

Training manual

**Proposed management  
interventions for improved  
small ruminant productivity  
in The Gambia**

**ITC**



**International Trypanotolerance  
Centre**





# Training manual

## **Proposed management interventions for improved small ruminant productivity in The Gambia**

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Dr Stephen G.A. Leak  
Project Manager,  
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## Foreword

This manual has been produced to provide guidelines for improved small ruminant production in The Gambia, based on research findings from ITC's Belgian Government funded Small Ruminant Research Project (SRRP) that has been carried out at the Institute between 1995 and 2003. The manual does not set out to comprehensively cover all aspects of small ruminant production, but to focus specifically on particular aspects that affect The Gambia, such as the trypanotolerant trait associated with West African Dwarf breeds in relation to the vector-borne disease risk prevalent in the country. The manual is therefore intended to complement some of the already existing recent and high quality manuals for improved small ruminant production, from which much information was drawn in preparing the SRRP manual.

The manual is a product of the second phase of the SRRP; that phase being entitled "*on-farm implementation of experimental research findings; the practical approach*". The manual is intended for distribution to small ruminant keepers in The Gambia and to extension workers, particularly from the Department of Livestock Services. Extension workers are expected to use it when working with farmers so that they can explain in local languages the content of the manual. A deliberate effort has been made to facilitate that method of use by keeping the amount of text to a minimum whilst making as much use as possible of simple pictures. ITC is currently engaged in the establishment of Farmer Field Schools in Central River Division of The Gambia and it is envisaged that the manual will be used during that process and will contribute to the development of participatory technologies to be implemented by those farmers. Many of the proposed interventions are also applicable to other countries of the sub-region.

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## Introduction



### SMALL RUMINANTS IN THE GAMBIA: SOME FIGURES



- > 1.300.000 inhabitants; increasing 4% per year
- > 69.000 farm holdings
- > 350.000 small ruminants, mostly *West African Dwarfs*
- > 90 % of farm holders have small ruminants
  - = mostly owned by poorer section of population
  - = 68 % are owned by women
  - = children are most common recipients of the milk
- **Role:**
  - = Contribution to human nutrition (meat & milk)
  - = Income generation
  - = Source of security
  - = Ceremonial
  - = Hides, manure, etc.
- **Scope:** Increase small ruminant productivity in order to reinforce this role

**Factors Impairing Small Ruminant Productivity:**



**ADOPTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INTERVENTIONS RELATED TO:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Diseases</u>: trypanosomosis, helminthosis, ticks and tick-born diseases and others (<i>Productivity losses in small ruminants amount 50-60 %</i>)</li><li>• <u>Inadequate nutrition</u>: yearly and seasonal fluctuation of animal feed resources, management practices (<i>Possibly the major factor limiting small ruminant productivity</i>)</li><li>• <u>Poor genetic potential</u>: random mating, lack of selection</li><li>• <u>Poor animal management practices</u>: housing, practices related to other factors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Health control</u>: monitoring of animals, treatment, vaccination schemes and sensitization</li><li>• <u>Improved nutrition</u>: fodder production and conservation, crop residues, grazing, tethering</li><li>• <u>Improve potential</u>: pure- and cross-breeding</li><li>• <u>Better management</u>: appropriate housing</li></ul>
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