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## Producing animals and milk for market

### Summary

This short practical guide describes how pastoralists can produce strong, healthy animals and good-quality milk that will fetch a good price.

### Description

#### Producing for a market

##### Markets for animals

- **Know your market.** Most buyers want certain types of animals: a farmer may want bullocks for ploughing or young females for breeding and milk. An abattoir wants young, healthy animals, not those that are old and sick.
- Buyers may want a certain **number of animals** at a time – for example, enough to fill a pick-up or a lorry.
- Buyers may want a **regular supply** of animals – such as a certain number each month.

##### Markets for milk

- Buyers may want to buy **fresh** milk, **sour** milk, or **pasteurised** milk. They may want to buy butter, cheese, yoghurt, or other products.
- Buyers may need a certain volume of milk every day.
- **Milk quality** is important: the milk should come from healthy animals, and must be fresh and clean.

##### What you can do

- Find out what **different buyers want**, and how much they want to pay.
- Work out how you can supply **that sort of animal or product**.
- Supply the **amount and type** of animals or products that buyers want.
- Agree to supply at the **right time** and on a **regular basis**.
- Get together with **other producers** so you can supply the required amounts.
- Make sure the animals you sell or use for milking are **healthy and well-fed**.

Do these things, and you can negotiate for a better price from the buyer.

### Keep your animals healthy

If an animal is sick, it can be hard to sell or it will fetch a low price.

- **Avoid parasites.** Keep the animals away from areas with ticks, tsetse flies and other parasites. Keep the night-enclosure clean and dry. Move the enclosure regularly and move the animals from one pasture to another to prevent the build-up of parasites.
- **Give animals enough feed and water.** Do not expect them to walk too far each day. Make sure they get water frequently.
- **Treat against ticks.** Dip the animals or use a pour-on acaricide to control ticks.
- **Vaccinate** the animals against the most serious diseases.
- **If an animal is sick**, separate it from the rest of the herd and get advice on how to treat it.
- **Be wary of fake or expired medicines.** Buy only from reputable dealers.
- **Get organised to buy health inputs and services.** As a group, you can get medicines and services more cheaply.
- **Get training in paraveterinary medicine.** Many common diseases are easy to treat if you know how. Get people in the community trained, and make sure they have the equipment and drugs they need.
- **Use traditional medicines.** Find out which traditional medicines work against what problems.
- **Comply with quarantine rules and movement bans.** These are designed to stop dangerous diseases from spreading.

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Buy animal medicines only from a reputable dealer.

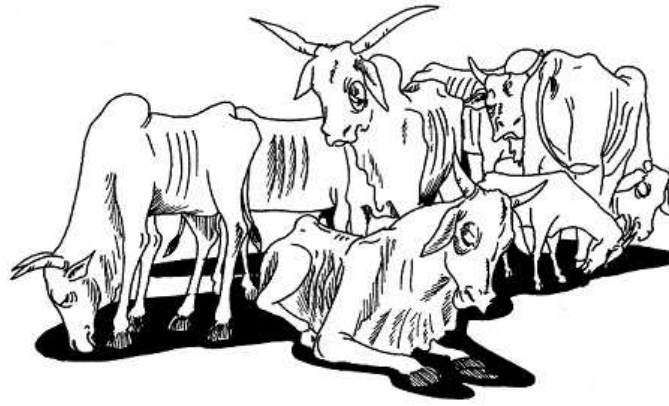


Traditional healers know a lot about animals and diseases. Learn from them!

### Feed your animals well

#### Reduce the need for feed

- **Limit your herd size.** Do not keep more animals than the pasture can feed.
- **Sell animals as soon as they reach market weight.** Keeping them longer will not always bring more money.
- **Sell animals before a drought.** During a drought, the price will fall, and many animals will die. Watch the weather, and sell them before the drought, while prices are still high.
- **Sell underweight animals to a feedlot.** Some traders and abattoirs maintain feedlots to fatten up underweight animals. Your community organisation might be able to set up its own feedlot.



Hungry, weak animals fetch low prices – assuming they live long enough to be sold.

#### Provide extra feed

- **Move the herd to find grazing and water.** Maintain good relations with neighbouring groups. Make agreements with them on sharing the land and water.
- **Give extra feed** to pregnant and milking animals, and animals you want to sell.
- **Graze animals on fallow cropland.** You can agree with farmers to graze your animals on newly harvested or fallow fields. The animals eat the crop residues and weeds, and fertilise the soil with their dung and urine. You may have to pay rent for using the land.
- **Set aside emergency grazing areas.** Your community leaders can designate certain areas for grazing during the dry season or only during a drought.
- **Grow feed and forage.** You may be able to plant improved grasses or legumes for grazing or to cut and feed to the animals. You can make hay or silage and store it until it is needed.
- **Provide supplementary feed.** Buy commercial feed or mineral blocks for valuable animals, such as milking cows. You can make your own blocks from molasses, urea, salt, straw or bran, and cement.

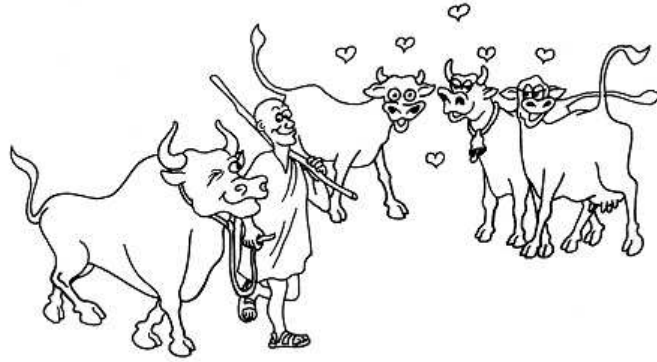


You can make silage in a sealed pit.

#### Choose the right breed

You need to have the right types of animals: ones that can survive and produce in the drylands.

- **Don't keep high-yielding exotic breeds.** They need special feed, housing and veterinary care. Without these, they will quickly fall ill and die.
- **Maintain and improve your local breed.** Local breeds are hardier and better adapted to the local conditions. You can select the best animals and use them for breeding. If you crossbreed, keep enough animals of the local type to maintain your original breed.
- **Set up a breeding association.** Organise a group of breeders to select and promote superior animals. Share the resulting offspring among the group, and use them for breeding.
- **Switch to a superior adapted breed.** If you see another breed from a similar area that is better than your own animals, consider buying them. Make sure they thrive in your area before you buy more.



Try buying a superior bull to improve your herd.

### Produce good-quality animals and milk

Maintaining quality can be difficult. Problems include poor-quality animals, hides with holes in them, sour or contaminated milk, inadequate hygiene, poor equipment, long transport distances, and a lack of inspection.

Quality has to be appropriate. The highest-value markets require the best quality, and reward it with better prices. Quality requirements for local markets are not so strict.

What you can do

- **Deliver quality animals.** Control parasites and diseases, improve feeding, and sell only healthy, strong animals.
- **Improve animal handling.** Sell to trustworthy traders who do not overload their lorry and who use partitions to support standing animals.
- **Produce quality milk.** Do not use milk from diseased cows. Do not dilute the milk, and make sure it is fresh.
- **Improve milk hygiene.** This is most important!
  - Wash your hands and the animal's teats before milking.
  - Protect milk from flies and dust.
  - Deliver milk to the collection point quickly - in the morning when it is cool.
  - Use an aluminium container instead of a plastic jerry can.



Dairies test milk to make sure it is good quality.

This guide belongs to a **series of practical guides for pastoralists**. Click on links below to get more information:

- [Marketing animals and milk](#)
- [Services for marketing animals and milk](#)
- [Organising to market animals and milk](#)
- [10 ways to improve milk marketing](#)
- [11 ways to improve animal marketing](#)

### Keywords

Pastoralism  
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### International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)

The **International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)** is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that aims to improve the quality of lives of the rural poor in developing countries through rural reconstruction; a sustainable, integrated, people-centered development strategy generated through practical field experiences.

**Contact person:** Dr. Isaac Bekalo  
**Contact email:** [headquarters@iirr.org](mailto:headquarters@iirr.org)  
**Country:** Philippines  
**Telephone:** +63 46 430 0016  
**Web:** <http://www.iirr.org>



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