Introduction

Livestock is central to the Ethiopian economy, contributing 20% of the GDP, supporting the livelihoods of 70% of the population and generating about 11% of annual export earnings. The country has been earning foreign currency by exporting meat (mainly chilled shoats’ carcass) and live animals namely cattle, sheep, camels and goats to major destination markets of UAE, KSA, Yemen and Egypt. As the country has the largest number of livestock in Africa, Ethiopia has much to gain from the growing global market for livestock products.

A substantial progress has been achieved in improving the livestock export sub-sector in general and increasing the foreign currency earnings from the sector in particular, as a result of several efforts exerted by Ethiopian government and partners. The former Livestock Marketing Authority (LMA) paved the way for the development of both domestic and export livestock market. Likewise, the establishment of USAID funded Ethiopia Sanitary & Phytosanitary Standards and Livestock & Meat Marketing Program (SPS–LMM) in 2005 and Ethiopia Meat & Dairy Technology Institute in January 2008, are the major measures taken to support private sector to immediately increase sales and profitability and provide them with tools for long–term success.

Technical assistance and training provided by SPS-LMM has improved productivity, market transparency and infrastructure essential for meat and live animal exports. SPS-LMM interventions have included assessment of feed resources, introduction of “best cost” total mixed rations, livestock market information, dairy beef production, design and specifications for international standard feedlots and abattoirs, cost analysis for road/sea refrigerated meat transport and management of the cold chain for processing and transport of meat products to meet requirements of international markets. Moreover, SPS-LMM has organized observation missions to Texas, Morocco, Kenya and South Africa, from which Ethiopian exporters and Ethiopian government development agents have learned from the practical experiences of successful commercial feedlot and abattoir operators. Trade missions to Egypt, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana and DR Congo, and participation of Ethiopian exporters at 2009 and 2010 GULFOOD Fairs, identified market preferences, and created an opportunity for private sectors to establish contact with new and potential buyers.

Highlight of Ethiopia’s meat and live animal export performance

2000/01- March 2008/09

According to Ethiopian Revenues and Customs Authority’s meat and live animal export performance data, meat export volume increased from 870 tons in 2000/01 to 7,468 tons in 2008/09. The country’s export performance reached its peak in 2005/06 by exporting 7,917 tons of meat. In the same period under review, the meat export (chilled shoats carcass) value has picked up from USD 1.7 million to USD 27 million.
Similarly, the number of live animals (cattle, camels, sheep and goats) export has also recorded a dramatic increment during this period by rising from 4,919 to 241,683 and reached its peak in 2007/08 by exporting 297,644 head of live animals. The export value mounted from USD 0.2 million to USD 53.1 million.

The livestock export sector has shown promising increment during 2000/01-2008/09. It could have performed much more than shown had the bans of UAE and KSA not imposed during January–September 2007 and from 1st week of March to 1st week May 2009. The export performance revived after the ban was lifted as a result of persistent efforts made by SPS-LMM in collaboration with Ethiopian government.

![Figure1. Ethiopian meat export performance, 2000/01-2008/09](image1)

![Figure2. Ethiopian live animal export performance, 2000/01-2008/09](image2)
During the nine months, July 2009–March 2010, USD 85.5 million was earned from export of 7,018 tons of meat and 259,247 head of live animals. As compared to previous year similar period (July 2008-March 2009), the performance in this period has increased by 29%.

**January-March, 2010**

During January–March 2010, Ethiopia generated USD 31.1 million by exporting 2,654.3 tons of meat (mainly chilled shoats carcass) and 60,189 head of live animals to nine countries. Export of live animals contributed 72% of the earnings and the balance (28%) was earned from meat export.

UAE followed by KSA are the top buyers by importing 54% and 43% in value, and 50% and 41% in volume terms, respectively. The highest FOB price, USD 3,566 per ton for chilled shoats carcass was paid by UAE importers while for offal, USD 1354 per ton was paid by Vietnam importers. Of the total number of live animals exported, 41%, 40%, and 19% were camels, cattle, and sheep, respectively. Of the total value of exported live animals, cattle and camel were 49% each and while the share of sheep was 2%.

Comparison of the export performance of January-March 2010 with October-December 2009 showed that the volume and value of exported meat significantly increased during this quarter while the performance of live animals export was similar during the two quarters. Meat export volume and value increased by 17% and 19%, respectively. Similarly, as compared to similar quarter of the previous year (January-March 2009), the meat export volume and value increased by 49% and 42, respectively. Likewise, the number and value of exported live animals increased by 55% and 85% during this quarter due to commencement of cattle export to Egypt, which was suspended due to SPS issues, and the booming of camel export to Egypt.

![Figure 3. Live animal export performance comparison among the periods of January-March 2010, October-December 2009, January-March 2009](image)

![Figure 4. Meat export performance comparison among the periods of January-March 2010, October-December 2009, January-March 2009](image)
Abergele modern slaughterhouse opens in Mekelle

Abergele International Livestock Development Plc (AILD PLC) export abattoir has commenced operation since mid February 2010. The slaughterhouse is constructed with an investment outlay of USD 15 million in Mekelle, 783 kilometers from Addis Ababa.

The slaughterhouse is the first of its kind in Ethiopia, uses many advanced slaughter techniques, equipped with large cold rooms, vacuum packing, solid and liquid waste treatment, and a rendering plant for bone, meat, and blood processing. According to D/ General Manager AILD PLC, Lwelo G/Selassie, the company envisages to be one of the most successful and leading enterprise in Africa that produces high quality meat and livestock byproducts.

More than 95 % of production is designated for export to the Middle East, Comoros, and Egypt. At full production, the slaughterhouse has a capacity of processing 30 tons of beef and 9 tons of sheep and goat meat per day. Animals for slaughter are obtained from co-operatives, unions, individuals and its own fattening centers that are established at Humera, Shire, Agbe, Mekelle and Alamata. In addition to increasing Ethiopia’s meat export capacity, the company will also open market to people engaged in animal husbandry and fattening.

Abergele slaughterhouse hall
Abergele uses Air Cargo to transport fresh beef and meat and refrigerated container for frozen beef by land and sea transport.

Premises of Abergele slaughterhouse

Focus on Ethiopia’s Meat and Live Animal Export is a quarterly bulletin that avails periodic information on live animal and meat export performance of Ethiopia and efforts, progress and new developments being made in the Ethiopian meat and live animal export sector.

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