Flood effect in tropical livestock production: Colombian case

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Climatic change shows transformations in meteorological and environmental topics, changes in frequency and intensity of phenomenon like El niño/la niña - Southern Oscillation (ENSO), and rains' frequency and intensity. Those changes are a threat for tropical sustainable livestock production. On other hand, problems like inadequate land use, inappropriate technologies and deficiencies in public policies, are a big risk for livestock productivity and rentability mainly for small farmers, as result decreasing their incomes and quality of life.

Different researches have contributed to identify effects in dry season for tropical livestock, milk production and fodder quality, while researches for identifying effects in rain season are not common. Actually, this is the goal of this paper. Based on information collected from different institutions and farmers, also direct observation during field visits, this research shows some elements for characterization of the affectation in six livestock regions in Colombia during 2010 and 2011. 62 small towns were visited and more than 600 villages.

Flood have affected animals and fodder also soils when cows were walking inside while had been waterlogged. This was the main effect of increase in rain in almost all the milk production in States in Central Colombia. Towns in North Region show the main affectation in the fodder availability. Other States show strong damages in infrastructure for flooded prevention in Magdalena and Cauca Rivers. In other regions like Mojana and Bajo Cauca, the main affectation was in roads. In other regions like Uraba and south of the country, the affectation was soft because the rivers flow to the north of the country, region that receives the rainwater of almost all Colombia.

In general the livestock suffered great damages because the forage production was decrease, this affected their welfare, additionally the long movements looking for dry soils and food, show increase in diseases and mortality, mainly in pregnant cows and calves.

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