

PENHA-Uganda
Nkoma Farm Exotic Goats Project
Summary Report June 2014



1. Overview: The Nkoma Farm Exotic Goats Project

At our Nkoma Farm Breeding Centre, PENHA maintains a stock of imported South African Boer goats, local, Ugandan Mubende goats and cross-bred goats.

Boer goats are meat goats, and goat meat fetches good prices on local and urban markets. (Roast goat meat is popular at social events and celebrations, so there is strong demand locally. Projects that promote milk goats have generally failed because, in many local cultures, it is considered shameful to drink goat milk.)

With carefully managed breeding, the herders at Nkoma produce a range of cross-bred goats – 25%, 50% and 75% Boer-Mubende crosses. The cross-bred goats are superior to pure local goats – they mature more quickly and produce more meat. They are also well adapted to local conditions. 25% and 50% cross-breeds are relatively easy to manage and care for. (75% Boer-Mubende crosses are very similar to pure Boer goats, which are large, aggressive and require expensive feeding and veterinary care.)

The project supplies cross-bred goats to women's groups that have received training in the proper management of an improved goat project. A small, properly managed, commercial operation can make profits of up to \$1,000 a year. Some of the women's groups that our project supports are making profits of \$300-500 a year, in a context where rural incomes are commonly around \$200 annually. So, while it has not brought transformative change, the project has delivered tangible benefits and has helped beneficiaries to significantly increase their cash incomes. This despite a number of challenges, which are discussed below. It is also an important element in a wider set of activities, centred on local people's own organizations, farmers' groups and women's groups, that aim to empower local people, with new knowledge, skills, information and productive assets.

Open Gate funding has enabled PENHA maintain and develop the breeding centre, and to:

- Pipe clean water to metal troughs
- Introduce new feed crops (Desdemodium and Elephant Grass)
- Establish and maintain structures - sheds, paddocks and fences
- Provide effective veterinary care and herd management
- Acquire new pure Boer goat stock



Boer-Mubende Cross-bred Goats, photographed by Dr. Vanessa Champion on her visit



Goat shed housing PENHA goats at Nkoma Farm, Ssembabule District



The Nkoma Farm Breeding Centre

2. Managing the Nkoma Farm Breeding Centre

Current stock at Nkoma stands at around 200 exotic goats, with a mix of 25%, 50% and 75% Boer-Mubende crosses). Over 200 goats of the local Mubende breed are kept in separate housing. There are 5 pure South African Boer goats – these are exchanged with other goat farms in order to mitigate the problem of in-breeding.

The aim here is to maintain a stable level of stock, with high off-take rates, distributing goats to women's groups or selling them to cover costs. Our herd has been well managed and the goats are generally in good condition. But, losses due to occasional disease outbreaks remain quite high. To have a healthy herd, the animals must be well fed (good nutrition makes them less vulnerable to disease) and protected from the elements (wind, rain and muddy ground). Herders must spot diseases early and isolate affected animals from the main herd. In the semi-arid "Cattle Corridor", dry season forage is often low in both quantity and quality. A particular problem is the spread of the invasive species *Prosopis Juliflora*, which dominates other, more nutritious shrubs and forage, and reduces the availability of water, for both plants and animals. (PENHA is implementing an IFAD-funded program that aims to promote the use of *Prosopis* to make alternative animal feeds.)

The main challenges are:

- maintaining high standards of management (disease and breeding control)

- providing adequate forage and feed as well as salt and mineral supplementation
- providing adequate water for the herd, year-round.

The imported, pure Boer goats are not well adapted to local conditions and must be carefully managed. Pure Boer goats must have:

- good supplementary feeds (cut-and-carry forage) as well as
- a plentiful supply of clean water
- good housing

The installation of a good water supply system at Nkoma Farm means that clean water can be piped to metal troughs for the animals.

3. Impact – The Experiences of Beneficiaries

The Ntutsi Tweekembe Women's Group, Ssembabule

The Ntutsi Tweekembe Women's Group, in Ssembabule, received 6 exotic goats from Nkoma Farm. They are a cohesive group, with 15 members.



Esther Kenyanja, Chairperson of the Ntutsi Tweekembe Women's Group, with group members.

The group has been able to manage its breeding stock effectively. Off-spring have been distributed equally among group members, and each group member now has their own stock of cross-bred goats. The group also carries out other commercial activities, including sewing and dressmaking.

At a meeting with PENHA-Uganda staff, during a June 2014 monitoring visit, Chairperson Esther Kenyanja said,

“Each group member was able to get one exotic goat (for breeding with local Mubende goats) which we now rear at our own homesteads. We were able to get an exotic goat each for all the group members, we are 15 members in total. The goats have been very helpful financially - when a male kid is born we sell it at the market to supplement on our children’s school fees, or even to give a loan to a needy neighbor or relative. This has strengthened our relationships with people around us. Through goat rearing we have also learnt to save as the responsibility of looking after goats has opened our eyes.”

There are several important points to note here:

- Cohesive, well-managed groups can successfully operate a small cross-bred goat rearing project that generates significant cash incomes for members.
- For local women’s groups, a small goat-rearing project can act as a useful source of cash to finance other activities, or to meet urgent needs.
- Cohesive groups are an end in themselves – when they work together successfully on one project, they demonstrate to themselves and to others that they can work together on other projects.
- The experience of working on a commercial goat rearing projects helps group members to think like businesspeople – to plan, to keep records, to save and to invest.

The Rwamuranda Bakyara Tukore Women's Group

The group's membership includes elderly, mature and young women members. (This is significant for a number of reasons. Across the Cattle Corridor there has been quite a dramatic generational shift over the past decade or so – younger women are, on the whole, much more literate, more aware of trends elsewhere and more aspirational. Many are choosing to leave their communities to find work in the major towns. For a rural women's group, literate young women are valuable members because they often bring valuable skills and abilities, as well as energy and new ideas.)



Members of Rwamuranda Bakyara Tukore listening to Edith, their Chairperson, during a PENHA monitoring visit

The group is involved in a range of activities. Some members make and sell crafts and jewelry for the traditional marriage ceremony (the “kuhingira”). The group received exotic goat breeding stock from PENHA and have been able to maintain a small commercial project. With the proceeds from goat sales, they were able to buy a plot of land and build a semi-permanent house on that group-owned land. At one point, they rented the house out to two nurses who were working in the area. The community is 15km away from the main road and there is no health centre nearby. The lack of access to basic healthcare is a major issue, and being able to accommodate two nurses was very significant for the local community. (In the end, the accommodation proved inadequate, as the semi-permanent structure was frequently invaded by termites.) Nevertheless, local women now have a plot of land and an asset that they can build upon, as well as a place in which to meet and organize.

The group faces familiar challenges in managing their goat breeding scheme. The women occasionally lose goats to thieves or to wild dogs. Because they have not been able to invest in

fencing, the goats frequently encroach on neighbouring farms, causing damage to crops, which must be compensated.

4. Challenges for Women's Groups

Internal Disputes over the Distribution of Incomes Earned and Costs Incurred

- Disputes within groups - over the distribution of goats and incomes earned, as well as over contributions to costs and maintenance.
- In a poor community, unavoidably, the presence of a significant material asset (breeding stock), one that generates returns that are very large relative to most people's annual incomes, results in disputes that are often quite bitter.
- PENHA staff have collaborated with local (sub-county) government and group members to resolve disputes and arrive at amicable settlements.

Encroachment by Goats on Neighbouring Farms and Homesteads

- Inadequate land and fencing, allowing goats to encroach on neighbouring plots.
- the problem of goats damaging crops on neighbouring homesteads and farms, with significant costs for groups in terms of compensation paid.
- (Frequently, some goats must be sold off in order to pay compensation.)
- Tensions with neighbouring homesteaders and farmers, resulting from disputes over the degree of damage done by goats and the appropriate level of compensation.

Goat Stock Losses

Groups frequently incur costly losses of goat stock to:

- Thieves - Goats are a very portable asset that it is quite easy for thieves to carry off, and few if any of the groups can afford to hire guards.
- Wild dogs and other predators
- Disease (veterinary services remain costly and difficult to access)

Insurmountable Management Problems, Prompting a Switch to Alternatives

- Several groups have decided to abandon goat rearing because of management difficulties – these groups have sold off their stock and re-invested the proceeds in other activities that are easier to manage and generate similar, or somewhat lower, returns.
- (The Akaku Tutunguukye Women's Group, sold off their goats and used the proceeds to establish a handicrafts business.)
- PENHA provided goat management training to participating groups and attempted to screen out those groups that did not appear to have the capacity to manage a commercial exotic goats project – but, inevitably, given the high level of demand for any kind of support, many groups took on cross-bred stock when they did not have the necessary management capacity.
- The fact that a number of groups have abandoned goat rearing does not imply a failure for the project – these groups have benefited from the assets transferred to them, and, with the proceeds from the sale of their stock, they have been able to establish other, profitable activities. This meets one of the core goals of the project - giving poor householders access to productive assets that they can use to increase and diversify their incomes. In effect, the

goats transferred to the groups, because they are so readily marketable, are functioning as cash, or as start-up finance for people who do not have access to loans.



Photograph by Dr. Vanessa Champion, Ssembabule 2013

Appendix: Web Article by Dr. Vanessa Champion, photojournalist.

How a goat can make a difference. Documenting the Women Pastoralists – on expedition with NGO PENHA across Uganda, by Vanessa Champion, Photojournalist.

Men, boys, goats, women jostle together kicking up rich dust from the red earth as the Ugandan heat beats down on the heaving goat market. Vanessa Champion, Photojournalist accompanied PENHA (Pastoralist and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa) on expedition with the pastoralists across Uganda and documented their way of life and discovered that there were arising economic and personal challenges for those herders whose traditional way of life and heritage is now threatened by a more sedentary life being urged upon them from the government.

“From their nomadic origins, Pastoralists in Uganda would drive livestock, cows and goats through the cattle corridor in Uganda and beyond. They moved, they grazed, they had families. Now the Ugandan government is recommending that Pastoralists make a seismic change to their culture and settle into a more agro-pastoralist way of life. [image of huts]

Before the encouragement to settle, traditionally, the men would drive the cattle across the bush, while the women stayed in the huts, taking care of the children, feeding them and looking after their goats which help provide revenue. When the land was challenging as a result of the dry season or maybe tribal threats, they would move. But now, as they are restricted to one piece of land, and are building more “brick” structures, the Pastoralists need to explore different means of supporting their families, and are developing additional economic streams for revenue. This is where PENHA comes in. PENHA is a voice and lobbying arm for Pastoralists in the Horn of Africa, working with nomads from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya, Somaliland and Djibouti. But it is their work in Uganda which I continue to find particularly interesting. PENHA is a voice for these people and continue to work independently and supporting other groups, such as the Ugandan Land Alliance, COPASCO and others helping lobby and advise at policy level.

PENHA also breed goats at Nkoma Farm which I visited [images attached of Eva, herding goats]. They give pregnant goats to women, who then nurture them on their own or shared land, and they begin to add to their livestock headcount and in turn can start selling the goats for revenue. Simple. I also visited a goat market [image attached], proud strong women in bright dresses, herd their goats and strike hard bargains, holding their own among other traders, buying and selling some rather attractive and healthy goats!

This is where PENHA has been able to make a huge and direct difference, the cross-breeding and provision of goats have proved themselves invaluable, particularly to the women whose role has always been to raise and foster them, selling them at markets, bringing in capital for additional food and putting their children through education. It also enables them to purchase material for sewing, raffia for weaving into mats and the like, which then adds to their revenue stream. The local goats (Mubende) were sensitively cross-bred with South African Boer goats which are good for meat. The crosses can handle local conditions, they grow fast, produce plenty of meat with good body weight and produce

twice a year with good twinning rates. This means the revenue from these Nkoma farm goats the PENHA women sell are worth more at the market. It's amazing what a goat can do...

The PENHA Uganda office is run by Elizabeth Katushabe, herself a pastoralist and a terrific font of all knowledge. Why not drop them a line to ask about how you can help? Maybe swapping ideas on farming might benefit us all? <http://www.penhanetwork.org/>

She says: "PENHA work hard to support the Pastoralist women in Uganda, our main challenge are the women's lack of assets to use as collateral to get loans. Lack of sustainable funding and consequently limited administrative capacity.

The goat project has been brilliant, and has improved the lives of many women as they can sell the goats for revenue which in turn pays for their children to go to school. One of the main ways people in the UK can help is by providing financial support to PENHA in order to replicate our Goat Farm project in Nkoma Agricultural Learning Center, in other districts of the Cattle Corridor. This will provide economic empowerment to the women found in these districts"

Notes :

Vanessa Champion, photojournalist and writer

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