

## DRAFT ANIMALS IN TOGO

ROSSIVI APETOFLA AND ARTHUR WESTNEAT  
PROPTA, ATAKPAME, TOGO

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL TRACTION

The use of draft animals is a practice that dates from antiquity. In Togo, it seems that the use of work oxen dates back to May 1900 when the German Colonial Economic Committee invited a team of black American experts from Tuskegee (Alabama) Normal and Industrial Institute to help introduce the use of oxen to local cotton farmers. Oxen appeared in the vicinity of Kpalime in 1901 and were introduced to Sansanne Mango by 1908. Efforts to expand the use of draft animals did not succeed because the average Togolese farmer was not used to handling cattle. The promotion of draft animals thus ended and this activity lay dormant until around 1960 when the BDPA (Office for the Development of Agricultural Production) and the SORADS (Rural Improvement and Development Company) initiated work oxen programs in the Savanes Region. Their initiatives ended in a second failure, this time due to inadequate health and technical follow-up.

From 1967 to 1970 the religious order of Dzogbegan, followed by the Brene missionaries in Apeyeme, tried using draft animals on the Danyi Plateau. These efforts were likewise failures.

In 1971, a few Peace Corps Volunteers based in Agbassa (Doufelgou Prefecture) undertook to introduce work oxen to local farmers. This center at Agbassa eventually became the DRDR-Kara training center administered by the Draft Animals Project Kara-Savanes (PCA Kara-Savanes).

Around 1973, the Centre d'Animation Rurale (Rural Animation Center) of Ayengré (CAR-Ayengré) made work oxen demonstrations a part of its program.

Several similar attempts to introduce work oxen were also sponsored by SOTOCO starting in 1969 in the Bassar Prefecture but, here too, the oxen teams disappeared before 1976 due to an inadequate infrastructure.

In 1976, PRODEBO (Project for the Development of Cattle Raising) was created with, among other things, the task of promoting the use of work oxen.

A further impetus came with the failure of a motorized agriculture project launched in 1977. It was found to have created problems for small farmers without producing the anticipated results. The Togolese government subsequently asked that a draft animal component, whenever possible, be included in all agricultural development projects so as to give its food self-sufficiency policy a better chance of success.

### CURRENT PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Today about 30 projects and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental pursue animal power activities in the rural sector of Togo.

As examples, we cite:

1. Agricultural Intensification Project of the Savanes Region (FED-Savanes).
2. Project for the Exploitation of the Kara Valley (FED-Kara).
3. Draft Animals Project Kara-Savanes (PCA-USAID).
4. Staple Food Crops Project Atchangbade-Sirka (FVAS-USAID).
5. Agricultural Development Project of the Central Region (DRDR-GTZ).
6. Regional Rural Development Administrations (DRDR).
7. Togo Cotton Company (SOTOCO).
8. Tami Center for Community Organization (Dapaong Diocese).
9. Ayengré Center for Community Organization (MISEREOR).
10. "Maisons Familiales" for Rural Training.
11. Wli Center for Training and Rural Promotion.

Always mindful of the need to give draft animal programs a better chance of success, the Togolese government created the Project for the Promotion of Animal Power (PROPTA) in Decree No 10/MDR of September 3, 1982. This project succeeded PRODEBO.

Today there are at least 4,195 work oxen pairs across Togo. Their distribution among the five economic regions is indicated by the table below.

#### OXEN TEAMS IN TOGO

<u>Economic region</u>	<u>Number of teams</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Savanes	3,214	76.2
Kara	637	15.18
Central	257	6.13
Plateaux	55	1.31
Maritime	32	0.76

The fundamental key to the success of draft animal projects in Togo is the political will shown by the 4th and 5th national councils of the RPT in adopting animal power as the dynamic factor in Togolese agriculture.

This political will found concrete expression in the establishment of the necessary administrative structures:

1. UPROMA: The Agricultural Equipment Production Center  
The creation of UPROMA permits:

- a. The timely acquisition of agricultural equipment for draft animals.
- b. The standardization of equipment design.
- c. The improvement of agricultural equipment by adapting it to local soils and animal types.
- d. The acquisition of spare parts.

2. PROPTA: Project for the Promotion of Animal Traction.

As the monitoring and support organization, PROPTA's purpose is to strengthen and invigorate efforts to promote the use of animal power in the rural sector. It is principally responsible for:

- a. Gathering and distribution of technical information concerning the use of animal power and associated technologies.
- b. Supply of draft animals as needed (farmers and projects may also supply their own needs).
- c. Coordination of health follow-up for draft animals in collaboration with the responsible government animal health and veterinary services.
- d. Processing of purchase orders for draft animal equipment for which it has a monopoly.
- e. Evolution and improvement of draft animal equipment in continuous consultation with its users.
- f. Encouragement of extension service staff training in draft animal technologies.

3. THE RANCHES: Adele, Namiele and Avetonou.

The government-sponsored ranches reinforce PROPTA's work oxen supply activities.

#### EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Numerous extension programs across the country, some of which are mentioned above, share the primary responsibility for introducing draft animals into Togolese agriculture.

#### FARMER AWARENESS

The growing awareness of Togolese farmers of the potential of draft animal power is an equally important key to the success of draft animal programs.

CONCLUSION

With numerous projects and development organization in the rural sector, animal power in Togo is experiencing a strong take-off.

From 1,040 oxen teams in 1978 to 4,195 teams in 1984, the use of work oxen has increased an average of 525 teams per year for an average annual increase of about 50 percent. Admittedly, the technical level of most of the farmers using oxen teams can be improved; it is here in the area of training that PROPTA can play a determinant role.