Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Livestock Bulletin

SOUTH SUDAN

April -June 2021

Background

Livestock play a critical role in the food security and the overall well-being of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in South Sudan by providing milk, meat, blood, income, and as draught power. Livestock also play a multitude of socio-cultural functions including the provision of prestige and social status, bridal gifts, payment and communal feasts and sacrifices.

However, restrictions of movement due to COVID-19 pandemic, floods, livestock related conflict and intercommunal violence have significantly affected the mobility of livestock disrupting the traditional seasonal migration patterns – the most critical element of any pastoral production system.

This has forced animals to stay in restricted geographic areas for consecutive seasons making an extensive use of grazing lands creating favorable conditions for the spread of livestock diseases. This has seriously compromised livestock production and reproduction, food security and the ecosystems' health. Additionally, these disruptions will limit the access of communities to essential livestock services such as vaccination and treatment thus hindering control of animal diseases.

Animal health and production

Livestock body conditions

As an indicator of good health, the livestock body condition is dependent on the availability of adequate forage and water, and absence of disease outbreaks.

Animal body condition starts to improve from the dry season's stress due to abnormal movements and lack of grass. However, as lush grasses are still tender, high in minerals and proteins but low in dry matter contents, the animals are expected to reach their full good body condition as of late August across the country except for flood-prone area

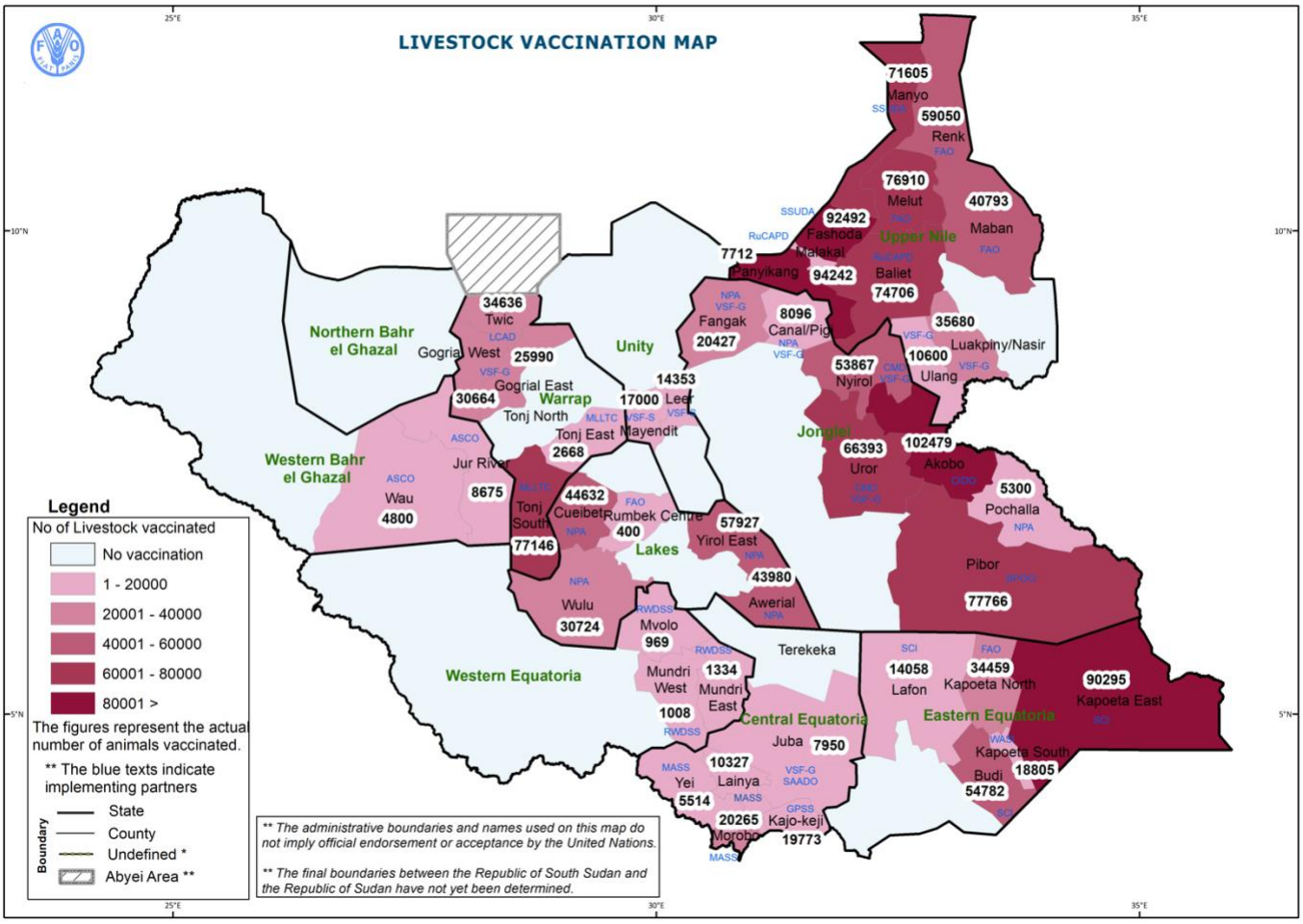

Figure 1 Vaccination coverage

One health approach: Joint Risk Assessment (JRA)

In March 2021, FAO the World Organization for Animal Health) and the World Health Organization (WHO) organized in May 2021 a multi-sectoral risk assessment workshop in Juba. The objective of the assessment was to identify zoonotic diseases of significant public health and veterinary concern in South Sudan, reviewing their burden, the associated risks, and coping capacities to facilitate the identification of practical management options and communication messaging for effective and sustainable control. The workshop was also aimed at building stakeholders' capacity in the use of Joint Risk assessment tool (JRA OT) developed by the three partners. Rabies, Rift Valley Fever (RVF) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) were identified as priority threats for people, animals and the environment.

Animal feed Total Mixed Ration (TMR)

The floods and desert locust outbreaks experienced in 2020 created serious livestock feed shortages in affected areas. Lack of pastures due to floods resulted in livestock

HIGHLIGHTS

- The search for high grounds, pastures and water for livestock resulted in **pastoralist-farmers conflict** in Kajokeji, Juba, Lainya and Magwi counties
- Feeding **Total Mixed Ration** (TMR) to lactating animals with low milk yields has resulted in **increased milk yields**
- **Effects of floods** on pastures resulted in **livestock mortality and production loss**, which seriously compromised the food security and nutrition of livestock communities in Duk, Twic East and Fangak counties, in Jonglei, which still remain in water from last year floods
- **Key drivers for livestock movement** include intercommunal violence, insecurity, floods, COVID-19, economic hardship, absence of rule of law, cattle raiding, women and child abduction

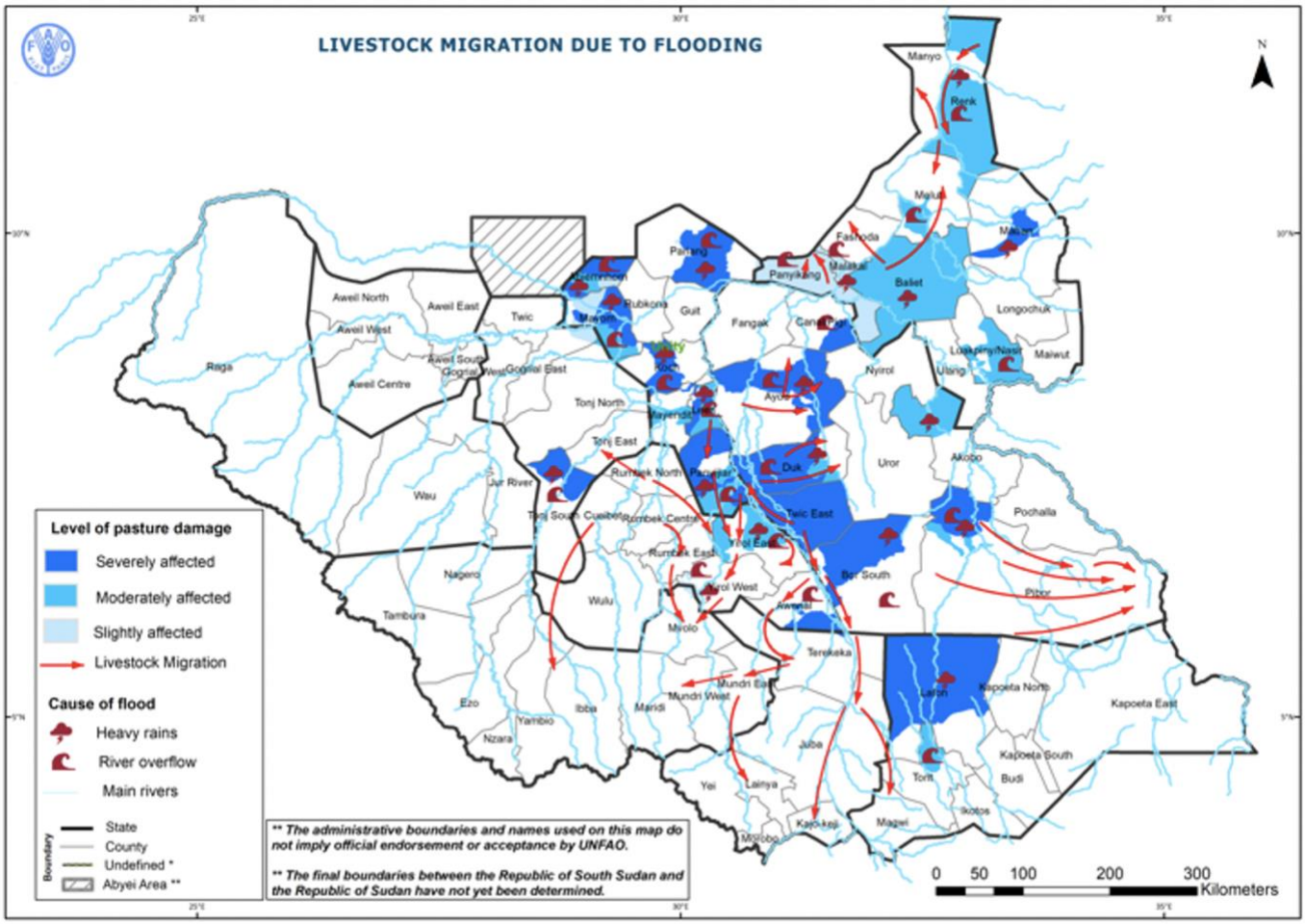

Figure 2 Expected abnormal movement in anticipation of floods

mortality and production losses, which seriously compromised the food security and nutrition situation of livestock keeping communities. FAO responded to the feed crisis by supplying 1 135 000 metric tons of total mixed ration (TMR) to the affected communities in Eastern and Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Northern and Western Bahr El Ghazal and Upper Nile States.

More importantly, the supply of TMR played an important role in speeding up the recovery of livestock body conditions and persuading livestock keepers on the importance of supplementary feed for their lactating and pregnant animals. The TMR supplement supported weak pregnant animals to rapidly regain strength. Likewise, lactating animals resumed milk production following the consumption of TMR feeds, hence improving households' access to livestock products.

Flood mitigation actions by pastoralists

Floods are likely to be a very significant hazard during the current rainy season.

Some of the mitigation actions adopted by the pastoralists include movement to higher ground before the flooding. The map below shows the counties at risk of being affected by floods and the possible migration patterns to be followed by pastoralists. Tensions between farmers and pastoralists in the areas of Kejokeji, Juba, Lainya and Magwi are ongoing. In the event of more floods, increased movement of livestock to higher ground will be expected which may worsen the already strained relations between communities.

Abnormal livestock movements

The key drivers for abnormal livestock movements include intercommunal violence, insecurity, floods, COVID-19, economic hardships, absence of rule of law and cattle rustling. All the above continue to pose serious challenges to pastoralists in accessing grazing lands and watering points.

States with high cattle raiding incidences include Lakes 57.6 percent, Jonglei 37.7 percent, Warrap 29.1 percent,

Central Equatoria 20.5 percent, Eastern Equatoria 20.1 percent and Upper Nile 7.1 percent.

Abnormal livestock movement also increases spreading of livestock diseases as well as prevents access to animal health services such as vaccination and treatment.

Predictive Livestock Early Warning System

The Predictive Livestock Early Warning System (PLEWs) is an innovative tool that provides a paradigm shift in Early Warning Early Action by providing a decision support tool that enables prediction of drought six months in advance. This aims at mitigating the high cyclic mortality rates occasioned by drought in South Sudan's pastoral livelihoods regions.

The PLEWs decision support tool was been piloted in Eastern Equatoria from February to May 2021 by FAO in collaboration with Texas A&M University and the Ministry of Livestock and Animal Resources of South Sudan.

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