

RLP Biannual Digest

TRANSFORMING PASTORAL LIVELIHOODS FOR LASTING IMPACT: RLP MID-YEAR RESULTS | JAN - JUNE 2025

Regional Livestock Program (RLP)’s 12-year initiative (2023–2034), funded by SDC and AFD, strengthens livestock markets through blended investment and Public–Private Partnerships, with Mercy Corps, IGAD, Helvetas, and WHH supporting production, trade, and cross-border governance. By mobilizing private investment, promoting women’s economic empowerment, and advancing sustainable resource management, RLP is driving lasting, system-wide change across the Horn of Africa’s livestock economies.













Mid-year results for January–June 2025 from the Regional Livestock Program (RLP) show promising shifts across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, including the expansion of private-sector services, stronger roles for women in livestock economies, and improved community stewardship of rangelands. These advances are reinforcing the resilience and livelihoods of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities while moving the program closer to its long-term goal of building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable livestock system.



Communities are accessing more essential resources, markets, and climate-adaptation support, and local enterprises, women, and youth are finding greater opportunities to engage in and benefit from the livestock economy.

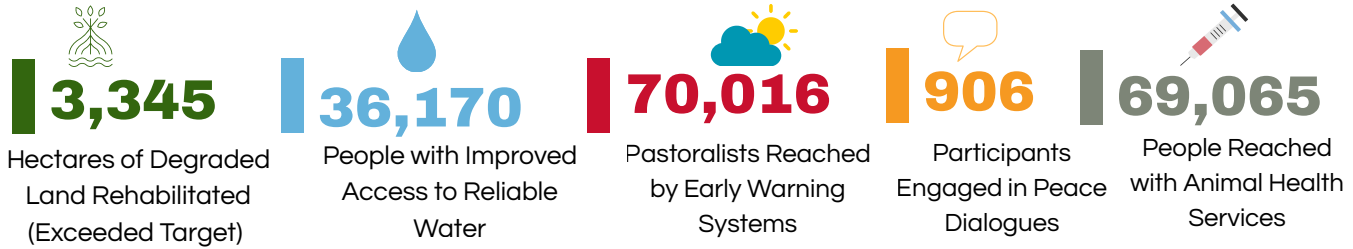
This digest presents the program’s key achievements, lessons and early signs of shifts in systems and behaviors from the first half of 2025.

Snapshots of Mid-Year Progress (Jan – June 2025)

| IMPACT AREA | TARGET | ACHIEVEMENT & STATUS |
|---|------------------|--|
|  Total People Reached | 220,000 (Annual) | 202,443  |
|  Land Restoration | 2,000 ha | 3,345 ha  |
|  People with Water Access | 20,000 | 36,170  |
|  Producers Reached with Animal Health Services | 35,000 | 69,065  |
|  People with Access to Feed/Fodder | 8,000 | 9,649  |
|  People Reached with Climate Adaptation Services | 40,000 | 70,016  |

LTO 1: SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION, PRODUCTIVITY, AND RESILIENCE

LTO1 focuses on restoring the ecological and resource foundations of pastoral livelihoods. Over six months, RLP supported communities in Afmadow, Moyale, Wajir, and Tog Wajaale to restore 3,345 hectares of rangeland and clear 602 hectares of invasive species. Through Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM) and Water User Associations (WUAs), communities led planning, implementation, and maintenance, strengthening rangeland governance. Upgraded water points, including solarized boreholes, ponds, and birkads now reliably serve 36,170 people, surpassing targets and enhancing herd health and climate resilience. The use of improved animal health products nearly doubled, reaching 69,065 producers (target: 35,000), while 24,096 individuals accessed pasture (target: 20,000),



Climate Adaptation & Coexistence

Early Warning Systems (EWS)

70K+ Pastoralists Reached

- Delivers critical climate and resource information by integrating forecasts, satellite vegetation data, and local fodder assessments, supporting scenario planning and guiding proactive herd movement.

Community Peace Dialogues

41 Kebeles Covered 906 Participant

- Engaged elders, women, and youth to restore trust and inclusion in governance ensuring safe access to resources.

Key Outcomes : Reduced conflict risks, formalized shared grazing protocols, and strengthened customary governance.

Early Signs of Systemic and Behavioural Shifts

Communities are planning proactively, managing water as a shared, sustainable resource, and enforcing rules that enhance long-term rangeland health. Pastoralists, once reactive, are now using seasonal and climate data to inform herd movement and grazing decisions.

Human Story: Restoring Rangelands and Hope

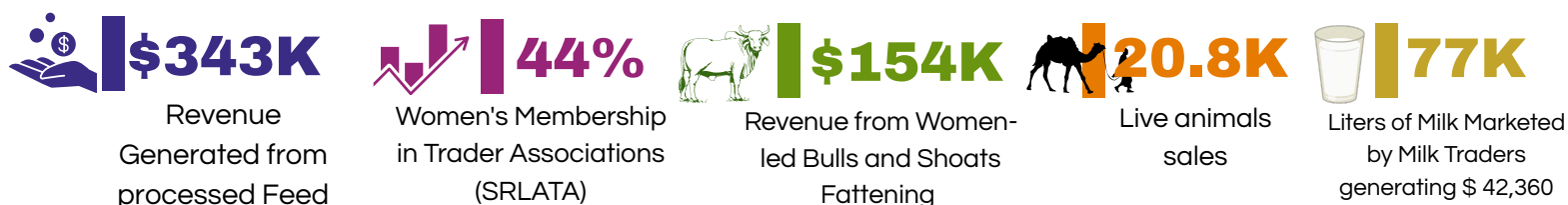
In Dhurwale, an old sub-village in Ethiopia's Kebribeyah district, decades of land degradation had forced frequent migration and left pastoralists struggling with fodder scarcity. With support from Mercy Corps' Regional Livestock Program, the community is restoring degraded land through PRM and soil and water conservation, conducting rehabilitations and adopting practices like soil bunds, half-moons, and pasture enclosures. Ifrah Osman Mahdi, Secretary of the Rangeland Management Committee said, "If we sustain these efforts... our grazing needs will be met, we survive droughts, and livestock diseases reduced."



LTO 2 – INCLUSIVE, ADAPTIVE, AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE INSTITUTIONS

LTO 2 focuses on transforming fragmented livestock markets into inclusive, competitive systems. In the reporting period, RLP played a facilitative role in strengthening trader associations, supporting women-led dairy and livestock enterprises, expanding private sector and community fodder production, and enabling cross-corridor market linkages.

As a result, private veterinary and fodder services are becoming more sustainable, trader associations more diverse and effective, and women-led enterprises increasingly resilient and visible in local markets.



Early Signs of Systemic and Behavioral Shifts

Market actors are investing their own capital, and adopting professional business practices. Women's participation in leadership roles is reshaping gender norms, driving both product quality and household resilience. Traders now consider market signals and seasonal supply in decisions rather than responding only to crises.

Human Story: Nimo Suleiman, Wajir East (Agrovet Entrepreneur)



Nimo Suleiman, the only woman agrovet in her district, expanded her business after installing Wajir's first solar-powered vaccine refrigerator with RLP's support. A last mile retailer outlet, Hadado, is also serving remote communities as part of this business. The innovation enabled reliable vaccine storage, women-focused training, and shop expansion.

Nimo has since doubled her profits, hired two staff, and now serves hundreds of livestock keepers, showing how women's leadership can strengthen market systems and improve access to quality animal health services.

Human Story: Mohamed, Wajir (Agrovet)



Mohamed Ugas, agrovet owner faced costly transport and unreliable cold-chain systems. With RLP's support, he trained ten mobile agents, six now running independent shops and expanded services to more than 3,000 livestock keepers each quarter. By employing two women agents, he also advanced gender inclusion.

Through strategic blended investment, Mohamed tripled his sales and built a sustainable, market-driven network that improves herd health while creating new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

LTO 3 – INCLUSIVE, ADAPTIVE, AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE INSTITUTIONS

LTO3 focuses on strengthening governance, institutional frameworks, and cross-border coordination that enable safe, predictable, and sustainable livestock mobility. In border corridors, RLP worked with governments, regional organizations, and customary authorities to harmonize policies, establish technical working groups, and embed climate- and market-informed planning.



Policy and Cross Border Coordination

Governance & Institutional Alignment

- **Revived Collaboration:** Somali and Kenyan authorities revived coordination mechanisms for rangeland and livestock management. Trilateral agreements drafted.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** Regional workshops aligned rangeland governance frameworks and cross-border protocols, emphasizing mobility and resource-sharing.

Trade Facilitation & Herd Health

- **Livestock Tax Elimination:** Advocacy by SRLATA contributed to the elimination of redundant livestock taxes, reducing trade costs and improving confidence.
- **Synchronized Disease Control:** The Regional Camel Technical Task Force (RTTF) was operationalized, synchronizing vaccination campaigns covering **48,826** animals.

Early Signs of Systemic and Behavioural Shifts

Communities are increasingly resolving disputes through negotiation rather than conflict. Local governments integrate climate and market data in planning. Women and youth are more visible in governance, and customary leaders are regaining authority as trusted mediators.

Borana Dialogue – Peace, Governance, and Livelihood Security



In the Moyale corridor, a three-year conflict over a 57-hectare communal grazing area threatened both pastoral mobility and social cohesion. RLP facilitated a dialogue that brought together 906 participants, including elders, women, and youth. The process combined traditional dispute resolution with structured scenario planning.

Women played a central role in mediating conversations, and youth contributed observations on herd movement patterns. By the end of the dialogue, the land was peacefully returned, grazing schedules were formalized, and trust was restored among the communities.

One woman participant reflected, “Peace begins when we understand each other. Now we can plan together, not fight.” This story highlights how integrating climate, conflict, and governance interventions strengthens both social cohesion and economic resilience.

CROSS-CUTTING SYSTEMIC SHIFTS

Beyond specific LTOs, RLP observed that pastoral systems are beginning to function more cohesively and resiliently, reflecting both structural and behavioral changes.

Community-Led Governance and Market Sustainability

Rangeland Management Committees (RMCs) and Water User Associations (WUAs) are taking ownership of land restoration, grazing regulation, and water system maintenance through community-led bylaws, reducing conflicts and fostering stewardship. Simultaneously, private actors, such as PVPs, agrovets, fodder farms, and feed processor are independently scaling services, signaling sustainable, demand-driven market engagements

Regional Coordination and Adaptive Practices

Cross-border collaboration among governments, trade associations, and regional bodies is starting to reduce gaps in trade, mobility, and disease control, while early warning systems, participatory scenario planning, and dialogue mechanisms help communities anticipate shocks and manage herds proactively. These adaptive practices strengthen peace, climate resilience, and informed decision-making.

These early signs of shifts demonstrate that RLP interventions are catalyzing behavior change and institutional strengthening, laying the foundation for long-term, self-reinforcing resilience across the Horn of Africa.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND MARKET INFLUENCE



**Women focused
Economic Outcomes
(Jan -June 2025)**

\$154K

Income from Bull and
Shoots Fattening

\$42K

Income from Milk
Trading

\$6k

Income from Camel
Milk Processing

Women are crucial actors in the pastoral economy, driving resilience and system change. Their growing influence is evident across key areas, leading to both economic gains and fundamental shifts in gender norms and governance:

- **Dairy and Fattening:** Women lead milk trading and bull fattening enterprises, significantly boosting household income.
- **Veterinary Services:** They are expanding as agro-vets and private agents, ensuring reliable access to animal health services in remote areas.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Women are organizing savings groups, gaining access to formal banking, and making collective investment decisions.
- **Governance:** Increased participation in Rangeland Management Committees (RMCs) and Water User Associations (WUAs) reinforces inclusive governance.

Systemic Shifts: Beyond revenue, women's rising influence is driving deeper change. Their leadership in trader associations and cooperatives is challenging traditional gender norms, as households increasingly recognize women's expertise in market and livestock decisions.

PROGRAMMATIC REFLECTIONS, ADAPTATIONS, AND WAY FORWARD

Challenges and Adaptive Actions Implemented

- **NRM Gaps:** Integrating PRM into county government plans, supplying starter kits for seed propagation, and conducting exposure visits helped embed long-term resource management practices at the community level.
- **Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain:** Infrastructure gaps were addressed by co-investing in solar-powered refrigeration and training local animal health workers and women agro-vets. These efforts expanded coverage and improved service reliability.
- **Inclusive Participation:** challenges related to lower number of applications by women livestock businesses for blended investments with RLP were mitigated by advertising in local languages, simplified application processes, and using community radios for communicating announcements for partnerships.

Key Lessons and Implications for Long-Term Goals

- **Community-Led NRM is Sustainable:** Integrating PRM planning with both women and men ensures shared responsibility and durability beyond direct project support.
- **Private Sector Drives Efficiency:** Scaling health and market services relies on private sector co-investment, ensuring commercial viability and service continuity.
- **Women's Economic Empowerment Multiplies Impact:** Their participation strengthens market systems, improves product quality, and enhances household financial resilience.
- **Integration of Systems Works:** Combining Early Warning Systems enhances proper use of information and timely decision making in livestock management.

Way Forward (July–December 2025)

- **Scaling Services:** Scaling private-sector led animal health inputs and service delivery, feed/fodder, improve access to sharia - compliant and livestock tailored financial services, and water services.
- **Deepening Policy:** Deepening governance and cross-border policy implementation across all corridors.
- **Market Integration:** Facilitating inter-corridor trade to enhance regional competitiveness and flow.
- **One Health:** Advancing One Health approaches integrating animal, human, and environmental health.
- **Leadership:** Strengthening women's leadership in cooperatives and associations

Conclusion: By mid-2025, pastoral systems are progressing to serving communities better in the horn of Africa. Land, water, herd health, markets, and governance are showing signs of self-sustaining change. RLP's facilitative, market-oriented, and gender-inclusive approach demonstrates how incremental, evidence-driven interventions catalyze lasting resilience and systemic transformation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT

Dr. Diba Dida Wako,
Director – RLP
dwako@mercycorps.org

Senbeto Funte,
Deputy Director and
Technical Lead – RLP
sfunte@mercycorps.org

Biannual Digest :

Editorial Lead : Yosef Tiruneh (ytiruneh@mercycorps.org)

Evidence Curation :

Ashenafi Tadesse (astadesse@mercycorps.org)

Aemero Alemayehu (aalemayehu@mercycorps.org)