Descriptive approach of the roles and constraints of traders in the sheep & goat value chains in the rainfed area of the North Western coast of Egypt

Context
The North Western Coastal Zone (NWCZ) in Egypt, extended over 500 km from Alexandria East to the Libyan border West, is historically a hot dry pastoral area. Most of the inhabitants are Bedouins, depending on raising small ruminant's flocks, beside cultivation of barley and some fruits as olives and figs. The zone had witnessed major changes over the last decades, namely demographic growth, urbanization, touristic development and land reclamation in the Eastern part. More recently the zone has faced a long drought period from 1995 to 2011, with low erratic rainfall (<150 mm annually).

Research Question & Hypothesis
This study was aimed to 1) evaluate the current status of sheep and goats marketing in North Western Coastal Zone of Egypt, and 2) identify the main constraints and opportunities for sheep and goat traders in the study areas.

Research methods based on:
A “trader” survey carried out in 2012 in the NWCZ of Egypt using semi-directed questionnaire; Sample: 55 traders, of which 38 of them do fattening operation in 3 centers: Matrouh, Negila and Sidi-Barani.

Results
• There are four main categories of traders: 1. Traders who only buy and sell the animals in the market (29%); 2. Traders who have a breeding activity (4%); 3. Traders who have a fattening activity (11%), 4. Traders who have the three activities: trade, fattening, breeding (56%). So majority of them practice more than one activity.
• Functions: The trader may act for his own, or as a middleman for other actors in the chain. The trader is the actor who is every day in the market places, either to buy and sell animals or “to have a walk” and “to check the status of the market”, gathering information about prices of animals. Therefore he always has good information about the market’s needs in terms of type of animals, supply and demand, prices of animals and consumers’ requirements.
• Trust and cooperation: There is a kind of cooperation among the traders. They can decide to buy and sell animals together and share the gains or losses money among them. They can share the costs of transportation of their animals by renting a car and dividing the cost of the car among themselves.
• Constraints: The most important constraint at which are facing the traders is the variability of the selling prices at short term and the reduction of grazing land and the increasing desertification because of the drought at medium and long term.

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