

**Factors Influencing Participation of Smallholder Farmers in Livestock
Markets in Mbulu and Bariadi Districts, Tanzania**

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Abstract

This paper explores the factors influencing livestock market participation decision of smallholder farmers in Mbulu and Bariadi districts, Tanzania. The objective of the study to sort out the key factors that influence smallholder farmers' decision to participate in the livestock market as it has been pointed out that smallholder farmers rarely participate in the markets. A probit regression model was employed for the analysis. The study used primary data collected from 333 smallholder farmers of the two aforementioned districts. It was found that herd size, family labour, income from livestock, market information, livestock income and farm income are the main factors that influence smallholder farmers' decision to participate in the livestock markets. Findings also indicate that smallholder farmers would participate more and more in the livestock market, if herd size, availability of labour, market information, farm income and income from livestock are increased as these factors were found to be significant at $p < 0.0$. It is concluded that. Smallholder farmers in the study are influenced by a number of factors as aforementioned. The uniqueness of this paper is that it examines the phenomenon of smallholder farmers in the study area from the viewpoint of market participation, which may create an opportunity for further constructive debate. Furthermore, development of market infrastructure, provision of marketing incentives to smallholder livestock farmers and development of an institutionalised marketing information service are recommended to embrace commercialisation of livestock in the study area.

Key words: Tanzania, livestock, market participation