



**ACTED**  
Agency for technical cooperation and development.

## Analysis of Past Livestock Distribution Projects

### Assessment Report and Recommendations for Future Livestock Distribution Projects

#### Executive Summary

ACTED's assessment of past livestock distribution projects implemented between 2002 and 2006 reveals that 67 % of beneficiary flocks decreased in size by spring 2008, with 47 % of beneficiaries no longer having any sheep at all. In light of these findings, ACTED has analyzed the mechanisms that led to these outcomes.

Main findings include:

- *Households that maintained or increased their flock size predominantly also had access to an alternative source of feed to commercial fodder, such as feed crop cultivation or grazing.*
- *Animal health was a key obstacle for beneficiaries, with 50 % of sales due to poor health and sickness.*
- *Half of respondents felt they had not received enough training over the course of the distribution project.*

Key recommendations include:

- *Improve beneficiary capacity to use cultivation to help feed their herd*
- *Provide more training using practical methods, particularly in the areas of feeding and health*
- *Follow-up project through field visits, veterinary care and training for as long as possible*

ACTED hopes that this analysis will provide guidance to future livestock distribution projects.

Please keep in mind that this assessment contains only preliminary results and merits more detailed research. ACTED plans to launch a follow-up assessment in 2009.

**Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)  
Palestinian Territories  
Jerusalem, August 2008**

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid

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# **Analysis of Past Livestock Distribution Projects in the West Bank**

## **I. Background**

The food security situation in the Palestinian Territories has grown increasingly worse since 2002. In response, a number of agencies have implemented projects in Gaza and the West Bank since 2002, most involving asset distribution to vulnerable households to improve access to food. ACTED implemented such a project in 2007 with ECHO support, involving the distribution of livestock, home garden materials, family greenhouses and beehives.

Since 2007, the breeding sector and small ruminant breeders in particular have been facing a crisis, due to rising input prices, especially fodder, and continuing drought, among other factors. This current decrease in the profitability of “breeding” is affecting the relevance and potential for success of the livestock component of ‘traditional’ distribution projects, the likes of which continue to be implemented and proposed today. The changing conditions of the breeding sector require a reexamination and adjustment of project type and structure.

This study is a cross-organization, multi-year assessment of past projects with the aim of recommending steps towards a new approach to addressing the needs small-scale breeders of small ruminants in the Palestinian Territories.

## **II. Objectives**

The objectives of this study are to:

- Assess the results of past livestock distribution projects in a given geographical area
- Understand the mechanisms that led to the success or failure of livestock distribution
- Identify the critical factors for success of such projects

## **III. Methodology**

For purposes of this assessment, ACTED conducted a series of interviews with former beneficiaries of three different livestock distribution projects implemented by three organizations between 2002 and 2006. From 28 February to 11 March 2008, 30 individuals were interviewed across a total of 9 villages.<sup>1</sup> The surveys were conducted by an experienced social worker and ACTED staff member from the region who has been involved with such projects for the last four years.

The interviews were personal and semi-structured in form, in part to obtain the opinions and impressions of the respondents. A standard questionnaire was used, divided into three sections: project characteristics, type of package distributed and evolution of the activities over time.

## **IV. Baseline Indicators**

Past livestock distribution projects typically identify their main objectives to be (1) increasing household consumption and (2) increasing household income. As interpretations of these indicators vary across organizations, for or purposes of this study, ACTED has defined household consumption as an increase in household consumption of dairy products following distribution. Increase in household income is measured by two factors: (a) increase in income from lamb and dairy product sales, and (b) aversion of costs which would have otherwise been incurred by the beneficiary.

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<sup>1</sup> The nine villages are Mas-ha, Kufr Thulth, Izbet Ashqar, Al-Mudawwar, Qarawat Bani-Zeid, Burin, Yasuf, Qabalan and Farkha. These span the four governorates of Salfit (3), Qalqilya (3), Nablus (2) and Ramalla (1).

In addition to these two indicators ACTED has chosen to focus on the ability of beneficiaries to maintain or increase their herd as this will enable measurement of the longer-term impact of distribution projects. Particularly in the longer term, both increased dairy consumption and increased income depend upon the ability of a household to increase or maintain the size of its herd after distribution. Thus while household consumption and household income will be examined at the onset of this assessment, change in herd size will constitute the primary indicator for this study.

## V. Limitations

The following assessment is based solely on the beneficiaries' own accounts and interpretations of past distribution projects. Due to lack of available official data (from the other organizations or households themselves), ACTED was not in a position to cross-check the responses provided in the surveys. While this survey method is useful for gathering otherwise unavailable follow-up data on projects, as well as beneficiaries' impressions and opinions, the following possible sources of inaccuracy should be kept in mind.

The surveys were conducted two to five years after the time of project implementation; thus we assume that some respondents may not have remembered project details in their full accuracy when providing answers.

It is also possible that some respondents were influenced by the belief that their answers would affect their eligibility for future aid distribution projects. Despite ACTED efforts to explain clearly to respondents that the surveys were to be used for assessment purposes only, it is possible that some exaggerated their responses in order to appear more vulnerable.

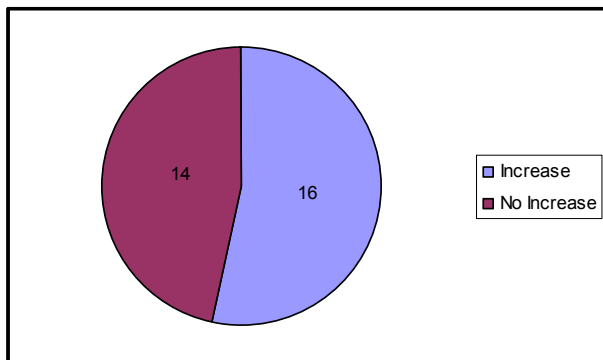
## VI. Findings

### VI. A. Baseline Indicators

#### VI. A. 1. Change in Household Consumption and Household Income

In terms of household consumption, 16 of the 30 households (53 %) interviewed report an increase in household consumption of dairy products at some point in time following implementation of the project.

Chart 1: Increase in Household Consumption of Dairy Products

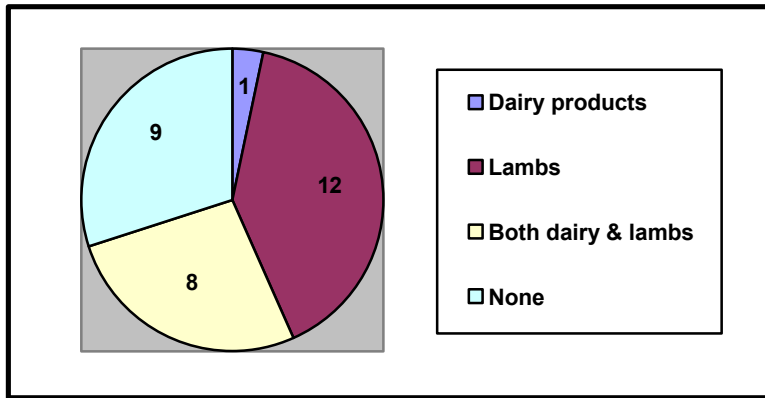


Of the 7 total households that increased or maintained their herd size, 6 reported an increase in household dairy consumption. Of the 14 total households with no heads remaining today, 12 (86 %) report no increase in household consumption after distribution.

Increase in household income is measured by two factors: (a) increase in cash availability from lamb and dairy product sales, and (b) aversion of costs which would have otherwise been incurred by the beneficiary. Overall, respondents report an increase in household income, though primarily in the form of single-instance cash injections.

The majority of respondents note an increase in cash availability from sales at one point in time.

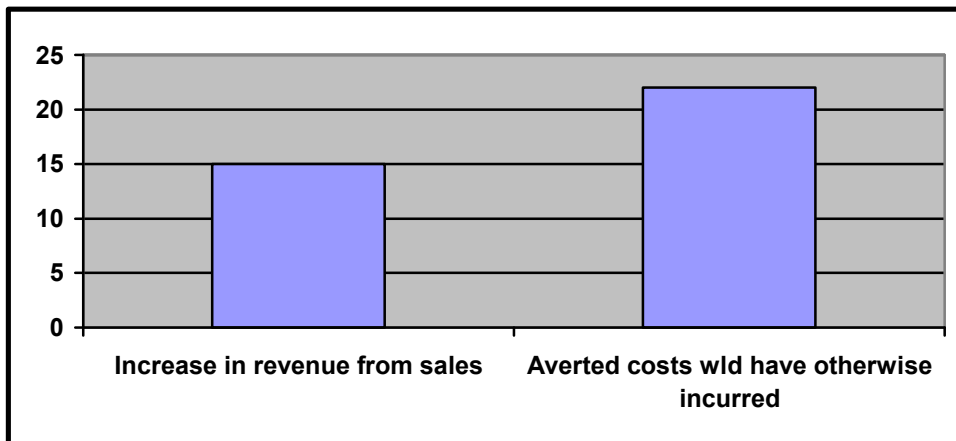
Chart 2: Sale of Lambs and Dairy Products



Of the 30 households, 21 (70 %) report selling lambs, dairy products or both. Despite the number of households that report sales of lambs or dairy, only 15 (50 %) households report having experienced an increase in income.

In addition to increased cash availability from sales, the distribution projects also enabled beneficiaries to save money they would otherwise have spent on similar items. The majority (73 %) report having saved funds due to the intervention.

Chart 3: Impact of Distribution Project on Household Income

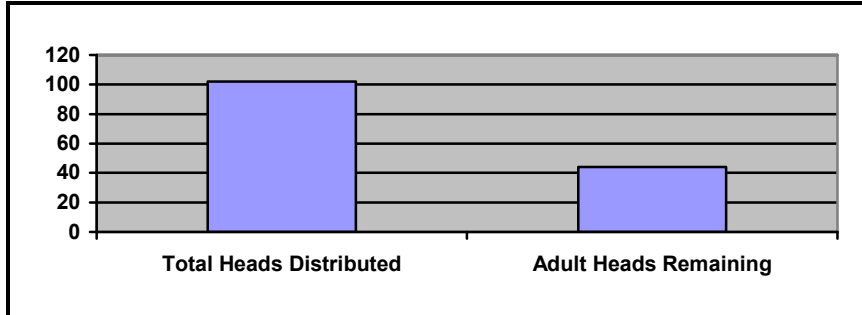


### VI. A. 2. Change in Herd Size

The overall number of sheep distributed decreased by more than half, and nearly half of households no longer had any sheep when the interviews were conducted. To measure change in herd size, interviewees were asked how many sheep they had received over the course of the project and how many remained at the time of the interview. Respondents report a general trend of decrease in household herd size, and nearly half no longer have any sheep at all.

Past livestock distribution projects typically distributed between 2 and 5 adult female animals per household, with households receiving either sheep or goats at the time of distribution. 6 households also received a lamb at the time of distribution, which are included below under total number of heads distributed.

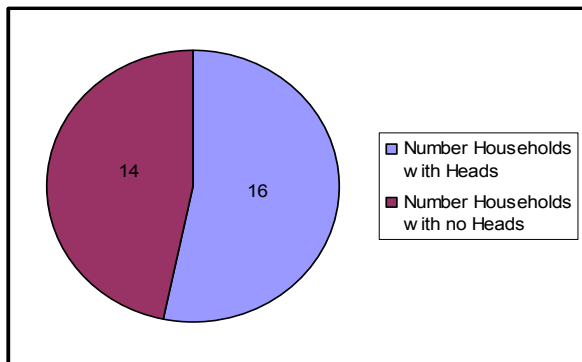
Chart 4: Number of Heads Remaining



According to the respondents, a total of 102 animals were distributed at the onset of the projects. By the time of the survey, only 44 adult heads remained, a decrease of over 50%.

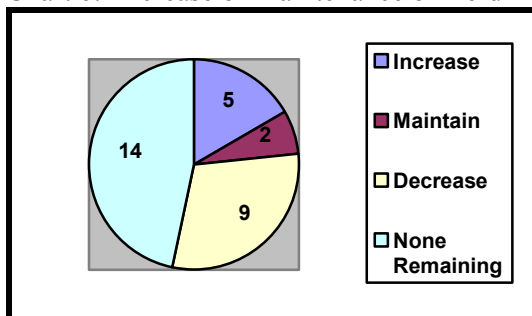
A significant number of households no longer had any remaining animals at the time of the survey.

Chart 5. Number of Households Remaining with Heads



Of the 30 households assessed in this study, only 53% had *any* remaining heads at the time the survey was conducted.

Chart 6: Increase or Maintenance of Herd



In total, only 7 (23 %) of the 30 households were able to increase or maintain their herd. 23 (77 %) total experienced a decrease in herd.

Overall, approximately half of the households interviewed achieved household consumption of dairy products or household income in the short term. However only 23% were able to maintain or increase herd size which brings to light major concerns as to the sustainability of any gains made in terms of the previous 2 indicators. In order to examine the reasons why the maintenance of herd sizes has been elusive, these findings will now be examined in relation to possible causal factors.

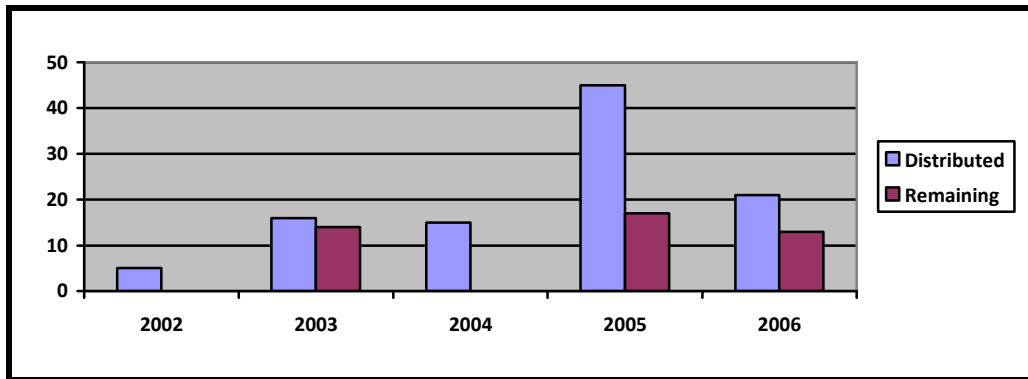
## VI. B. Results by Characteristics of Distribution (possible factors)

The following section examines the relationship between project success and some of the different characteristics of distribution. These include year of distribution, type of animal distributed, breed of animal distributed, number of heads distributed per household, package type, and training type. Analysis will focus on the impact of these characteristics on the number of heads remaining.

### VI. B. 1. Year of Distribution

As mentioned, this study examines past livestock distribution projects implemented between 2002 and 2006.

Chart 7: Year of Distribution



The number of heads remaining today from each year of distribution is significantly lower than the amount initially distributed, with some variation in rate. 2003 seems to stand out as an exception to this trend, with 14 out of 16 heads remaining today. This is due to the fact that one of the 2003 beneficiaries initially received 2 heads, and claimed to have purchased an unspecified number in the interim, thereby increasing his total at the time of the survey to 8 heads. If adjusted for this exception, the results show a general trend of low sustainability, with the number of remaining heads decreasing with time.

Overall, the year of distribution does not appear to have had much influence on the general sustainability of the intervention.

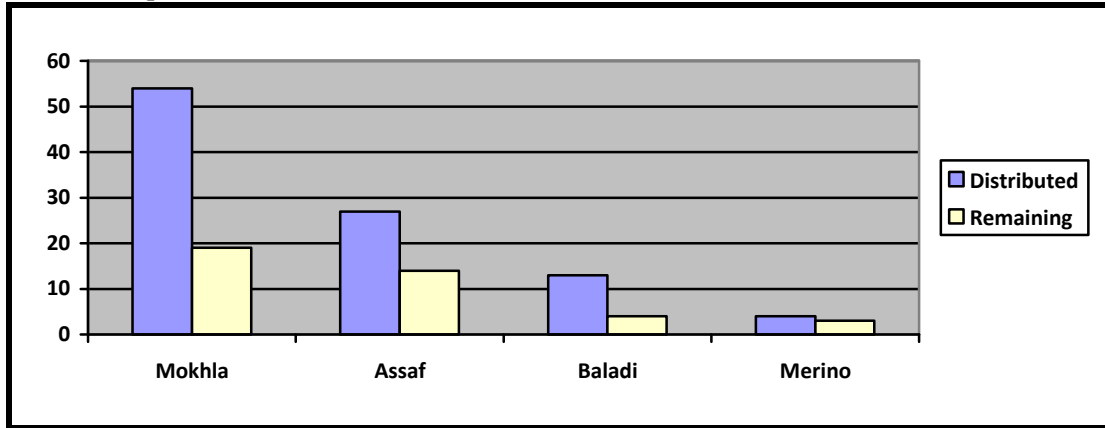
### VI. B. 2. Sheep versus Goats

Past projects distributed primarily sheep to their beneficiaries, but in some instances beneficiaries received goats or both sheep and goats. Since goats were only distributed to a total of 4 households at the onset, however, a meaningful comparison cannot be made in this study. On the other hand, 5 households mention that they exchanged some or all of their sheep for goats following distribution. Of the 9 total households which had goats at some point, 4 increased or maintained their herd. These households explain that they preferred goats because they found them to be “stronger” and did not require as much fodder or grazing land per head to feed. It would be useful to investigate this further in future studies.

### VI. B. 3. Animal Breed

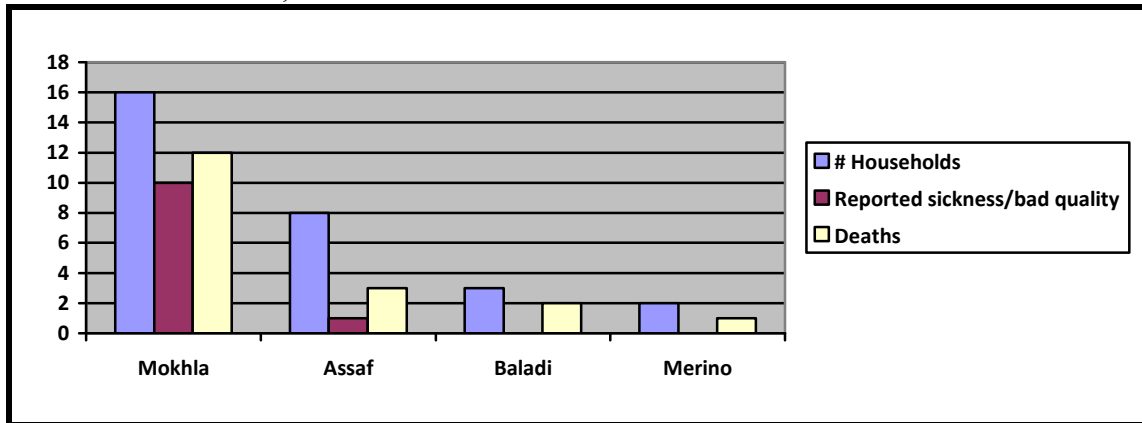
Five different animal breeds were distributed to the beneficiaries: Mokhla, Merino, Assaf and Baladi.

Chart 8. Impact of Animal Breed



Of the 5 breeds, Mokhla and Assaf were those most commonly distributed. Overall, Assaf has the highest number of heads remaining as compared to the number distributed and Mokhla the lowest number. Though 54 heads of Mokhla were initially distributed, just over a third remained at the time of the survey.

Chart 9: Animal Breed, Sickness and Death

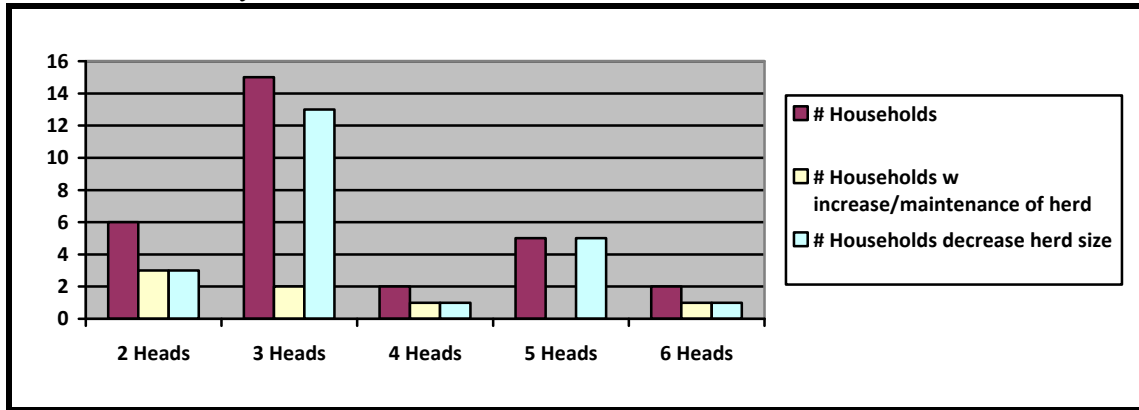


Furthermore, the Mokhla breed seems to have had the highest death and diseases rates. 12 of a total of 16 households that received Mokhla complained of animal deaths. In addition, 10 of 16 households that received Mokhla complained of sickness or poor quality. This is surprising considering that Assaf sheep are usually reputed to be the most fragile. It should be kept in mind here that the table does not reflect the different amounts of time that have elapsed for the animals since their date of distribution. In the case of the Mokhla sheep, however, some were distributed every year.

### VI. B. 4. Number of Heads Distributed

Beneficiary households typically received between 2 and 6 total heads (adult female + lambs) from the distribution projects.

Chart 10: Results by Number of Heads Distributed

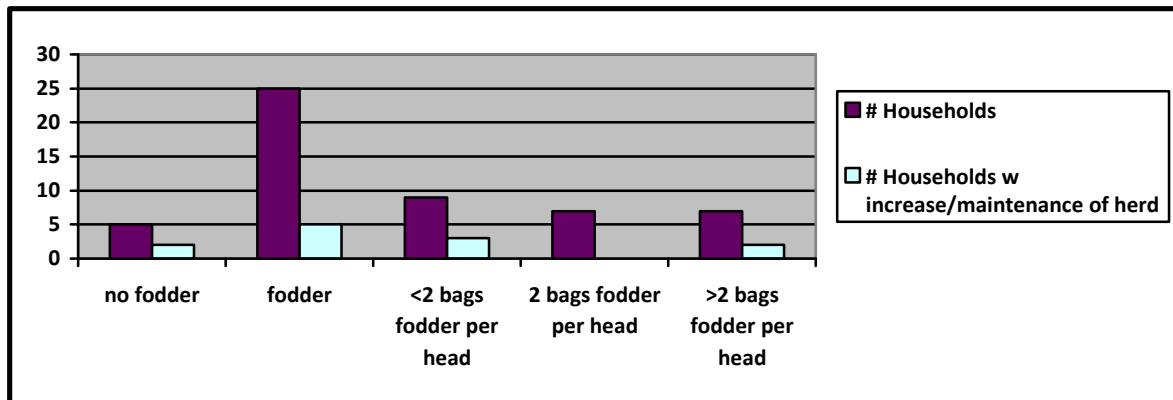


The results indicate that the number of heads distributed does not have a significant impact on the ability of a household to increase or maintain the size of its herd.

### VI. B. 5. Type of Package Distributed

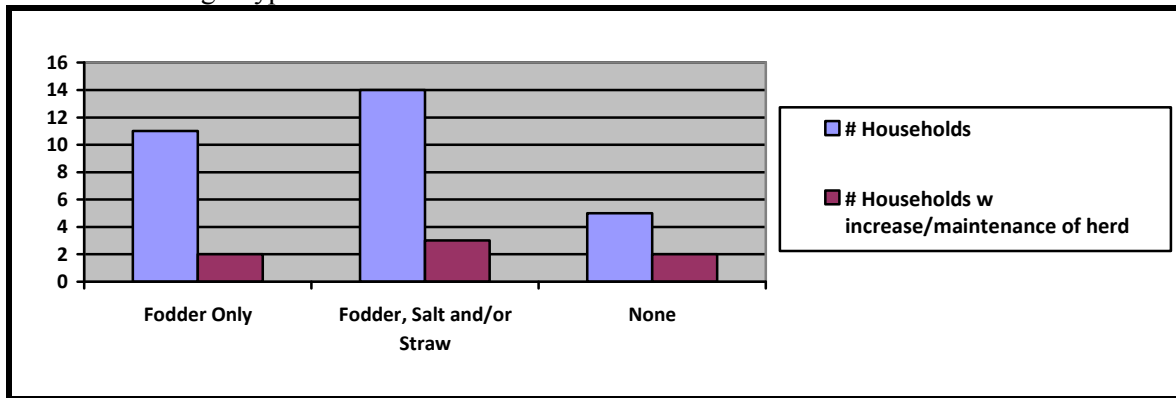
Depending on the distribution project, supplementary packages of different content and quantity were distributed to the beneficiaries. Typically, projects distributed between 0.5 and 3 bags of fodder per head, where one bag contains 50 kg of fodder.

Chart 11: Amount of Fodder Distributed per Head



The amount of fodder received per head does not seem to have had a significant impact on the increase or maintenance of herd size. It is important to keep in mind that one bag of fodder usually feeds one head for about one month.<sup>i</sup> It is possible that none of the projects distributed enough fodder to have an impact on success. This question should be examined more extensively in future studies.

Chart 12: Package Type

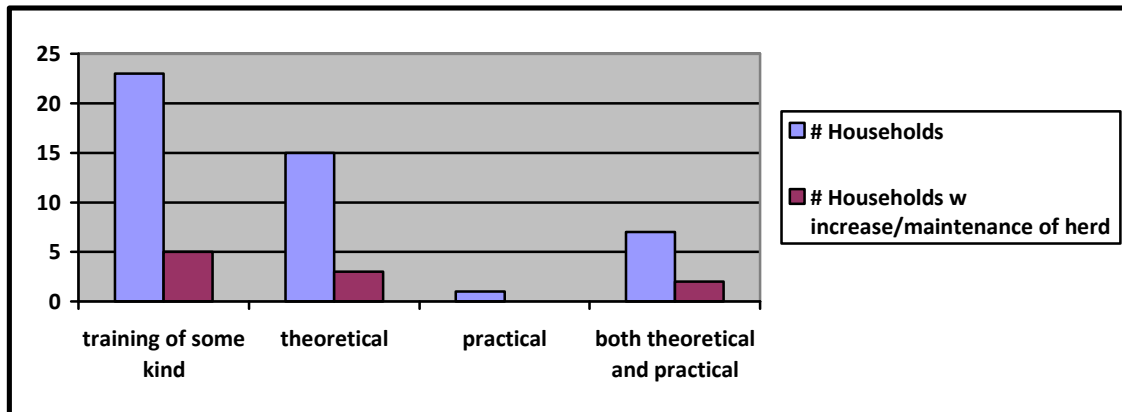


11 households (37 %) say they received fodder only, and 11 households (47 %) say they received a combination of fodder, straw, salt blocks (and sometimes also powder milk). 14 households (15 %) individuals claim not to have received any livestock related materials, but considering the structure of past projects, this seems highly improbable. The survey results indicate that the supplementary package did not play a significant role in the increase or maintenance of herd size.

### VI. B. 6. Training

The majority of beneficiaries say they received some training over the course of the distribution project. These were either theoretical or included a practical component.

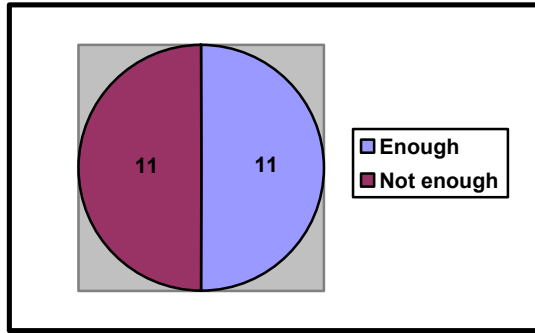
Chart 13: Impact of Training on Increase/Maintenance of Herd



Of those who received training, a slightly higher proportion of households were able to increase or maintain herd size when they had received both theoretical and practical training. Two respondents did not recall whether they received training, and were excluded from these results. These results may indicate a need to look at the overall relevance of training topics.

The 22 total households which reported having received training were also asked to evaluate their experience with the trainings.

Chart 14: Beneficiary Perception of Training



Of those who received training 11 (50 %) report that not enough was provided. This again highlights the need to conduct further research on which trainings topics and methods are most appropriate.

## VI. C. Post-Project Developments

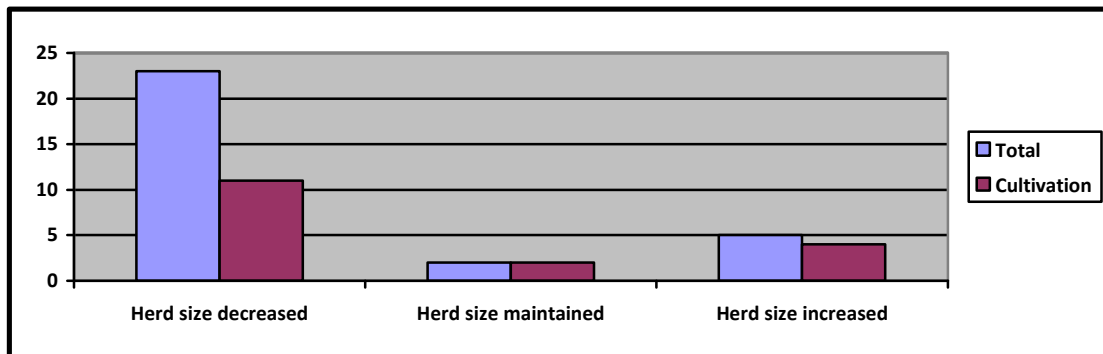
### VI. C. 1. Feeding

Households typically relied on a combination of three sources for feeding their herd: cultivation of feed, grazing, and the purchase of concentrate fodder and barley. Compared to fodder, cultivation and grazing have almost no related costs. Overall, the results indicate that cultivation and grazing have a determining but not sufficient influence on the maintenance or increase of herd size. It seems that those households with self-sufficient means of production were better able to maintain their herds.

#### VI. C. 1. a. Cultivation of Feed

Cultivation of feed seems to be highly correlated with the increase or maintenance of herd size.

Chart 15: Cultivation of Feed and Change in Herd Size

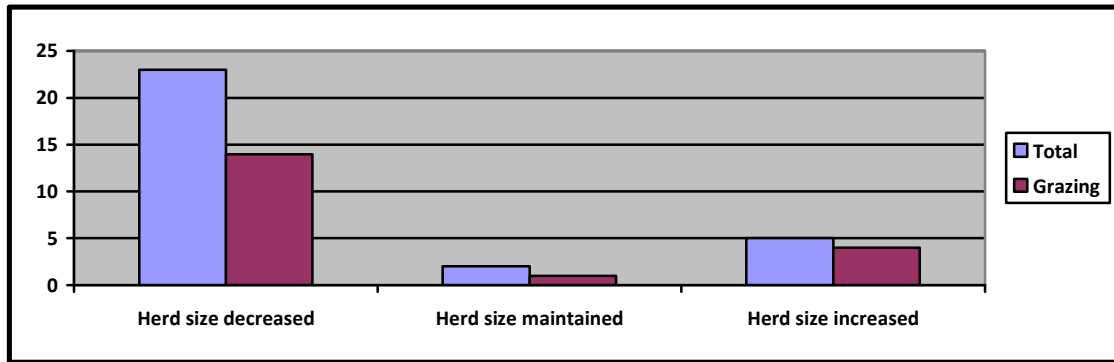


Out of 30 households 17 (57 %) reported cultivating at least some food for their animals. Of these, 6 succeeded in increasing or maintaining the size of their herd in the long run. This means that 6 of the 7 total successful households used cultivation to continue feeding the animals after the end of the project. Conversely, of the 23 households whose herds decreased in size, over half did not use cultivation to help feed their animals. Of the 14 households with no heads left at all, 9 did not use cultivation.

#### VI. C. 1. b. Grazing

Out of 30 households, 19 (63 %) reported feeding their animals through grazing for part of the year.

Chart 16: Grazing and Change in Herd Size



Of the 7 total successful households, 5 used grazing as a means of feeding their herd. Conversely, of the 23 households whose herds decreased in size, 9 did not use grazing to help feed the animals.

### VI. C. 1. c. Concentrate Fodder and Barley

Out of 30 households, 25 (83 %) purchased either concentrate fodder, barley, or both to feed their herd. 19 (63 %) purchased concentrate fodder only to help feed their herd, 3 (10 %) purchased barley only, and 3 (10 %) used a mix of concentrate fodder and barley.

Of the 7 total successful households, all of them relied to some extent on concentrate fodder or barley.<sup>2</sup> Since nearly all respondents purchased concentrate fodder or barley to feed their herd after the end of the distribution project, the results do not indicate any significant correlation between success and use of concentrate fodder or barley.

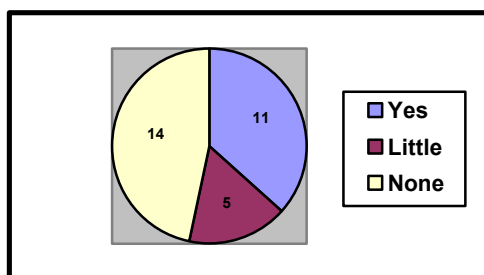
### VI. C. 2. Sheds

Respondents were asked whether they had adequate sheds available for their herd. Out of 30 households, only 6 (20 %) reported they felt their sheds were not adequate. Among these, 3 insisted the problems were only minor. These results seem to indicate that people do not think that more adequate sheds would impact their ability to increase or maintain the herd (through better health conditions).

### VI. C. 3. Health Problems

When asked whether they had faced health problems with their herd, a significant number of households replied that they had. Health problems could include disease, high mortality, pregnancy problems or other.

Chart 17: Households with Health Problems



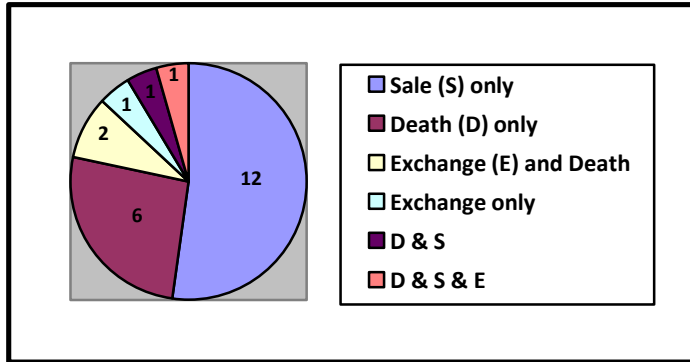
<sup>2</sup> Of the 7 total successful households, 6 relied on concentrate and 1 relied on barley.

Our of 30 total households 16 (53 %) report having faced some kind of health problem with their herds. 11 households (37 %) said they faced significant health problems.

#### VI. D. Analysis of the Causes and Modalities of Herd Size Decrease

Of the 23 beneficiaries whose herds decreased in size, decrease was due primarily to sale and death.

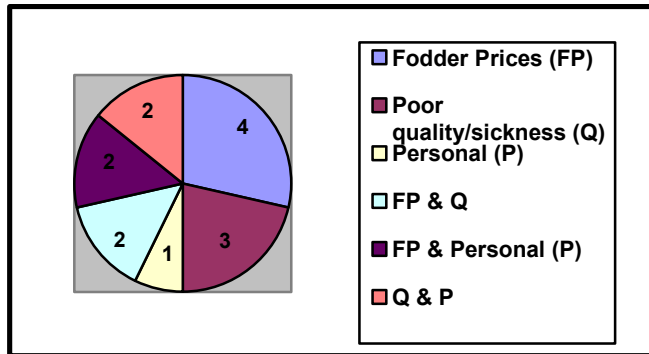
Chart 18: Decrease in Herd Size



14 households sold some or all adult heads, while 10 households lost some or all adult heads through death.

The beneficiaries were asked to specify the reasons for selling heads. Reasons for sale varied broadly, from poor quality/sickness to personal financial reasons (such as school fee payment or debt repayment). It would be necessary to conduct more detailed research on use of animals for debt repayment.

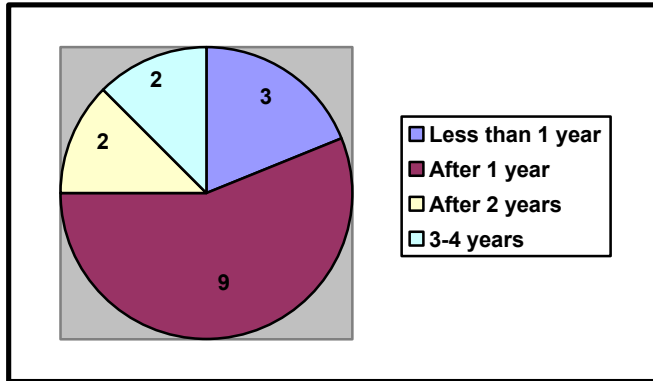
Chart 19: Reasons for Sale among those with Decreased Herd Size



Of the 14 households with decreased herd size who sold heads, 8 claimed to have sold some or all because of high fodder prices, 7 sold some or all because of poor quality/sickness, and 4 sold some or all for personal financial reason.

Respondents were also asked how long after distribution they had sold their animals.

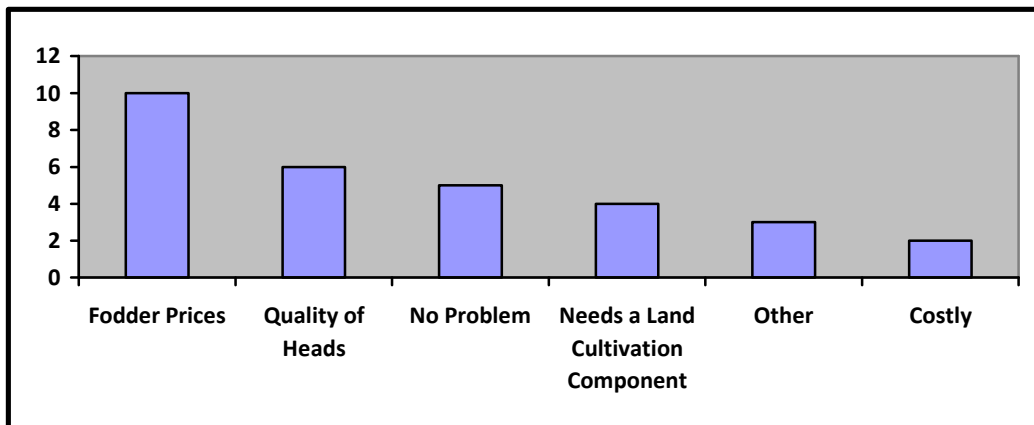
Chart 20: Time Animals Sold Among those with Decreased Herd Size



Of the 14 households with decreased herd size who sold heads, 9 claim to have sold some or all 1 year after distribution. 3 households sold some or all within months of distribution, while 2 households sold some or all 2 years after distribution, and 2 households sold some or all 3-4 years after distribution.

All respondents were asked to evaluate their experience with the past livestock distribution project, and more specifically to describe what they believe to have been the main causes for failure.

Chart 21: Beneficiary Perception of Causes for Failure

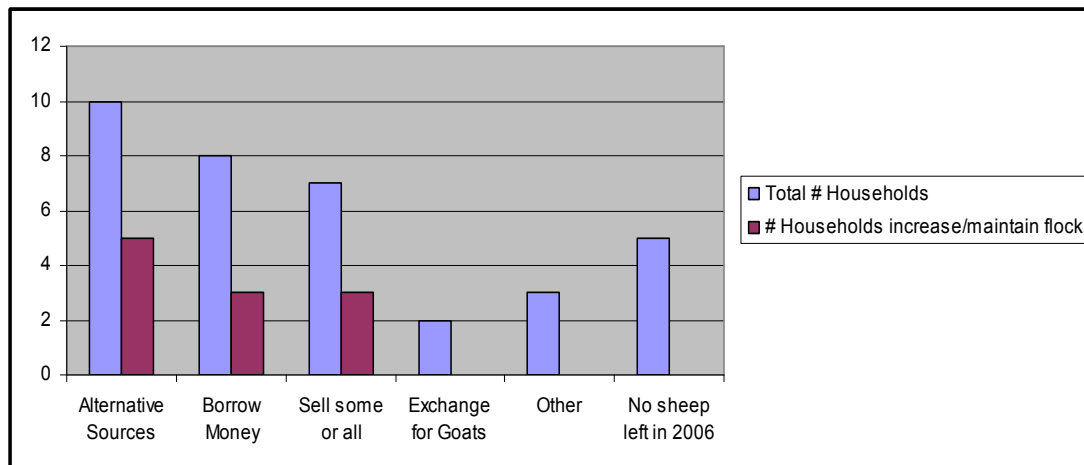


Out of the 30 total households, 10 (33 %) mention high fodder prices as a main cause and 6 (20 %) mention poor quality/sickness of the heads. 4 (13 %) mention that land cultivation should have been better incorporated into the projects.

Respondents were asked to describe how they managed increasing fodder prices since 2006. Most responded with a combination of some of the following approaches: switch to alternative sources of feeding (cultivation and/or grazing), borrow money to continue purchasing fodder, sell some or all heads, exchange sheep for goats, and other.<sup>3</sup> Of the 30 households, 5 (17 %) no longer owned any heads in 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Only three households are included under 'other:' one reported no difference, one switched to a cheaper type of fodder, and one never used fodder to begin with.

Chart 22: Beneficiary Response to 2006 Fodder Price Increase



Of the 30 households, 10 (33 %) responded to the increase in fodder prices by switching to alternative sources of feeding. Among these 10, 9 mention increasing cultivation and 7 mention increasing grazing. Of the 30 households, 8 (27 %) borrowed money to continue purchasing fodder, and 7 (23 %) sold some or all of their animals (4 sold all heads). Additionally, two households opted to switch their sheep for goats, stating that goats require less or no fodder.

As mentioned earlier, 7 out of 30 households succeeded in maintaining or increasing flock size overall. Of these 7, 5 are among those that responded to higher fodder prices by using alternative sources of food.

## VII. Conclusions

In summary, the vast majority of households interviewed were not able even to maintain the size of the herds distributed. In addition, roughly half of respondents reported an increase in dairy consumption, but less than one fourth were able to sustain this increase over the long term. Finally, household incomes increased for most as a result of the projects, but not in a sustainable or regular fashion. There is a need to re-examine and reconfigure the way in which traditional livestock distribution projects are structured and implemented.

ACTED examined a number of factors in relation to the ability of households to maintain or increase their flock size over time. High fodder prices were reported to be the primary reason for flock size decrease, followed closely by animal health and quality. Those households which were most likely to maintain their flocks in the long run were overwhelmingly those which could provide an alternative source of feed to commercial fodder through cultivation or grazing. Furthermore, half of respondents felt they had not received sufficient training over the duration of the projects

The following issues were highlighted as key areas for future research:

- Training topics and methods
- The impact of indebtedness on a household's ability to maintain its flock
- The benefits of raising sheep versus goats,
- Impact of the quantity of fodder distributed and over what period of time

## VIII. Recommendations

1. **Take into account at the moment of distribution the need to ensure food supply for livestock in the short and long terms either directly or through increased income**

- *Tailor the amount of fodder provided to match the period of time before which households can begin to support the new herds on their own through sale of dairy products and meat.*
- *Accompany with distribution of pregnant ewes with powder milk distribution for newborns. Otherwise, distribute lambs rather than pregnant sheep.*  
This will help to limit the period of time before which households can begin to support the new herds through sale of dairy products.
- *Improve beneficiary capacity to use cultivation to help feed their herd*  
Of the three principle sources of food for livestock, our results show that cultivation is most closely correlated with success and likely the most isolated from volatile external forces. This can be done by either selecting households that already have their own cultivation or by integrating a cultivation component into projects.
- *Encourage use of grazing to supplement feed of animals*  
This can be done by either selecting places where grazing is possible.

## **2. Address animal health over a more long-term basis**

- *Include an animal health section during trainings, making sure to include a practical, demonstration-based component*
- *Secure veterinary follow-up visits, interspersed over the duration of the project*
- *Ensure that all heads distributed comply with strict health criteria in order to build a sound basis for the projects*

## **3. Match animal quantity and type to needs of households**

- *Conduct further research on distributing goats rather than sheep*  
While the results seem to indicate that goats may be easier to sustain, the sample size was not large enough to determine significance.
- *Consider the pros and cons of the breed of animal that will be distributed*  
Our results show that contrary to dominant perceptions among farmers in the West Bank, Assaf sheep may be the most sustainable.

## **4. Consider the following criteria when selecting target areas and beneficiaries**

- *Target areas with access to local resources, such as land for cultivation or grazing, or availability of water*

## **5. Re-examine training topics and methods. Tentative recommendations include:**

- *Provide more training, particularly in the areas of feeding and health*  
Half of respondents who had received training explicitly mention the need for more training. As our results indicate, feeding and health are the two most problematic areas of animal care.

- *Include a practical component in training sessions whenever possible*  
Households whose trainings included a practical component fared better than those without.

## **6. Prolong duration of project as much as possible**

- *Follow-up project through field visits, veterinary care and training for as long as possible*
- *Aim to extend project duration for at least 6 months following the distribution of the livestock, as well as move beneficiaries into a development program following the end of the distribution project.*

Please keep in mind that this assessment contains only preliminary results and merits more detailed research. ACTED plans to launch a follow-up assessment in 2009.

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