

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOTS

Livestock Sector Lao PDR



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Livestock Crucial to Agriculture in Lao People's Democratic Republic

Livestock production in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) has picked up in recent years, with growth rates of 3-5% annually and is buoyed by domestic and international demand. Lao PDR can potentially meet this demand if current production and trade issues are addressed.

One key concern is sustainably increasing efficiency and improving quality in smallholder farms. **Smallholder farms raise more than 95% of the country's livestock.** These farms operate in a largely unregulated environment with fragmented value chains. Small-scale farmers suffer from poor access to input supplies and services, lack of market linkages and information, long marketing chains, low sale volume, and depressed output prices.

Smallholder farmers lack technical knowledge to **maintain livestock safety and quality**, leading to mismanaged farms that cause livestock diseases to spread. Also, substantial **informal trade in cattle and buffalo** across Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam is one of the primary reasons for the spread of foot and mouth disease. With informal trade, there are limited opportunities for regulating animal health safety across borders.

From a conservation perspective, another issue is the **environmental effect of intensified livestock farming**. Smallholder farming is highly dependent on forest and water resources. Many farms in peri-urban areas do not comply with technical standards, such as solid and water waste management. On the other end of environmental impact is climate change effect on livestock, as rising temperatures cause declining fodder availability and heat stress.

Government and Development Partners Responses

The policy governing livestock development in Lao PDR is the **Strategy for Agricultural Development, 2011–2020**. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery (MAF) has a **Livestock Strategy**, which aims to commercialize the sector and improve product quality, develop and improve livestock breed, support animal forage and feed production, and enhance livestock productivity and environmental protection.

The government is also working on **food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary issues** concerning livestock. The Ministry of Health (MOH), with support from USAID, recently passed the Law on Food which regulates the livestock value chain. The MAF is responsible for sanitary and phytosanitary issues, while the Department of Livestock and Fisheries is responsible for animal health.



Small-holder farmers need to improve technical knowledge in livestock safety and quality

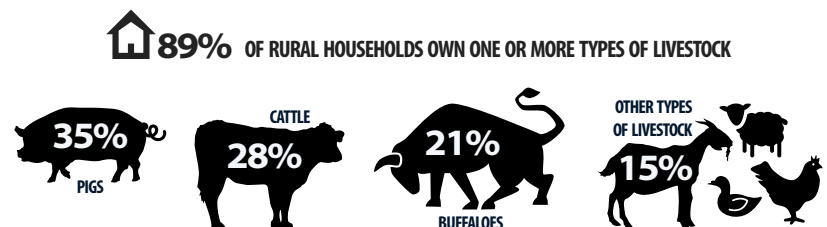
Development partners play an important role in promoting the livestock sector. Some key program areas of support include **livestock development and productivity enhancement** through an enhanced livestock management system, creation of production groups, and an inclusive supply chain. Partners have also focused on **animal disease control**. Since diseases like Foot and Mouth, avian influenza and swine cholera can be transboundary, projects tend to be regional, covering Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Most notable is the establishment of a regional cooperation mechanism to manage animal diseases.

In support of regional animal disease control, USAID has been working in Lao PDR (as well as Cambodia, Viet Nam and Indonesia) particularly **in response to the avian influenza pandemic**. Since 2005, it has committed to minimize the risk of further spread in animal populations, reduce the risk of human infections and further support pandemic planning and preparedness. While the pandemic has been contained, USAID is helping the Lao government with new animal diseases. It is currently in capacity-building mode to enable the government to predict and identify new pathogens emerging from wild animal populations.

AGRICULTURE SECTOR STATISTICS



LIVESTOCK STATISTICS



Another key area for USAID in Lao PDR is environment and climate change. One goal is to **reduce pressure on local forest resources**. These resources are adversely affected as small-scale farmers turn to forest foraging due to declining incomes from livestock farming. Under a program called “Lowering Emissions in Asia’s Forests (LEAF)”, USAID works to strengthen livelihood opportunities through improved livestock management and production systems.

STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, 2011–2020

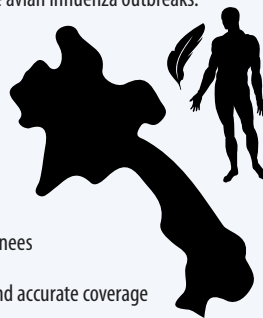
Key objectives:

- modernize lowland market-oriented agriculture production adapted to climate change, with a focus on smallholder farmers
- conserve upland ecosystems, ensuring food security and improving the livelihoods of rural communities

USAID RESPONSES TO THE AVIAN FLU CRISIS

Along with its work in Cambodia, USAID had notable success in Laos in limiting the number and size of the avian influenza outbreaks.

- 2006: year of intense USAID programs in Laos and Cambodia for H1N1
- 1,685: village veterinary workers trained in H1N1 detection and cure
- 40,000: farmers reached by trainees
- 65: journalists trained on fair and accurate coverage of H1N1
- 13,000: sets of personal protective equipment distributed in Cambodia and Laos



VILLAGE LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT, USAID’S LEAF PROGRAM

Huaphan province in Lao PDR, where villages are situated in or near protected forest areas:

- Population approx.: 370,000
- Program rolled out in 4 villages
- 20 trainers trained (who can then train the rest of the community)
- 40-50% decline in livestock mortality rate

Potential Areas for Development Assistance

Further support is still needed to **optimize the efficiency of smallholder livestock value chains and provide higher incomes for livestock producers**. To achieve critical mass, interventions must support the government’s effort to promote production clusters – a geographic concentration of livestock farmers - that will improve market linkages and attract private sector investment. Improving production capacity and quality through new production methods, better and resilient livestock breeds, and more efficient distribution mechanics will also be necessary.

Quality assurance and safety will be a key factor in enhancing productivity and ensuring public health as well. In terms of policy, the government needs support in drafting animal health-related legislation, such as amendments to the Law on Livestock Production and Veterinary Matters. One practical intervention is the creation of a **dedicated training school for veterinarians**, which the country currently lacks. Lastly, developments in the livestock sector have to be made in a sustainable manner **protecting natural resources**, particularly water and forests.



Food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary issues being addressed by the Government

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