

## Publication

### Public and private veterinary services in West and Central Africa: policy failures and opportunities

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The livestock sector in most African countries, in particular in the Sahel region, remains underexploited. It is traditionally managed in pastoralist systems that best guarantee the environmental sustainability of the arid and semi-arid grasslands, which can be hardly used for agriculture. However, pastoralists are vulnerable to exclusion to social services because they are remote to educational and political centres. The majority of livestock, however, are kept in mixed crop-livestock systems in which livestock have multiple roles such as producing food, generating income, providing manure, producing power, being financial instruments and enhancing social status. Livestock breeding faces many challenges and constraints including transboundary animal diseases (TADs) and increasing waves of droughts due to climate change as well as politically and economically instable states. Despite that Sahelian livestock owners have robust empirical methods to protect their basis of livelihood-their livestock-they need and appreciate quality medicines, vaccines and veterinary services. Operational veterinary services are at the heart of controlling important livestock diseases to reduce impacts on livelihoods. There are effective control measures such as anthrax vaccination of livestock that also safeguard human health. Veterinary services are equally at the heart of early detection of TADs and surveillance and response to epidemic and zoonotic diseases. But how can the services, composed of public and private veterinarians, veterinary technicians, community animal health workers and outreach services, meat inspectors and monitoring/surveillance professionals, better ensure and satisfy the needs of livestock owners, their families and other stakeholders such as public health and rural development? Which roles do international and national policies play? We review the status of veterinary services in the Sahel over the last 20 years and relate their provided services to overarching policy changes such as the privatisation of veterinary services and external funding schemes and programmes. We conclude on new ways forward such as implementation of intersectoral collaborations of professionals in remote Sahelian zones and needed operational research in optimising services.

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