

# Traditional Husbandry Practices of Goats in Selected Districts of Sidama Zone, Southern Ethiopia

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## Research Article

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# Abstract

The aim of this study was to describe goat production system in two districts of Sidama zone of southern Ethiopia using two production systems. Semi-structured questionnaire was developed and employed to gather information regarding the management activities, purpose of keeping goats and selection criteria of farmers to select breeding animals. A total of 240 households were interviewed to collect relevant information for the study. Data collected from questionnaire was statistically analyzed and summarized into descriptive statistics. Indexes was calculated to clarify rankings by using indexes formula. The number goat population is more in Loka Abaya than Aroresa. The primary purpose of keeping goats study area are mainly for their milk, meat and income generation. The reproductive potential of Does reared in the Aroresa district was lower. Broad shoulders, compact frame and short and thick necks of the Bucks were considered as the most important characteristics for selection. Communal grazing and crop aftermath were the most common feed sources reported by farmers in the study area. River was the major water source for goats in the study districts. The major factors limiting the productivity of goats are feed shortage, diseases, labour shortage and lack of improved goat breeds.

## 1. Introduction

Goat farming is one of the most important agricultural sectors in developing countries, with Africa accounting about 35% of the world's goat population (heads), making it the second continents next to Asia (Skapetas & Bampidis, 2016). Ethiopia has rich livestock genetic resources of varied and diversified genetic pools, which are adapted to a wide range of agro-ecologies. The number of goats reported in the country is estimated to be about 52.5 million heads (CSA, 2020). Goat production in Ethiopia accounts for 16.8% of total meat supply and 16.7% of the total milk consumption (Gobena, 2016; Zereu et al., 2016). Goats are found in all agro-ecological zones of Ethiopia, from intensive farming system to very extensive nomadic pastoralism and over the entire range of production systems. The majority of the goats in the country are maintained under mixed crop-livestock and pastoral and agro pastoral production systems (Tsegaye, 2009). Thanks to their tolerance to heat stress goats can be survive and produce in the most marginal regions of the country. Goats traditionally had a strong impact on of human populations' socio-economic life, especially in smallholder farmers. They play important role the different production systems due to their low initial capital investments, their potential to produce multiple products, high reproductive rates due to the short time they take to attain maturity (Solomon et al., 2014). They have different purposes, such as income generation, serve as household social welfare, accumulation of capital, milk, manure, chevon, skin and cultural functions (Grum, 2010; Tsegaye, 2009).

Despite the large population of goats' and their advantages, the current contribution to the country's economy and producers' livelihoods is still below the total potential production capacity (Girma et al., 2000). The success and profitability of goat production system in Ethiopia are limited by a number of challenges and constraints. The major constraints are: prevalence diseases and parasites, inadequate and lack of sufficient feed supplies and breeding strategies, unimproved genetic potential of local breeds, poor access to markets and minimal institutional support by actors and services providers, poor access

to and utilization of knowledge, information and technologies (Gizaw, 2010). Currently, goats face environmental challenges (degradation of rangelands, competition for land use, reduced water availability etc.) and climate change also poses additional difficulties. These resulted, failure to earn sufficient income for smallholder goat farmers and pastoralists in Ethiopia.

To increase and sustain the productivity of indigenous goats, it is important to understand traditional goat management practices before implementing any development strategy. Understanding the production system, preferences and selection criteria would allow breeders to implement sustainable genetic improvement programs that would enable the development and promotion of appropriate genotypes that match with the prevailing socio-economic and cultural environment (Bett et al., 2011; Kosgey, 2004). Identification of goat production constraints helps to design management strategy at least to minimize the effects applied on goat production (Tesfahun et al., 2017). Hence, the objectives of this study was to assess the goat husbandry practices as well as their constraints, and selection criteria of goats in the selected districts of Sidama region, Ethiopia.

## 2. Materials And Methods

### 2.1. Description of the Study Areas

The Sidama zone is divided into 21 administrative districts. The two districts (Aroresa and Loka Abaya) were selected for their potential of goat distribution and as their different production environment (Hankamo et al., 2020). The descriptions of the districts are as follows:

**Aroresa** district is situated 6<sup>0</sup> 20' North Latitude 39<sup>0</sup> 00' East Longitude. It has variability in topography, with an average rain fall of 733 mm, and the mean annual temperature of 18.5<sup>0</sup>C. The District occupies an area of about 8,100 Km<sup>2</sup> and has total 33 kebeles and 11 of which are highland and the rest are midland. The total number of goat population in the districts area was estimated 20,855 heads. The livelihood of the farmers was mainly based on crop production; this is due to of the ample rain fall obtained in the "kremt from April-August (Hankamo et al., 2020).

**Loka Abaya** district is located in south eastern boarder of the Guji zone of Oromia region, Woayita zone and Humbo district in the east, Dale and Aleta chuko district in west and Boricha district in north. The district lie between 6<sup>0</sup>14 – 7<sup>0</sup>18 North latitude and 37<sup>0</sup> 92–39<sup>0</sup> 14'East longitude. It is lowland with altitudes ranging between 1170 to 1500 meters above sea level. The districts total agro-ecology is estimated to be 79% lowland, 16% midlands and 5% is desert. The average annual rain fall is 900-1400mm and annual temperature range from 10-32<sup>0</sup>c. It is estimated that the population of goats in the district was 123,607 heads (Hankamo et al., 2020).

### 2.2. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employed a purposive multistage sampling strategy. Three rural kebeles were selected from each selected districts. They were selected based on the concentration of goat population, suitability,

farmers' willingness to participate in the study. Forty (40) household (goat owners) per rural kebeles, (total of 240 households) were randomly selected for the interview.

## **2.3. Methods of Data Collection**

The study was used both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data on respondents' land and livestock holdings, management practices, goat productivity, selection criteria for breeding and goat production constraints were collected through pretested semi-structured questionnaire from the randomly selected respondents. In order to strengthen survey data group discussion were also held. Secondary data was collected from the district office, as well as different published unpublished relevant documents.

## **2.4. Data Analysis**

All of the collected data were arranged, organized and analyzed by using simple descriptive statistics such as mean and percentage by using SPSS version 20 and the results were presented in the form of tables. Index was determined by using formula: (Index = sum of (3 X selection criteria ranked first + 2 X selection criteria ranked second + 1 X selection criteria ranked third) given for each districts divided by sum of (3 X selection criteria first + 2 X selection criteria ranked second + 1 X selection criteria ranked third)).

# **3. Results And Discussion**

## **3.1. General household information**

The results as presented in Table 1 indicates that, the average family sizes observed in this study area are in close accordance with the reports of Gatew et al., (2015), ( $7.68 \pm 0.26$ ) from Siti district and there were no variation ( $P > 0.05$ ) between the two studied districts. The large family, especially among the agrarian communities, have a number of advantages because it provides a large force for agronomic activities. However, over the period of time larger family size would result in fragmentation of farm land which can have negative consequences over period of time (Alemu et al., 2017). The findings revealed that most of the respondents in the survey were males. The observations are in close accordance with those of Alemu, (2015); and Kebede et al., (2017). They can be seen that most of the females in the houses were busy doing household works. This is a socio-cultural norm in most of the developing countries. Studies by Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, (2012), have indicated that most of the husbandry activities such as cleaning barns, feeding, watering etc. of the small ruminants were carried out by the female members of the houses. The findings also indicate that there were no differences across the two areas for the same. The results related to the respondents age group show that most of them are from the age group 41–50 years. This indicates that most of the respondents had a good background of livestock farming. However, the results of the respondents' educational status show that most of them were illiterate, the findings are in line studies from different part of Ethiopia (Gatew et al., 2015; Grum, 2010; Tsegaye, 2009). Moreover, a higher level of illiteracy among the respondents is a drawback in modern livestock husbandry practices and adoption of improved technologies (Ntume et al., 2015; Woldeyohannes, 2020), requires better and

appropriate livestock husbandry extension services. Such respondents usually have difficulties in maintaining proper records for their livestock enterprise besides also find difficulties in properly balancing the feed and also calculating the doses of veterinary drugs.

Table 1  
General characteristics of the sampled households.

Characteristics	HH responses	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	$\chi^2$ - value
Family size (Mean $\pm$ SE)		7.67 $\pm$ 0.25	7.62 $\pm$ 0.12	7.65 $\pm$ 0.65	0.87
Sex (%)	Male	89.2	82.5	14.2	2.19 <sup>ns</sup>
	Female	10.8	17.5	85.8	
Age (%)	20–30	0.8	0.0	0.4	6.34 <sup>ns</sup>
	31–40	20.8	29.2	25	
	41–50	44.2	49.2	46.7	
	51–60	25	15.8	20.4	
	> 60	9.2	5.8	7.5	
Educational back ground (%)	Illiterate	63.3	69.2	66.2	1.826 <sup>ns</sup>
	Read and write	24.2	23.3	23.8	
	Primary school	12.5	7.5	10	

ns = not significantly different, HH = Household.

### 3.2. Land Holding Pattern in the Study Areas

The findings in Table 2 indicates that the total land holding did not vary across the sites studied, the land holdings observed are in close accordance with the report of Belete, (2009) from Goma District. The study further indicates that the crop land was higher ( $p < 0.001$ ) in Aroresa, while the grazing land was higher ( $p < 0.001$ ) in Loka Abaya. This may be ascribed to the cropping and rainfall pattern in the areas; the observations too corresponds closely to the reports by Assefa, (2007) and Gizaw et al., (2008). Land allocation for cropping can provide the animals with much crop residues in the lean season (Assefa, 2007). The grazing land in Loka Abaya is higher, indicates that the respondents are dependent on livestock more than agriculture in the area, which is in close accordance with those of Alefe, (2014); Asefa & Kebede, (2013); and Assefa, (2007). This may be ascribed to poor fertility of the land and/or erratic rainfall. The study also shows that most of the respondents could not access the communal grazing lands in Aroresa and even some of the respondents could access the same, they reported that the grazing land is shrinking over the period of time due to anthropogenic activities and also expansion of grazing

land by agronomic activities, similar trend was also reported by Aune et al., (2001). The respondents also indicated that some of the land was also used for establishment of roads and other public facilities like health centers and schools, the findings are in close accordance with those of Alemu, (2015).

Table 2  
The land holdings (Mean  $\pm$  SE) of the households in the study districts

Land size in hectare (ha)	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	P- value
Total land	1.67 $\pm$ 0.33	1.72 $\pm$ 0.39	1.69 $\pm$ 0.256	0.31
Crop land	1.36 $\pm$ 0.28***	1.05 $\pm$ 0.27	1.21 $\pm$ 0.22	0.00
Fallow land	0.26 $\pm$ 0.12	0.28 $\pm$ 0.14	0.273 $\pm$ 0.01	0.42
Grazing Land	0.28 $\pm$ 0.007	0.61 $\pm$ 0.24***	0.45 $\pm$ 0.17	0.00
<b>Trend of communal grazing land (%)</b>				$\chi^2$ - value
Decreasing	26.7	95.8	61.2	135***
Stable	0.00	3.4	1.7	
No communal grazing land	73.3	0.8	37.1	
<b>If decreasing then why (%)</b>				118.856***
Due to land covered by crops	88.3	19.2	53.8	
Due to Governmental control	0.00	30	15	
Anthropogenic causes	11.7	50.8	31.2	

The result observed across the districts significant \*\*\* P < 0.001.

### 3.3. Income Source of the respondents

The findings (Table 3) shows that most of the respondents from Aroresa are dependent on agronomic activities but for Loka Abaya district the reverse is true. The findings are in close accordance with those of Assefa, (2007). Furthermore, the results shows that some of the respondents were dependent on both livestock and agronomic activities that minimize the risk associated with either crop or livestock alone. The trend was more or less similar across both districts although the proportion varied (P < 0.001). The respondents need to be encouraged to engage in mixed crop-livestock farming as this encourages nutrient recycling and also optimum utilization of farm residues (Assefa, 2007).

Table 3  
Major source of income of households in different seasons across the Districts.

Seasons	Sources of income	Aroresa (%)	Loka Abaya (%)	Overall (%)	$\chi^2$ - value
Dry season	Crop	85	0.8	42.9	186.8***
	Livestock	0.0	64.2	32.1	
	Both crop and Livestock	10	28.3	19.2	
	Trade	5	6.7	5.8	
Wet season	Crop	50	2.5	26.2	100.5***
	Livestock	17.5	75	46.2	
	Both Crop and Livestock	28.3	15	21.7	
	Trade	4.2	7.5	5.8	

The result observed across the districts significant \*\*\*  $P < 0.001$ .

### 3.4. Livestock composition and holding pattern

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate that composition of livestock species in the areas were similar, however the proportion of species varied across the locations. The study showed that there were more numbers ( $P < 0.001$ ) of cattle and goats in Loka Abaya. This could be because in Loka Abaya the respondents were more dependent on livestock than in Aroresa, Studies conducted by Alefe, (2014) have also indicated that the proportion of livestock among the communities who are dependent on them is usually higher. The study also shows that the numbers of cattle is less than that of the goats, as both sites are more suitable for the goat production, the observations are in close accordance with those of Desalew, (2008) from Mettema District.

Table 4  
Livestock species composition and size per household in the studied districts

Livestock species	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	P = Value
	Mean $\pm$ SE	Mean $\pm$ SE	Mean $\pm$ SE	
Cattle	7.56 $\pm$ 0.47	14.37 $\pm$ 0.8***	10.68 $\pm$ 0.5	0.001
Goat	4.23 $\pm$ 0.24	13.016 $\pm$ 0.8***	8.48 $\pm$ 0.49	0.001
Sheep	0.94 $\pm$ 0.12	0.75 $\pm$ 0.11	0.85 $\pm$ 0.08	0.25
Chicken	4.5 $\pm$ 0.18	4.4 $\pm$ 0.17	4.5 $\pm$ 0.12	0.85
Donkey	0.091 $\pm$ 0.026	0.29 $\pm$ 0.53*	0.2 $\pm$ 0.3	0.01

The result obtained across the districts were significantly different \* $P < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $P < 0.001$ .

### 3.5. Flock Structure of Goat in the Study Areas

The results in Table 5 reveal that the flock dynamics varied across the locations with higher numbers in Loka Abaya district. This may be ascribed to the availability of grazing land in the area when compared to Aroresa district. The study also shows that the numbers of Does were higher when compared to the Bucks, the findings are in close accordance with those of Grum, (2010) and Tsigabu, (2015). This is because the reproduction ability of the Does are higher than those of the Bucks and as they reach the market age, most of the Bucks are sold for various purposes. The findings also indicate that the post weaning mortality was very high in the study areas which was associated with the decrease in the numbers of buckling and doelings from < 6 months of age and also those > 6 till < 1 year, the observations are also in close accordance with those of Alefe, (2014) from Shabelle Zone.

Table 5  
Flock structure of the goat population in their age category (Mean  $\pm$  SE)

Goat Flock Structure	Age classes	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Over all	P-Value
<b>Kids</b>	Male kid [< 6 month]	0.8 $\pm$ 0.06	2.08 $\pm$ 0.13***	1.4 $\pm$ 0.08	0.000
	Female Kid [< 6 month]	0.7 $\pm$ 0.06	2.04 $\pm$ 0.13***	1.37 $\pm$ 0.08	0.000
<b>Buck</b>	Buck [< 1 year]	0.41 $\pm$ 0.04	1.49 $\pm$ 0.11***	0.95 $\pm$ 0.07	0.000
	Buck [> 1 year]	0.32 $\pm$ 0.04	1.25 $\pm$ 0.1***	0.78 $\pm$ 0.06	0.000
<b>Doe</b>	Does [< year]	0.057 $\pm$ 0.05	1.85 $\pm$ 0.11***	1.18 $\pm$ 0.07	0.000
	Does [> 1 year]	1.2 $\pm$ 0.06	3.7 $\pm$ 0.22***	2.49 $\pm$ 0.14	0.000
<b>Barren</b>	Adult age	0.033 $\pm$ 0.016	0.06 $\pm$ 0.02	0.05 $\pm$ 0.01	0.238
<b>Castrated buck</b>	Adult age	0.23 $\pm$ 0.052	0.67 $\pm$ 0.08***	0.45 $\pm$ 0.05	0.000

The result observed across the districts significantly different \*\*\* P < 0.001.

Studies by Assefa, (2007) also indicated that there was a high demand for growing doelings and buckling by the restaurant owners especially those serving "Tibs" as the chevon is very succulent and requires less cooking at that stage. This often contributes to negative selection among the livestock, as the ones which are fast growers are usually slaughtered at an early age (Gemiyu, 2009). Therefore, the respondents need to be appraised about selection of buckling and doelings at an early age so that the best animals are retained for breeding. The presence of castrated Buck indicates that the selection of Bucks being carried out by the respondents to control the breeding. The observations are in close accordance with those of Alefe, (2014) from Shabelle Zone.

### 3.6. Purpose of keeping goat in the study areas

The study as presented in Table 6 shows that the goats in both the study locations are primarily raised for their meat, milk or as a source of income which is similar across the study areas, however the ranking varied slightly. The findings are in close accordance with those of Hassen et al., (2012). The use of chevon is quite popular in the lowlands of the country as the meat is relatively leaner when compared to mutton (Assefa, 2007; Madruga et al., 2008). Moreover, the meat from small ruminants is popular in areas where there are no refrigeration facilities as the whole carcass can be consumed by the family members in a day or two (Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, 2012). The rearing of small ruminants for milk purposes as observed in the study too are in close accordance with the findings of Gatew et al., (2015) from Siti District. This is because the small ruminants are easier to rear when compared to the bovines and the milk from goats are easily digestible by the old and young alike (Wodajo et al., 2020). The importance of goats among the pastoralists as milk animals have been reported by Tsegahun et al., (2000). The study further indicates that the goats are reared also as a source of income, corresponds with the findings of Oluwatayo & Oluwatayo, (2012) results, which show that small ruminants are easily sold when compared with bovines. Contrary to its difficulty in finding purchasers for bovines among the villagers or neighbors, small ruminants are preferred to meet the immediate needs for cash by the farmers (Kosgey, 2004).

Table 6: Major Purpose of keeping Goat across the districts in the study areas

Purpose	Aroresa				Loka Abaya			
	Rankings				Rankings			
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Index	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Index
Milk	102	12	3	<b>0.46</b>	72	0	7	<b>0.31</b>
Meat	9	29	55	<b>0.19</b>	25	22	51	<b>0.24</b>
Income source	3	48	20	<b>0.17</b>	12	93	16	<b>0.33</b>
Saving	1	4	13	<b>0.04</b>	7	1	14	<b>0.05</b>
Manure	5	27	29	<b>0.14</b>	4	4	31	<b>0.07</b>
Social status	0	0	0	<b>0.00</b>	0	0	1	<b>0.00</b>

### 3.7 Reproductive Performance of Goats

The results in Table 7 show the breeding and reproduction potential of the Does and Bucks. The average age at first mating of the Does reared at Aroresa district was higher ( $P < 0.001$ ). Higher age at first mating is not desirable hence; it leads to fewer numbers of kids born in lifetime. The study further indicates that the reproduction potential of the Does and Bucks reared at Aroresa district was lower which may be

ascribed to poor nutrition. The average age at first mating of the Does as obtained in the study is in close accordance with the findings of Gatew et al., (2015). However, the values are higher than those reported by Belete, (2009) for Keffa breed. The results pertaining to the age at first mating of the Bucks reared in the studied areas also indicated that the average age at maturity was lower at Loka Abaya district, which may be ascribed to proper feeding and management of the Bucks, the findings are in close accordance with report of Gatew et al., (2015). The average age of first mating of the Bucks as observed in the study are in close accordance with those of Gatew et al., (2015). However, the values are higher than those reported by Tsigabu, (2015) for Nuer goats; the differences in age at first kidding across the locations may be ascribed to the fertility of the Does and Bucks which are seriously influenced by the nutrition and diseases. The study also indicates that the average kidding interval was in consonance with the findings of Tsegaye, (2009) from Mettema District Amhara Region. The average numbers of kids born from the Does indicate that there is an ample scope to improve the same which can make goat rearing a very successful venture (Banerjee et al., 2000). The average numbers of kids born are lower than those reported by Tsegaye, (2009). The influence of nutrition on the lifetime production of the Does is also evident, where the average reproductive life of the Does is quite lower than those reported by Asefa & Kebede, (2013) from Bale Zone of Oromia Region. The study further indicates that irrespective of the locations most Does were not prolific, this can be a breed character, thus within breed selection can help in identification of Does which can be profitable for the farmers. The differences in prolificacy as observed may be ascribed to low level of nutrition prior to mating (lack of flushing ration).

Table 7  
Averages of some reproductive performance traits of goats in the studied districts.

Average Reproductive performance	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	P-value
	Mean ± SE	Mean ± SE	Mean ± SE	
Does Age at first mating (months)	9.36 ± 0.83*	8.97 ± 0.17	9.16 ± 0.07	0.006
Bucks Age at first mating (months)	11.06 ± 0.18***	9.65 ± 0.10	10.36 ± 0.11	0.000
Age of first kidding (months)	14.73 ± 0.71***	14.12 ± 0.52	14.42 ± 0.05	0.000
Kidding interval (months)	8.52 ± 0.063***	7.53 ± 0.035	8.02 ± 0.05	0.000
No of kids born in life time per Doe	10.97 ± 0.21	11.24 ± 0.2	11.10 ± 0.14	0.36
Reproductive Age of Doe (years)	6.46 ± 0.087	6.81 ± 0.08**	6.64 ± 0.05	0.003
Frequent type of birth (%)	%	%	%	X <sup>2</sup> -value
Single	73.3	71.7	72.5	0.08 <sup>ns</sup>
Twin	26.7	28.3	27.5	

The result observed across the districts significantly different \* P < 0.01, \*\*\*P < 0.001, ns = not significant (P > 0.05)

## 3.8 Selection criteria of goats

### 3.8.1 Selection criteria for breeding Bucks

The results as presented in Table 8 indicate that the appearance (bright eyes, broad shoulders, compact body, short and thick necks) of the Bucks were considered as the primordial trait for their selection. The observance are in close accordance with those from Bale Zone of Oromia Region (Asefa & Kebede, 2013). The traits as indicated correlate with the masculinity. The study also indicates that Bucks with strong legs are preferred as such animals have ability to graze for long distances (Banerjee et al., 2014). The study also indicates that coat color is considered as an important criteria for selecting the Bucks (Woldeyohannes, 2020), which can be ascribed to socio-cultural value to the owners (Asefa & Kebede, 2013), besides it has been recorded that animals with lighter coat color are able to thrive well in warm locations especially in the lowlands (Woldeyohannes, 2018).. Pedigree of the Bucks are generally from their maternal lines and are not formally maintained (Banerjee et al., 2014; Grum, 2010). However, studies by Banerjee et al., (2014) have indicated that farmers maintain oral records of their animals which are often questionable.

Table 8  
Trait preference for selecting the breeding Bucks in the study areas

Preference traits for selecting breeding Buck	Aoresa			Loka Abaya			Index	Index
	Ranking		Index	Ranking		Index		
	1st	2nd		1st	2nd			
Appearance	93	7	0	<b>0.41</b>	88	8	1	<b>0.39</b>
Coat color	7	23	21	<b>0.12</b>	10	29	21	<b>0.15</b>
Testicular character	13	5	2	<b>0.07</b>	12	6	8	<b>0.08</b>
Growth rate	2	18	29	<b>0.10</b>	1	16	26	<b>0.08</b>
Pedigree	2	18	39	<b>0.11</b>	5	20	38	<b>0.13</b>
Sexual ability	0	0	9	<b>0.04</b>	0	6	7	<b>0.03</b>
Other (tail & hoof)	3	40	20	<b>0.15</b>	4	36	19	<b>0.14</b>

### 3.8.2 Selection criteria for selecting breeding Does

The results as presented in Table 9 indicate that phenotypic selection (appearance) of the Does are mostly considered as a primordial criteria for their selection, the observations are in close accordance with results of Asefa & Kebede, (2013). The Does with thin and long neck, deep body, and well developed udder are considered as criteria for their selection. The other important trait that is considered for

selection are the mothering ability of the Does and their lactal yield (Abraham et al., 2017). Does with good lactal yield are expected to nurse strong and healthy kids (Gemiyu, 2009), besides goat milk are also an important part of the diets of the people residing in many parts of the country (Park, 2007). The importance's of coat color as a selection criteria have already been discussed ahead.

Table 9  
Trait preference for selecting the breeding Does in the study areas.

Preference traits for selecting breeding doe	Aroresa				Loka Abaya			
	1st	2nd	3rd	Index	1st	2nd	3rd	Index
Appearance	93	24	3	<b>0.45</b>	78	27	3	<b>0.40</b>
Coat color	24	23	15	<b>0.18</b>	36	33	17	<b>0.27</b>
Mothering Ability	0	9	5	<b>0.03</b>	1	7	5	<b>0.03</b>
Kids Survival	0	5	4	<b>0.02</b>	0	3	7	<b>0.02</b>
Pedigree	0	9	16	<b>0.05</b>	0	16	21	<b>0.07</b>
Milk Yield	0	34	51	<b>0.17</b>	0	16	39	<b>0.10</b>
Twinning Ability	0	3	7	<b>0.02</b>	0	3	6	<b>0.02</b>
Other (hoof, tail & ear)	3	13	19	<b>0.08</b>	4	15	22	<b>0.09</b>

### 3.9 The feed source of goats in the study areas

The feed resources for the goats reared in the study areas have been presented in Table 10. The study shows that during the dry season ample crop aftermaths are available in the agriculturally productive Aroresa district, the importance of crop aftermath as a source of fodder for goats are in close accordance with those of Abraham et al., (2017) from Western Tigray, North Ethiopia. The crop aftermaths at times have good amount of grains as a result of shattering. This is supplemented by cut and carry grasses and browses which are in close accordance with those of Gatew et al., (2015). The cut grasses are usually provided to the sick, infirm, pregnant and nursing Does (Abraham et al., 2017). The presence of private grazing land and low intensification of agriculture allows Loka Abaya respondents to get access to communal grazing lands, the results are very similar to those of Tsigabu, (2015) from Nuer Zone. However, the quality of the forage and pasture is deteriorating over the time, which can be ascribed to encroachment by invasive species and also overgrazing (Mihertu, 2018). In the wet season besides communal grazing land, the goats are grazed on the private grazing lands; this is because the crop aftermaths are not available during this season. Cut and carry system of feeding is prevalent in the wet season (irrespective of the location) as many times the goats especially the old, infirm, pregnant and nursing Bucks/Does are usually reared indoors because of vagaries of nature especially during the rains (Gemiyu, 2009).

The respondents also indicated that there was variation in the availability of fodder, across the study areas, the observations were in close accordance with those of Assefa, (2007). The shortage was higher in wet season for Aroresa district because in district the lands are usually cultivated and hence it's expected that there will be shortage of forage and fodder under such circumstances, while reverse was true for Loka Abaya district.

Table 10  
The feed source of goats and the seasonal feed availability in the study areas

<b>Feed sources</b>	<b>Aroresa</b>				<b>Loka Abaya</b>			
<b>Feed Source in dry season</b>	1st	2nd	3rd	Index	1st	2nd	3rd	Index
Communal grazing Land	27	27	15	<b>0.21</b>	75	36	7	<b>0.42</b>
Crop Aftermath	85	23	0	<b>0.42</b>	36	39	10	<b>0.27</b>
Cut grass and browse	8	47	45	<b>0.23</b>	5	23	50	<b>0.15</b>
Grazing fallow Land	0	23	0	<b>0.06</b>	1	18	1	<b>0.06</b>
Crop residue	0	0	60	<b>0.08</b>	3	4	52	<b>0.10</b>
<b>Feed Source in wet season</b>								
Communal grazing Land	1	4	24	<b>0.05</b>	59	13	18	<b>0.31</b>
Private grazing Land	4	70	29	<b>0.27</b>	2	58	26	<b>0.21</b>
Grazing fallow land	12	15	8	<b>0.11</b>	13	16	7	<b>0.10</b>
Crop residue	0	27	10	<b>0.09</b>	2	33	24	<b>0.13</b>
Cut grass and brows	103	2	13	<b>0.48</b>	44	0	45	<b>0.25</b>

### 3.10 Goats flocks herding mechanisms

Table 11 results indicate that the goats were rarely reared together with other livestock which is a good venture. The goats reared in Aroresa were herded alone, this is in close accordance with those of Tsegaye, (2009) from Metema. Rearing of goats alone has some positive and also some negative consequences, grazing the flock alone can prevent the spread of many diseases across the flocks (Animut & Goetsch, 2008). However, rearing the flocks aside the other goats (from the neighbors) can often lead to inbreeding within the flocks (Kosgey et al., 2006). The study further indicates that the goats are provided with adequate housing, provision of housing protects the goats against dangers, apart from predators (Asefa & Kebede, 2013). The study also indicates that in areas where land and labour shortages exists the respondents preferred to reduce their flock size, this is in accordance with the findings of Legesse et al., (2008) from Southern Ethiopia. Land shortages often lead to lack of fodder and forage (which was observed in Aroresa district) and therefore, in such conditions the flock sizes are usually minimized

(Assefa, 2007). The study also indicates that farmers are aware of the importance of minerals in livestock diets; similar findings were also reported by Gebrechristos & Dugma, (2013) around Jimma. Minerals play important roles in various physiological processes and hence it is imperative that feeding of minerals can play significant role in production and reproduction processes of livestock (Zelege et al., 2016). Studies also show that Bole (mineral soil) are the most preferred means of the provision, which is also in close accordance with those of Zelege et al., (2016). However, care has to be taken so as to make sure that the mineral soil is not further contaminated and hence therefore, the region where this soil presents needs to be fenced off. The study also indicated that the respondents from Loka Abaya purchase the mineral supplement which is usually in form of table salt; these observations too are in close accordance with the findings of Gatew et al., (2015).

Table 11  
The herding mechanism and sources of minerals supplement for goats (%).

Parameters	Choices	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	$\chi^2$ -value
How do you keep your goats?	Together with other species	11.7	20	15.8	3.13 <sup>ns</sup>
	Separately from other Species	88.3	80	84.2	
Way of herding	Alone	89.2	5	47.1	170 <sup>***</sup>
	With neighboring goat	10.8	95	52.9	
Source of Mineral	Bole	91.7	34.2	62.9	85.02 <sup>***</sup>
	Purchased	8.3	65.8	37.1	
Reason of supplying mineral	To improve growth rate	1.7	0.00	0.8	69.9 <sup>***</sup>
	To improve body condition	15	61.2	37.7	
	To increase milk yield	41.7	6.9	24.6	
	All	41.7	31.9	36.9	

The result observed across the districts significantly different <sup>\*\*\*</sup> P < 0.001, ns = not significant (p > 0.05).

The findings also indicate that the respondents provide the minerals for improving the milk yield of the Does besides the overall body condition and their growth, these findings are also in close accordance with the findings of Yadessa, (2015) and Zelege et al., (2016). Feeding of minerals also tend to improve the immune system of the animals and therefore, assist in overall improvement of the production and reproduction potential of the animals (Yadessa, 2015).

### 3.11 Housing system for the goats in the study areas.

The result pertaining to the housing system of the goats presented in Table 12 shows that in most of the cases the goats were housed along with their owners, these findings are in close accordance with those of Desalew, (2008) and (Gemiyu, 2009). Housing of the goats along with their owners might be ascribed to prevent goats from theft (Gemiyu, 2009). However, housing goats alone can help prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases. The study also indicates that in most of the cases the floor is made up of mud with proper slope and drainage mechanism, which helps in absorbing the urine of the goats. However, such floors are difficult to clean and can help in spreading of diseases and parasites. The walls in most of the cases made of wood, which is locally available materials, which is in accordance with the result of Abraham et al., (2017). The wooden walls can keep the room warm during colder days, but wood is also prone to ecto-parasites and fire alike. The roof of the houses are made of grass, which is locally available and cheap (Abraham et al., 2017). However, proneness to fire and also predators should be considered when such houses are being constructed.

Table 12  
Housing /Enclosure/ of goat both dry and wet season in the study areas (%).

Parameters	Response of HH	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	$\chi^2$ -value
Housing in dry season	In family house	84.2	76.7	80.4	2.14 <sup>ns</sup>
	Separate house	15.8	23.3	19.6	
Housing in wet season	In family house	83.3	74.2	78.8	3.013 <sup>ns</sup>
	Separate house	16.7	25.8	21.2	
Housing materials		<b>Floor</b>	<b>Wall</b>	<b>Roof</b>	
	Mud	100	-	-	
	Wood	-	100		
	Grass	-	-	100	

The result observed across the districts are not different ( $P > 0.05$ ) ns = not significant.

## Water source and watering frequency of goats

The results (Table 13) show that in A district water from the river is the major source across both the dry and wet season, these observations are in close accordance with those of Alemu, (2015). Water from the rivers is permanent so care has to be taken not to contaminate it with upstream carcasses (Amenu, 2013). Water from bore well is also provided to the goats in Loka Abaya district, this is in close accordance with those of Asefa & Kebede, (2013). Rain water is used for the goats during the rainy season in Loka Abaya district. However, care has to be taken to ensure that the water is clean and that the rain water is not too old and contaminated. The study further indicates that water is provided to the goats at least once a day, which is in close accordance with those of Gatew et al., (2015) from Bati area. During

the dry season the forage usually lack moisture and hence the animals need water quite frequently; it's advisable that the goats be provided with water adlib (Gatew et al., 2015). The results also indicate that during the dry season the water is mostly made available adlib across both study locations, which also corresponds to the result of Alemu, (2015). However, in some cases water is made available once in two or three days, under such condition the animals are quite stressed and hence can influence their productive and reproduction capacity adversely.

Table 13  
Water sources and watering frequency of goats in different season (%).

Source of water in dry season	Response of HH	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	$\chi^2$ -value
Major water sources	River	100	30	65	129.23***
	Bore well	0.00	70	35	
Source of water in wet season	River	100	48.3	74.2	83.59***
	Rain Water	0.00	51.7	25.8	
Watering frequency (dry season)	Once a day	60.8	82.5	71.7	15.49***
	Once in two days	38.8	17.5	26.7	
	Once in three days	3.3	0.00	1.7	
Watering frequency (wet season)	Feely Available	60	37.5	48.8	68.103***
	Once a day	1.7	0.00	0.8	
	Once in two days	5	31.7	28.3	
	Once in three days	33.3	10.8	22.1	

The result observed across the districts significantly different \*\*P < 0.001. HH = Household

## Goat health management in the study areas

The findings (Table 14) shows the most common goat disease is a form of accidental death locally called "*Godosha*" which causes damages in liver of the goats, diarrhea, and oral inflammation locally known as "*Fetele*", affects the young and old aged goats particularly, coughing, and nasal discharge locally called "*Gansho*", skin wound and inflammation locally called "*Bijajisha*". The study also indicates most of the respondents preferred to take the sick animals to the veterinary clinic near the kebeles, the observations are also in close accordance with those of Abraham et al., (2017). The results indicate that respondents also use traditional ethno-veterinary treatment methods using medicinal herbs to treat their goats those who are very far away from veterinary clinics. Hence, there is a need for either establishing veterinary clinics at shorter distances or allowing the private veterinary practitioner's in the area.

Table 14  
Goats health management systems across the districts in the study areas.

Management methods	Response of HH	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	$\chi^2$ -value
What do you do when your goat sick?	Treat with ethno veterinary	32.5	15	23.8	10.14**
	Take to veterinary center	67.5	85	76.2	
Do you have veterinary service	Yes	100	100	100	
	No	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Distance to Veterinary service	< 1 km	25	42.5	33.8	8.21**
	1–5 km	75	57.5	66.2	
Vaccination timing	After report of disease	60	70.8	65.4	10.44**
	After certain animal died	10	0.8	5.4	
	Before Out break	30	28.3	29.2	
The result observed across the districts significantly different **P < 0.01. HH = Household.					

The study further indicates that vaccinations are provided to all the goats, which is a welcome gesture and need to be replicated in other areas too. However, regarding the timings of the vaccination, most of the respondents indicated that the vaccinations are provided after incidences have been reported in the area, similar reports have also been indicated by Tsegaye, (2009). Thus, the zonal and regional veterinary officials should develop annual vaccination calendar for their livestock.

### 3.14. Castration and fattening practice

The results in Table 15 indicate that most of the respondents from Aroresa district did not castrate their Bucks, while the reverse was true for the goats reared at Loka Abaya district. The society considered castration as not to give birth and which was deviate from natural and not allowed by their cultures (Asefa & Kebede, 2013). The study further shows that most of the Bucks are castrated using traditional methods, which are naturally painful and may lead to their death too. Traditional method of castration methods have also been known to lead to infections as the wound is usually exposed and prone to infections in the castration season (Abebe et al., 2013). The study also indicates that majority of the Bucks are castrated after they attain maturity, which of course defies the reason for controlling their breeding ability; these observations are in close accordance with those of Gatew et al., (2015). As observed in the report, the reason for castrating the Bucks are generally for obtaining better price which is also in close accordance with those of Gatew et al., (2015). The castrates usually tend to fatten well if

provided with proper feeding and care. The study also shows that most of the respondents castrate their Bucks in the dry season, during the dry season the risk of infection at the site of the castrate site is low. However, during the dry season the availability of the feed and fodder too is less and hence can influence the chances of wound healing. The study also shows that the castrates are provided with supplementary feed to facilitate wound healing (Desalew, 2008). The study also indicates that the period of providing the supplements usually last around 3 months, typically enough to cure the wound. The results reveal that the supplemental feeding is supplied to the castrates as well as to the expended does (who are also supposed to carry children) and may later be sold out, these conclusions are also in near agreement with those of the castrates (Asefa & Kebede, 2013). The results also show that young Does are also provided with supplementary feed so as to facilitate conception and lactal yield of the Does.

Table 15  
Castration and Fattening Practice of Goat in the study areas (%).

<b>Castration Practices</b>	<b>Responses of HH</b>	<b>Aroresa</b>	<b>Loka Abaya</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Do you Castrate your Buck	Yes	40	80	60
	No	60	20	40
Method of Castration	Modern method	29.2	38.5	35.4
	Traditional method	74.8	61.5	64.6
Age of Castration	< 1 year	4.2	17.7	13.2
	> 1 year	95.5	82.3	86.8
Reason of castration	Control breeding	0.0	19.4	13
	Improve fattening	33.3	18.4	23.3
	For better price	66.7	62.2	63.7
Season of Castration	Dry	91.7	63.2	72.7
	Wet	8.3	36.8	27.3
Mean-time duration for providing supplementary feed for Castrated Buck ( months) (Mean $\pm$ SE)		3.23 $\pm$ 0.1	3.17 $\pm$ 0.08	3.19 $\pm$ 0.06

The result observed across the districts significantly different \* ( $P < 0.05$ ), \*\*\* $P < 0.001$ , ns = not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### 3.15 Breeding mechanism of goat in the study areas

The findings as presented in Table 16 is indicative that the majority of the respondents in Loka Abata district prefer to rear Bucks, the findings are also in close accordance with the observations of Tesfahun & Kebede, (2013). However, those from Aroresa district do not rear Bucks in the flock, this is evident from

the fewer numbers of kids born from the Does. The study further indicates that there are higher chances of inbreeding in Aroresa district as the numbers of Bucks are fewer and sharing of Bucks are commonly observed. Sharing of Bucks and fewer numbers of Bucks can often lead to high incidences of inbreeding and also it does not allow genetic improvement (Jaitner et al., 2001; Kosgey et al., 2006). However, there are a few respondents who reared more than one Buck which is desirable as it can facilitate within flock selection (Alemu, 2015). The study also indicated that the Bucks are usually home born, they still leads flock to inbreeding, which of course is not desirable in the flock for prolonged period (Abegaz, 2014). The study further indicates that the reason given by the respondents varied across the locations, while those in the LA district reported that the reason was because of their whole flock structure, which may also be ascribed to the fact that predatory attacks are common in the area. The study from Aroresa district indicates that most of the respondents preferred to rear extra Bucks for fattening purposes, typically they were usually either outlived their productive life or castrates. The study further indicates that the primordial reason for rearing the Bucks were for breeding purpose, while those which were old and/or incapable of mating were usually used for fattening purpose. The study further indicates that mating is panmictic (random mating) and the age of the Bucks are not monitored for the purposive of breeding; the findings are in close accordance with those of (Banerjee et al., 2014) from Southern Ethiopia. Allowing the Bucks to serve at a very young age can adversely influence their growth and therefore the respondents need to be made informed and prevented from using the Bucks at an early age.

Table 16  
Breeding mechanisms of goats across the districts in the study areas (%).

Characteristics	Response of HH	Aroresa	Loka Abaya	Overall	$\chi^2$ -value
Do you have breeding Buck	Yes	28.3	82.5	55.4	71.25***
	No	71.7	17.5	44.6	
If yes, how many Bucks you have	One	64.7	50.4	50.4	4.97 <sup>ns</sup>
	Two	23.5	27.3	26.3	
	More than two	11.7	27.3	23.3	
Source of these Bucks	From own flock born	91.2	90.9	91	0.002 <sup>ns</sup>
	From market	8.8	9.1	9	
Why you keep more than one Buck	Due to having large flock size	0.0	50	41.4	12.8**
	For social status	0.0	6.9	5.7	
	For both fattening and mating	100	43.1	52.9	
Do you fix age at first mating	Yes	1.7	3.3	2.5	0.68 <sup>ns</sup>
	No	98.3	96.7	97.5	
Average year of Buck serving in flock		2.5 ± 0.08	2.8 ± 0.07	2.7 ± 0.06	0.7

The result observed across the districts significantly different \* ( $P < 0.05$ ), \*\*\* $P < 0.001$ , ns = not

### 3.16 Constrains of goat production in the study areas

The findings pertaining to the major constraints of rearing goats in the study areas across the two seasons are presented in Table 17. The results indicated that the constraints varied across the locations, which are in close accordance with those of Assefa, (2007) who reported that every location has its unique problems. The feed shortage has been reported as the primordial reason in the Aroresa district across irrespective of the season, this can be ascribed to shortages of land and those allotted for grazing too. Fodder deficiency leads to late maturity of the goats which also leads to poor body weight and low immunity (Mogas & Bogale, 2012). The shortage of labor was also considered as a significant constraint, which can be due to lack of employment opportunities and also migration of young people to the cities. The findings from Loka Abaya district indicated the water shortages as the most important constraint, water is one of the nutrients constraints which can lead to serious consequences. The availability of

water is not only essential, but also the water should be clean and free from any foreign debris and parasites alike. Moreover, the watering point should be selected so that feces and animal carcass are not pulled, as this can lead to spread of diseases among the flock (Bekele & Kebede, 2016). This is evident from high incidences of diseases among the flocks in the study areas; this can be minimized by two approaches, management of the animals and vaccination of the animals for those diseases which are vaccine preventable (Gemiyu, 2009). Therefore, the veterinary professionals from the areas are expected to chart out the vaccination schedule for different classes of livestock and ensure that the same is strictly adhered. The study also shows that there were incidences of predators in Loka Abaya district during the wet season, which is why the respondents need to ensure separate coating and, if possible, provide food and water for the young, nursing and the pregnant animals (who are the most vulnerable classes). The predators can also cause enormous damage to the flock if they are not provided with proper housing (Alemu, 2015). Therefore, it is important that the flocks are properly housed in the night and that the houses are strong and properly ventilated. The drainage system of the houses needs to be properly constructed so that it ensures proper outflow of urine and that the houses are dry even in the wet season (Ayalew et al., 2013). Lack of market in Loka Abaya district may be ascribed to inadequate local connectivity and many respondents undergo distress selling which in turn benefits the middlemen. This can be solved by improving accessibility of sellers and buyers alike to infrastructure development.

Table 17  
Major constrains for goat production with respect to season in the study areas

Major constraints based different season	Aroresa			Loka Abaya				
	Ranking		Index	Ranking		Index		
<b>Dry season</b>	1st	2nd	3rd		1st	2nd	3rd	
Feed shortage	62	33	18	<b>0.37</b>	7	19	12	<b>0.1</b>
Water shortage	2	7	5	<b>0.04</b>	82	30	6	<b>0.43</b>
Disease	5	9	38	<b>0.1</b>	9	16	44	<b>0.14</b>
Drought	0	0	0	<b>0.0</b>	13	20	15	<b>0.13</b>
Market	1	6	5	<b>0.03</b>	0	5	12	<b>0.04</b>
Lack of superior genotype	15	15	30	<b>0.15</b>	3	10	9	<b>0.05</b>
Predator	0	0	10	<b>0.01</b>	2	10	15	<b>0.06</b>
Labor	35	50	14	<b>0.30</b>	4	10	7	<b>0.05</b>
<b>Wet season</b>								
Feed shortage	87	27	6	<b>0.44</b>	2	1	0	<b>0.01</b>
Disease	7	21	23	<b>0.12</b>	70	29	20	<b>0.40</b>
Market	0	11	28	<b>0.07</b>	8	30	39	<b>0.17</b>
Lack of superior genotype	0	18	48	<b>0.12</b>	11	19	20	<b>0.13</b>
Predator	0	0	0	<b>0.00</b>	25	24	14	<b>0.19</b>
Labor	26	43	15	<b>0.25</b>	4	17	27	<b>0.10</b>

## 4. Conclusion And Recommendation

The present study identified goat husbandry and management practices in selected districts of Sidama zone as well as the challenges that the for area low goat production. The management system is nearly similar with the rest of the country with identical agro-ecology. Goats were kept in both study areas for multiple purposes and keepers have their established criteria for selecting breeding does and bucks. The major production constraints were feed shortage, water shortage, diseases and labour shortage in both dry and wet seasons. Planning and implementing goat development and extension services on management improvement, disease prevention and appropriate forage development strategy helps the smallholder goat farmers to increase goat production their livelihood.

## Declarations

**Authors Contributions:** Research was developed by Amsale Hankamo and Tariku Woldeyohannes. Amsale and Tariku conducted survey and collected data. The collected data was analyzed by Sandip Banerjee. Tariku and Amsale wrote the manuscript by interpreting the analyzed data. All authors read and approved the manuscript.

### **Compliance with ethical standards**

**Conflict of interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. All co-authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript.

### **Data Availability:**

Because the raw/processed data used to produce these findings is part of an ongoing project, it cannot be provided at this time.

**Ethical standards:** The manuscript does not contain clinical trials or patient data.

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