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Livestock farming

Livestock farming dates back 5,000 B.C. years ago, with cattle playing an important role in the human occupation of the African continent. **The livestock sector is one of the most important sectors until today for many developing countries** (sustainability of national economies, rural economies and many ecosystems), **as they provide goods and services to farmers** (Lambrecht, 1983).

However, **they are facing rising external challenges such as climate change**, factors that are beyond the farmers control. **Drought has serious impacts on livestock production, causing deadly disease that affect human beings as well.** Rangelands have become degraded due to poor land use management such as overgrazing (Lambrecht, 1983). **Such challenges require costly measures by farmers to continue making a living on livestock farming.** These conditions of drought and degradation of rangelands have shortened their full use for grazing of cattle in many parts of the world.

Advantages of farming wild animals

Due to the sensitivity of livestock farming, some farmers have embarked on farming with game animals or both. Game farming is concerned with the utilization of **a wide spectrum of wild species**, which is mostly conducted on extensive areas. **Game farming operates with lower input and management costs because native animals are better adapted to local environmental conditions**, including heat and

drought, and have greater resistance to diseases, parasites and toxic plants (Ntiamoa-Baidu, 1997).

Habitat degradation is a problem throughout many African grazing lands, but **game animals can be kept at high stocking density because the mix of browsers and grazers makes optimal use of all vegetation types** (Muir, 1989). Furthermore, **game animals tend to be more mobile than livestock**, and are not as tied to watering locations, thus achieving better distribution across landscape which reduces the potential for overgrazing (Muir, 1989; Ntiamoa-Baidu, 1997).

The ways in which game animals may be utilized are many and they simply rely on the farmer's objectives.

Game ranching is not limited to meat production but also creates income from ecotourism, photographic safaris, [trophy hunting](#), breeding, color variants, curios and stock sales; promising the farmer more income. A game farm could then also host guest as a lodge, providing accommodation, which allows additional income for farmers and creating job opportunities in the community.

Areas such as communal lands are currently used for low profit, small scale, livestock production, but these lands could be better used for game meat production and tourism.

Game animals have been in many years used as a biological control tool in many degrading lands. They have been used to reduce invading plant species and restoring the land. Biological control is a progressive and environmentally friendly way to control invading plants because it leaves behind no chemical residues that might have harmful impacts on humans or other organisms, and when successful, it can

provide essentially permanent, widespread control with a very favorable cost-benefit ratio.

Conclusion

Livestock farmers should think about the potential benefits (as mentioned above) of farming with game animals alone or both livestock and game, especially in this negative rising effect of climate change.

References

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Lambrecht, F. L. (1983). Game Animals: A Substitute for Cattle?. *Rangelands Archives*, 5(1), 22-24.