspective Studies (2018) and the World Bank Global Consumption databases

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND VALUE CHAINS URBANIZE

As cities and towns expand, livestock production systems, and more so livestock markets, will be increasingly structured to satisfy the demand for animal source foods of urban dwellers. As Nigeria's rural infrastructure is still to be fully developed, in the next few decades the production of perishable livestock products will tend to move closer to consumption, with an increased number of market-oriented livestock operators emerging in peri-urban and urban areas. Already today, livestock density in and around urban areas is as much as high as in rural areas. According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, for example, Lagos State has the highest density of people (approximately 4 430 per km²) in the country and ranks second in terms of chicken density (approximately 1 220 per km²), while the cattle density in the Federal Capital Territory (approximately 27 heads per km²) is not significantly different than that of the sparsely populated states in the northern part of the country, where most of the cattle herd is kept.



Source: elaborated from data provided by the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2017) and Landscan (2017)

ZOONOTIC DISEASES

High density of people and animals in and around cities and towns not only will exercise major pressure on the environment but also create unprecedented public health challenges, because of novel and more frequent interactions between humans, livestock and wildlife in a resource-constrained natural environment. In particular, an outbreak of a (re)-emerging zoonotic disease (EZD) that jumps from animals to humans not only might negatively impact the livestock sector but also result in a high human death toll with broader disruptive impact on society, thereby jeopardizing the entire development trajectory of Nigeria. In the worst-case scenario, it might turn into a pandemic, such as COVID-19.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

Because of the growing risk of EZDs and increased competition to access limited natural resources in densely populated urban and peri-urban areas, livestock producers might be tempted to use antibiotics imprudently, such as for prophylaxis. This, in the medium to long term, will increase the risk of livestock-driven antimicrobial resistance in humans, potentially compromising the country's ability to treat common infectious diseases, resulting in prolonged human illness, disability and death.

The way forward: urban and peri-urban livestock sector policies

Urban and peri-urban livestock farming and value chain should become a key component of all livestock-related policies and plans and should have a specific focus on the prevention, detection and control of zoonoses, including (re)emerging zoonotic diseases, and of inappropriate use of antimicrobials in livestock. The government of Nigeria and FAO are supporting a One Health multi-disciplinary multi-stakeholder process to enhance the country capacity to deal with livestock-related public health threats.

The adoption of good practices along the urban and peri-urban livestock value chain to detect, prevent and control public health risks is a precondition for the sustainable development of the livestock sector, and of Nigeria's society as a whole.

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- FAO, 2019. *The Future of Livestock in Nigeria. Opportunities and Challenges in the Face of Uncertainty*. Abuja, Nigeria.
- Statistical estimates of the FAO Animal Production and Health Division based on data from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2017), Landscan (2017), the FAO Global Perspective Studies projections (2018) and the World Bank Global Consumption database

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