



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

SOMALIA 2017

Saving livestock, saving livelihoods, saving lives

Three years of drought have taken a heavy toll on the rangelands and water supplies that Somalia's 7+ million pastoralists rely on to keep their animals alive and healthy. Livestock are their most important possessions – trade items bartered for food and other essentials; high-value assets used as collateral; the source of daily dairy protein. But malnourished animals do not produce as much milk. They cannot be traded, or only traded for less. And even minor illnesses can kill livestock weakened by a lack of food and water. Losses of goats, camels, sheep and cattle in 2017 have ranged from 20-40 percent in the south and 40-60 percent in the north. When animals die or stop producing, people go hungry. When animals are lost, so are people's livelihoods.

To keep livestock alive and producing, FAO is engaged in a massive animal treatment campaign, deploying 150 fast-moving teams of veterinarians across Somalia. Our goal: To provide simple and effective care to as many

animals as possible as rapidly as possible. As conditions have warranted, we have also delivered large volumes of water to support people's herds. Saving animals saves human lives and livelihoods.



**QARDHO,
PUNTLAND**

Veterinary teams have reached as many as 270,000 animals a day with simple, life-saving care.
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Results and impacts

- **14+ million animals** treated so far.
- **2+ million pastoralists** benefitting.
- **14+ million litres of water** trucked to over 100 sites across Somalia.
- **\$560 million in estimated livestock** losses prevented to date.
- Average cost of each FAO treatment, per animal: **\$0.40**.
- **Cost to a pastoralist** to replace one dead animal: **\$40-70\$**.
- That makes preventive veterinary care **100 times more cost-effective** than replacing animals after they've died.
- Approximate amount of milk beneficiary families can get from their animals per day, on average: **4.8 litres** – enough to nourish one mother and up to four children.

Why save animals?

Animals are the economic and food security bedrock of rural Somalia. But for pastoralists, animals are singularly important, the sole foundation of their livelihoods. They provide daily dairy protein, act as a “bank on four legs” used to access cash, and serve as valuable trade items exchanged for food and other essentials.

Faced with the pressures of drought, pastoral families will often put their livestock’s welfare at the top of their list of priorities, giving them water first or drawing from limited housed cash reserves to buy them food or medicine. There is a clear reason why: Pastoralists understand that if they lose their animals, they lose their livelihoods.

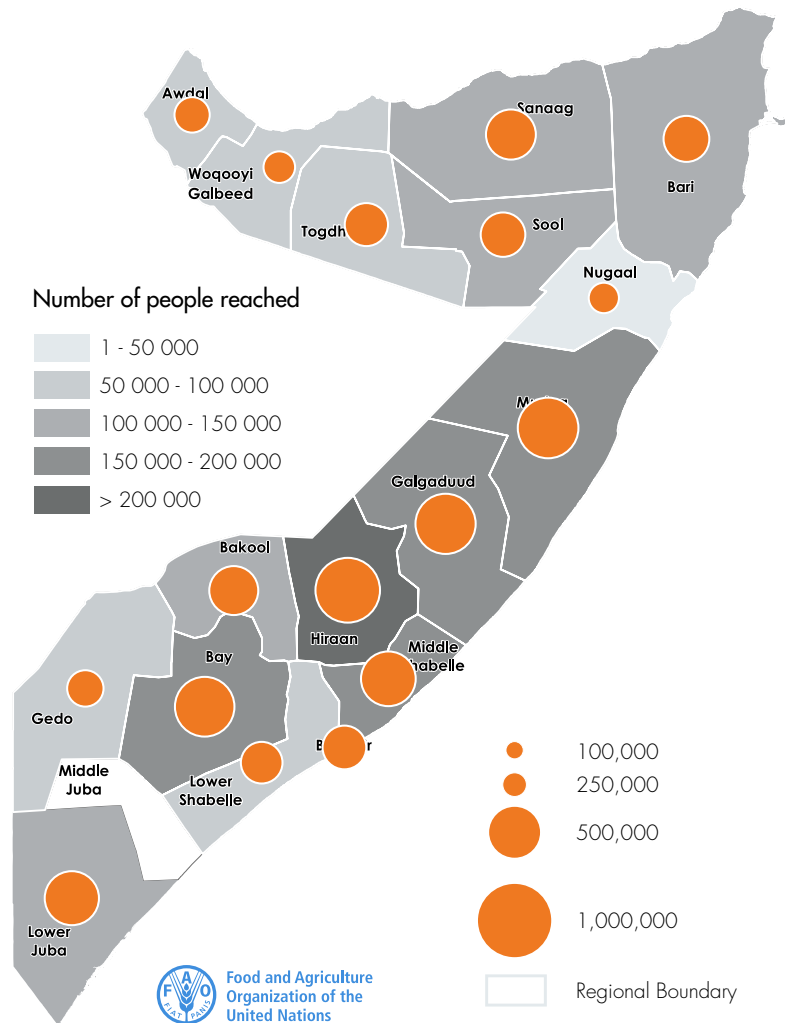
Larger-scale livestock deaths can push families over the edge. In camps where displaced people have gathered to seek relief, we have heard again and again: “When we began to lose our animals, that’s when it all came apart.”

For a drought-weakened animal, even minor problems can lead to mortality. Reaching livestock with preventative care before that happens keeps people fed. It supports their self-reliance. It keeps their livelihoods intact. Doing so also reduces the immediate humanitarian burden in Somalia and will make for a faster climb out of crisis once the drought ends.

A swift, strategic, and wide-reaching response

The first priority in FAO’s 2017 treatment campaign has been

LIVESTOCK TREATMENTS: AS OF 2 JUNE 2017



to keep livestock alive. The fastest way to reach the greatest number of animals with the most essential assistance has been to mobilize small, highly-mobile veterinary teams capable of quickly fanning out across the countryside. This has allowed us reach up to 270,000 animals a day during peak surges.

Teams are comprised of Somali veterinary professionals, some from the private or non-profit sectors, others from regional

government health agencies or the federal Ministry of Livestock, Forestry and Range. Many have roots in pastoral communities.

The treatments they are providing include injections of multi-vitamin boosters and medicines that kill off internal and external parasites, administration of long-lasting antibiotics to fight respiratory infections, doses of deworming medications and basic care for injuries and wounds.



UUSGURE, PUNTLAND

Some Somalis are calling the ongoing, 3-year-old drought *Odi Kawayn*, which means “something bigger than the elders.”
© FAO/K. Prinsloo

Today, milk; tomorrow, a future

Goats, camels, sheep and cattle have been saved by FAO treatments. Surviving animals are producing, although their production is reduced. Even a little milk can go long way in helping keep children nourished.

And the loss of livestock is catastrophic for families. The cost of replacing the average-sized herd of 40 animals can run from \$1,600 to \$2,800, depending on market trends. This in a country where the average annual household income has been estimated at around \$450.

Losing animals pushes pastoralists into destitution and forces them to seek external assistance. Once their livelihoods collapse, it can take them years to get back on their feet again – some might never make it.

KEY FACTS

- By the end of July FAO will have provided veterinary care to over 21 million animals – roughly half of Somalia’s entire livestock population.
- That will have seen benefits accrue to over 3.1 million people in terms of daily dairy intake and preserved assets.
- In current conditions one goat can still produce nearly half a litre of milk each day.
- Livestock provide pastoral Somalis with 50 to 60 percent of their annual income.
- The livestock sector generates 40 percent of Somalia’s national GDP.
- And accounts for 60 percent of the country’s export earnings.
- Exports from Somalia to Gulf States are estimated to be the largest live-animal trade flow in the world.

A FIGHTING CHANCE

Ali, a young pastoralist, waits for an FAO veterinary team to treat his camel. Families like his have moved their livestock eastward towards the ocean, where grass and rangelands have better managed to withstand drought.

Although they are highly tolerant of dehydration, one of the longest and most severe dry spells in living memory has taken a heavy toll on these tough survivors; their humps, usually full of energy-rich fats, are now depleted.

Camels are among the most valuable animals in Somalia – they can cost as much as \$1,000 to replace. For a pastoralist like Ali, that scale of loss spells disaster. A \$40 cent FAO medical intervention has increased the odds his camel – and his family – will make it through this crisis.

BANDAR BEYLA, PUNTLAND

For pastoralists, preventing livestock die-offs is crucial to withstanding the current drought and safeguarding their futures.
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