

Cattle Commercialization in Rural South Africa: Livelihood Drivers and Implications for Livestock Marketing Extension

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KEYWORDS Market Participation. Sustainable Livelihood Framework. Double-Hurdle Model. Agricultural Extension. South Africa

ABSTRACT Commercialization of livestock farming systems remains a challenge in rural South Africa. Recent empirical evidence places agricultural extension at the forefront of policy strategy to address this challenge. This study applies the sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) to quantitatively analyze the factors confounding participation in cattle markets for the purpose of informing agriculture extension programming. Based on a dataset compiled from a household survey of 230 randomly selected smallholder cattle farmers in Okhahlamba Local Municipality (OLM), a Double-Hurdle econometric estimation technique is used to determine factors within the SLF influencing market participation and supply volumes decisions. The results reveal that the low rate of market participation could be explained by the broader aspects of livelihoods of smallholder cattle farmers, including limited access to financial, social and natural capital, as well as the difference in livelihood strategies and motivations. Based on these findings, the study draws the implications for the design of livestock extension programs in OLM, and South Africa in general.