

## **EMPLOYABILITY OF UNFETTERED JOBS IN THE CATTLE SECTOR OF THE BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS IN CAMEROON, 1916-2008**

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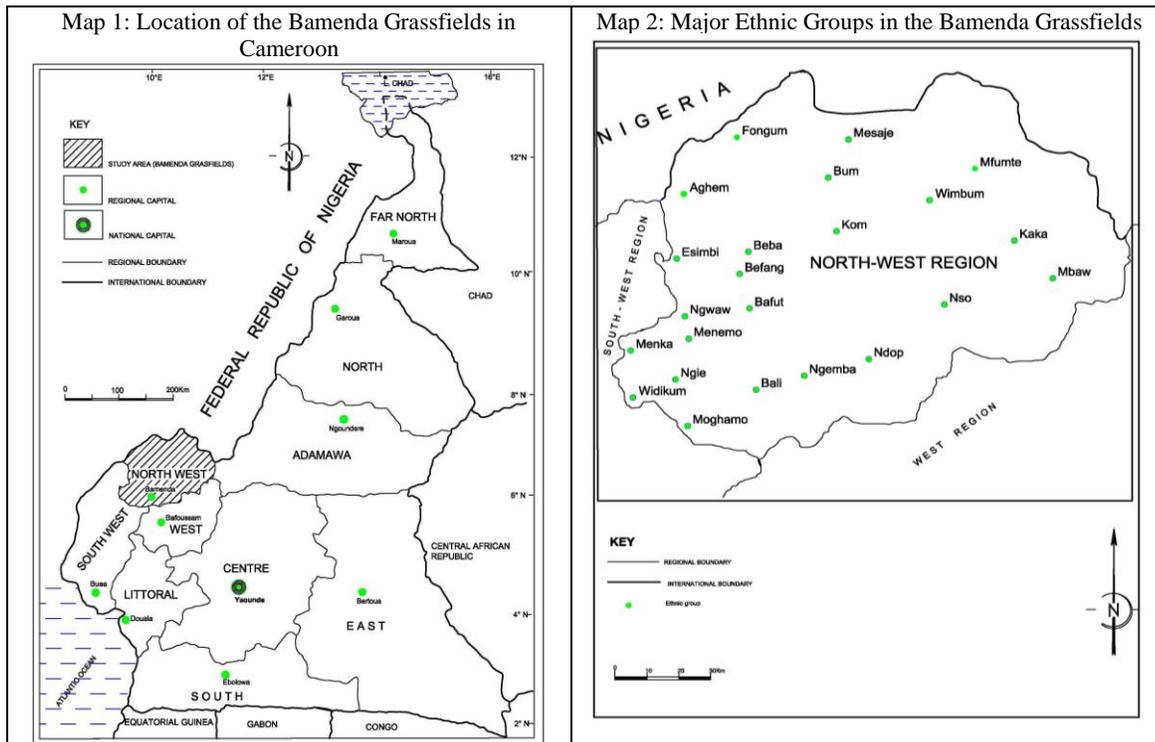
### **ABSTRACT**

The paper presents analysis of employability in the cattle sector in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon. The focus is to situate changes in the cattle sector in wider conceptual and historical contexts by showing that the emergence of the sector and its expansion created unfettered jobs that recruited the inhabitants. It is argued that the likely impacts of employability sustainably contributed to the development of the Bamenda Grassfields in plurivariant ways. The study adopted the quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, key informant interviews and life histories. Primary sources were complemented by secondary and tertiary sources. The findings of the study reveals that the creation of unfettered job openings in the cattle sector to an extent sustainably contributed to the development of the cattle sector, the locale and the people through the accelerator and multiplier mechanisms. The study further reveals that in spite of the hurdles encountered, the continuous expansion of the cattle sector led to more jobs, more revenue to continuously improve and maintain the communities where the cattle and cattle food products were produced and distributed as well as improving the animal health and welfare taking into cognizance the need to safeguard the environment for the purpose of posterity.

**Keywords:** Bamenda Grassfields, Cattle sector, Unfettered jobs, Employability, Sustainability and Posterity.

## INTRODUCTION

Cattle entered into the Bamenda Grassfields along with the arrival of the Fulani led by Ardo Sabga Abdulahi Bi Hoba in 1916 (Jumbam, 2012). He settled in Babanki Tungo with approximately 2000 herds of cattle.<sup>1</sup> Later, many other Fulani groups successively entered and settled at different locations with a greater number of cattle. Gradually, they organized themselves into families and clans. Prior to the migration of the Fulani and their cattle into the Grassfields, the local inhabitants kept goats, fowls, pigs and were also involved in crop cultivation and trade. Later, the local people became attracted to the cattle sector and hugely invested in it (Jumbam, 2012). The development and expansion of the cattle sector was followed by the creation of a chain of both direct and indirect unfettered job opportunities. In Africa, a plethora of literature exists on the employability strength of the agricultural sector. Research on this sector has been skewed more on plantation and subsistence crop farming with little attention focused on the chain of unfettered jobs created in the cattle sector. Our intriguing research questions in this paper therefore are: what constituted the unfettered jobs in the cattle sector? And how did the jobs contribute to the sustainable development of the cattle sector, the locale and its people? In an attempt to search for answers to these posers from primary, secondary and tertiary sources, our main objective is to assess how the creation of unfettered job openings in the cattle sector sustainably contributed to its development as well as the locale and its people in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon as presented in Map 1. As indicated on map 1, the Bamenda Grassfields is conterminous to the North West Region of Cameroon. Map 2 present the major ethnic groups in the Bamenda Grassfields.



Source: Adapted from the Administrative Map of Cameroon as of 1982, NIC, Yaounde

<sup>1</sup> The Babanki Tungo highlands located between Bamenda town and Bamesing village, en route to the Ndop plain became a permanent settlement for Ardo Sabga and his followers. The highland after some time came to be known as Sabga Hill, and today it appears as such on maps and administrative documents. According to Amadou (2003), the Sabga community has retained its initial prestige as the earliest arrivists and has become the headquarters of the Fulani in the Grassfields.

## UNFETTERED JOBS IN THE CATTLE SECTOR

### Herding

Herding is aggregating individual animals together into a group, maintaining the group, and navigating the group from place to place—or any combination of those. Herding was a common practice in the Bamenda Grassfields. Fundamentally, the contours of grazing transformation in the cattle production systems revealed that many Fulani and some local inhabitants served in the cattle sector as herdsman locally referred to as *gaynakoh* (*pl.gaynakohs*). Essentially, there existed three main variants of cattle grazing systems: the extensive, the semi-intensive and the intensive types. However, the traditional grazing method which was purely extensive herding involving more than 95% Fulani dominated (Ngalim, 2015:178). According to Ngalim (2015), extensive herding involved little inputs from the graziers and included all systems in which the movements of herds and men were major components; a practice known commonly as pastoralism. In the Bamenda Grassfields, the Fulani and some local inhabitants were employed in cattle herding. They were compensated after an agreed period with one or more cows and later they had financial benefits, depending on the terms of the agreement.<sup>2</sup> By 1953, about 203 indigenous graziers could be counted in the Bamenda Province owning an estimated 5,271 heads of cattle. (NWRAB. -North West Regional Achieves Bamenda, 1953). They were obliged to conform to the same grazing rules as the Fulani. The *Jangali* assessment figures for the period 1954-1955 revealed that many more indigenes all over the province owned cattle (NWRAB.,1955). It was partly due to this increasing number of cattle owned by both the Fulani and the indigenous local inhabitants that the Bamenda Province was divided into federations by the colonial administration. Each of the federations was sub-divided into Native Authority Areas (I.Yacubu I, interview, July 9, 2008 and C. Lukong, interview, December 30, 2006) This stratification enabled the colonial administration to determine and assess the total number of cattle available each year (owned by individuals, Native Authority Areas and the entire Bamenda Grassfields). The *Jangali* tax collection was therefore facilitated. It equally became easier to determine the number of cattle owned by indigenous graziers (see table 1). Herding in the Bamenda Grassfields therefore appears to be a sustainable development activity given the increasing number of people it employed and the increasing revenue collected as *Jangali* tax. This goes in line with the Brundtland's Report (1988) defining sustainable development as “development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.”

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<sup>2</sup> Following the quintudimensional questioning approach, this view was common among the interviewed *gaynakohs* in Nso, wum , Nkambe and other areas without exaggeration.

**Table 1; Native Graziers in the South East, South West and the Bani Federations, 1954-55**

Federations	Area	Number of Native Graziers	Number of Cattle Owned
South East	Banso	77	2,399
	Ndop	14	594
	Bafut	22	620
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>3,613</b>
South West	Ngemba	103	2,711
	Ngie	2	33
	Moghamo	20	656
	Menemo	4	118
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>3,518</b>
Bani	Bani	9	292
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>7,423</b>

**SOURCE:** Compiled by author from Jangali Assessment Figures. (NWRAB. 1954) File No. Qg/a.1954/2., pp. 34-49. Also see NWRAB. (1955) File No. Qg/a.1954/2. Ref. No.Cc./101, Cattle Population, in the Bamenda Province for the year 1954-1955: Jangali Assessment.

Table 1 shows that by 1955 many indigenous people owned many cattle in the Bamenda Grassfields. A total of 113 indigenous people owned 3,613 cattle heads in South East Federation, 129 with 3,518 cattle heads in South West Federation, and 9 with 292 cattle heads in the Bani Federation. The conclusion is that by 1955, there were 251 indigenous graziers in only three of the five federations that constituted the area under study, owning a total of 7,423 cattle.<sup>3</sup> If this figure was added to the cattle in the North East and North West federations, the total of indigenous graziers in the area would be very high. However, the statistics for graziers in the North East and North West Federations were not available.

Godwin Kputeng of Kingomen, a *gaynakoh* confirms this fact in the following words:

I have been a *gaynakoh* (herdsman) under Durwah (Fulani Sub-Chief of Nkuv) for eight years. I worked with him for three years before getting married. Durwah pays me in two different ways depending on our agreement made at the beginning of each year. We may agree that he pays me in cash (15,000FCFA at the end of each month) or, he gives me a calf at the end of each year. This has enabled me to have six cows today. I have been able to get married, build a house, acquire a plot for a new house at Shisong and sponsor my children in schools. For example Elvera is in Government Primary School (GS) Kingomen and Banadzem is in Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Kumbo. (G.Kputeng, interview, July 13, 2009).<sup>4</sup>

From Kputeng's words it is clear that his employment as a *gaynakoh* enabled him to sustain himself and to provide for his family. Many other jobless indigenes gained employment as herdsmen. By 1940, a herdsman contracted between 400-500 heads of cattle. It was quite difficult for one herdsman to control this large number of cattle. According to (Jumbam, 2021), some herdsmen mounted on horsebacks to control and to get displaced with cattle from grazed up areas to lushes. In Nso

<sup>3</sup> We worked only on the statistics of three out of the five federations that constituted the Bamenda Grassfields during the British mandate and trusteeship. We did not come across the detailed statistics of the North East and North West Federations.

<sup>4</sup> The translation from Lamnso to English was done by the author.

alone by 1943, about 16,669 heads of cattle were placed under the care of only 18 herdsmen. The difficulty to effectively control these large numbers of cattle by a few herdsmen explained the persistent and unavoidable destruction of crops and farms as was reported here and there in Nso and elsewhere. A general call was thus made by the Bamenda administrators for more herdsmen to be employed. The decision taken was that two herdsmen should henceforth be placed in charge of every 75 heads of cattle. As a result, all large herds were split and this led to a general increase in the number of herdsmen. According to article 6 and 8 of the Native Ordinance No. 17 of 1943:

There shall be employed such proportion of herdsmen to cattle as may, from time to time, be decided by the Native Authority and Communicated in writing by the clerk of the Ardo.... The Native Authority may appoint such number of cattle control assistants for the purposes of rules as it may think fit either generally or in respect of any particular part or parts of the area.... (NAB. –National Archives Buea, 1943)

The article above confirms that indigenous people gained employment in the cattle sector not only as herdsmen but equally as cattle clerks and control assistants. Over the years, the cattle population increased together with the employment of more herdsmen. According to Nyoh, (2006). "...native graziers began employing *gaynakohs* who could either be Fulani or other indigenes." By implication, the Fulani who were the source of cattle in the region came to be employed in the same sector by indigenes. By 2008, the number of local inhabitants employed as herdsmen in the Bamenda Grassfields both by the Fulani and by indigenous cattle owners had increased tremendously (Jumbam, 2012).

#### **CATTLE OWNERSHIP AND SELF EMPLOYMENT**

As mentioned earlier, some indigenous people came to own more cattle than the Fulani in some areas of the Bamenda Grassfields. Notable cases in Wum included Christopher Aghem, Honourable Behha. In Kumbo Marius Dinzee, Sheey Aloysius Manjoh and Benedict Chin. Jumbam (2005) states that in Bali Kumbat Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin's cattle ran to thousands. Several other examples existed in different areas of the Bamenda Grassfields (Bahmbi III, interview, July 24, 2008).<sup>5</sup> By 1975 the indigenous population of Fungom already owned more than ten percent of the total cattle population in the area (Boutrais, 1995). As the number and quality of indigenous cattle kept improving, some decided in 1984 to participate in the Agro-Pastoral show in Bamenda. There was no distinction between the Fulani and the indigenes who were "apprentice" cattle breeders. Some indigenous cattle owners got good prizes from the said competition. Alhadji Ardo Umaru from Wum got the first prize of 60,000 FCFA. The second was Thomas Ndong, an indigene of Aghem who got 50,000 FCFA. Ardo Buba equally from Aghem came third and received 45,000 FCFA (Nyoh, 2008). The examples above reveal that the indigenous people had become far more involved in activities which the Fulani dominated at the time of their arrival. Boutrais (1996) explains that coffee farms were abandoned in the 1960s in the Bamenda Grassfields because they ceased to be a lucrative investment. Many people who produced coffee took up cattle rearing as a new form of investment with the hope that they may find solace in the new trade. The rearing of cattle soon became an aspect of social classification and many went into it for prestige.

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<sup>5</sup> According to Bahmbi III, (2008) "many indigenous cattle owners do not want to be known". They fear exposing their wealth since cattle owners are generally regarded as wealthy men. Others fear that if they are known to have cattle, they could be hunted by thieves and witchcraft.

The impact of cattle ownership by indigenous people was great. It offered employment and changed the lifestyles of many owners. Those who kept cattle, catered for them effectively and sustainably developed the sector because of the benefits that accrued from it. As the number of cattle increased, the indigenous owners became wealthy and boasted of their new found economic power. They ploughed back the profits from sales in order to innovate and improve on the sector. Some of the cows were sold in times of difficulty, to sponsor their children in schools or to acquire basic domestic needs. Improving and sustaining lives from cattle ownership and self employment goes in line with Ngalim`s (2014) argument that “ People should be able to change and improve their lives in accordance with decisive factors which takes account of the needs of others and which protects the planet and future generations.

## **RANCHING**

Ranching is the activity of raising herds of animals on large tracts of land. Ranchers in the Bamenda Grassfields both state and non-state commonly raised grazing animals such as cattle and sheep. Over the years, the ranching and livestock industry grew faster than any other agricultural sector in the North West Region of Cameroon. This has created more employment opportunities especially as the number of ranches increased geometrically. Employment in the ranches was diversified and went far beyond recruiting only herdsmen. Some recruits served as administrators, technicians, veterinary nurses and labourers who provided various services. The administrators supervised and directed all ranch activities. Technicians did all repair work related to the building and roofing of ranch houses as well as fencing. Nurses took care of the health of animals and workers and fought against trypanosomiasis as well as food-to-mouth diseases (M. Rabeu, interview, July 23,2008), E. Fonyuy, interview, July 23 2003 and A. Joseph, interview July 23 2003). While some female employees prepared food for workers and labourers in the ranch, others concentrated on the planting of grass to innovate the pasture. Trained female staff also did artificial insemination. These activities and modern operations were exceptionally executed in the four El Hadji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo. One of the ranches was at his residence in Ndawara (Boyo) and the other three were in Menchum Division (Esu, Elba and Fanduri) (see table 2 showing Major Ranches in the Bamenda Grassfields by 2008).

**Table 2: Some Major Ranches in the Bamenda Grassfields by 2008**

Division	Sub-Division	Ranch	Owner
Boyo	Belo	Ndawara	El Hadji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo
Menchum	Wum Central	Esu	//
		Elba	//
		Fanduri	//
Donga-Mantung	Ndu	Mbohngong	Sarki Mforbah
Mezam	Ntubah	Sabga	Sabga Family
Ngoketunjia	Babessi	Babungo	Honourable Yoyo Emmanuel
Bui	Kumbo	Tadu Diary Cooperative Society	Tadu Diary Cooperative Society Ltd.

**SOURCE:** Constructed by Author from interview with Rabeu,; interview with Fonyuy; interview with Akum. Many other ranches existed, but we chose to work only with the above few given that they stood exemplary with modern facilities than others not mentioned.

Table 2 above presents eight major ranches in the Bamenda Grassfields with modern facilities. Four were owned by El Hadj. Baba Ahmadou Danpullo, a Fulani, one by Sarki Mforbah, a Hausa Moslem and an indigene from Ndu, one by the Sabga family in Mezam, one by Honourable Emmanuel Yoyo in Ngoketunjia Division, and the one by the Tadu Diary Cooperative Society Ltd. in Bui Division. Out of the eight ranches, the four owned by Danpullo employed the highest number of indigenous local inhabitants as skilled and unskilled workers. The Esu and the Elba ranch for example had 56 indigenous herdsmen, many technicians and veterinary nurses including male and female labourers (see plate 1 below)

**Plate 1  
Some Employees of the Elba Ranch in Wum by 2007**



Plate 1 shows workers of the Elba Ranch. The photograph was taken in Wum town shortly after the 1 May, 2007 Labour Day march past. The banner in plate 1 bears a message in French language. “*Voyage qui crée les emplois*”, meaning an enterprise that creates employment opportunities. This message ties with the employment opportunities available in the ranch, besides others. The portrait shows more indigenous youths (both boys and girls) than Fulani. The few young girls (about ten of them) putting on headscarves are Fulani, while the rest are indigenes. All the men except the elderly man putting on a *gandoura*

*saroji* (Fulani) are indigenes. The ranches therefore did not only offer employment opportunities but promoted unity and solidarity between the Fulani and the indigenous local inhabitants (Rabeu, 2008, and. A. Wagua, interview, July 12, 2008).<sup>6</sup>

### **Cattle Transportation**

The transportation of cattle from grazing lands to markets and to slaughter points is another form of employment opportunity attached to the cattle sector for the indigenous people. The Fulani owned more cattle but scarcely did they transport the cows to the slaughter houses (abattoirs). Transportation was mostly done by indigenes. Those who took up this form of employment were given different appellations in different regions of the Bamenda Grassfields. They were known in Nso as *ankoanah* (*sing. nkonah*).<sup>7</sup> These were people often hired either by the Fulani who intended to sell a cow or by butchers who had bought cows at some distant ranch and wanted them to be brought to town. Examples of such cattle transporters in Nso were Dzelamonyuy<sup>8</sup> of Mamo compound, Sheey Bandin of Squares (Kumbo Town), late Benedict alias *Kibuh* of Bamfem compound, Shuufaay wo Kongir of blessed memory (he abandoned this profession as soon as he was made the lineage head of the Kongir lineage), Sheey Tatah of Ndzendo compound and so on (Jumbam, 2005). The money acquired from this profession helped in the up keep of their families.

### **BUTCHERY**

Butchery is the work of slaughtering animals and preparing them for sale as meat. Thus a butcher is a person who may slaughter animals, dress their flesh, sell their meat, or participate within any combination of these three tasks. Therefore, relative to most people in modern societies, butchers interacted and interact more frequently with meat and, in particular, with products that more visibly resemble parts of the animal. In the Bamenda Grassfields, Fulani and indigenes were employed as butchers. Butchers could be found in many villages and towns of the area under study. These butchers worked in collaboration with the *ankoanah* (cattle transporters). They paid the *ankoanah* in cash and provided them with money to buy cows from the Fulani. According to Felix Tavnjong alias *grand butcher*, the *ankoanah* were paid sums depending on the distance they were to cover in transporting a purchased cow (the greater the distance, the higher the amount and vice versa) (F. Tavnjong alias *grand butcher*, interview, July 17, 2009). These butchers slaughtered the cows and sold them to others who in turn retailed the meat to local consumers. These butchers generated a lot of income not only for themselves but equally for the local councils and inspection services. They paid regular slaughter fees to their respective councils and inspection charges to veterinary agents. These were obligatory payments expected from all butchers and were calculated according to the number of cows slaughtered. Any butcher who failed to pay his dues was taken to court. Several butchers were prosecuted in the Wum Magistrate Court in 1975 for failing to pay their slaughter fees and inspection charges (NWRAB., 1975).

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<sup>6</sup> Farmer-grazier conflicts had often resulted in the indigenous call for the eviction of the Fulani like in Wum. By 2008 this call could no longer be made given the rate at which the indigenous people were employed by the Fulani or in the cattle sector.

<sup>7</sup> This was done with the aid of ropes. It was tied on the neck of a cow and held by one or two people in front and another one tied on the hind legs held by others. The strength of wildness of a cow could be determined by the number of *ankoanah* transporting it.

<sup>8</sup> Talking about himself, Dzelamonyuy one of the cattle transporters aged 67 remarked that he abandoned school in Standard 3 and joined cattle transportation. He only abandoned it at the age of 59 due to ill health and advanced age. He added that it was from this job that he built his present house, got married and educated all his children.

## **MEAT ROASTING ((SOYA))**

The roasting and sale of meat (*soya*) became a profession that employed many indigenous youths in urban and semi-urban centres of the Bamenda Grassfields. Much of the meat roasted was cow meat. At road junctions, hot spots and popular open spaces in towns like Kumbo, Bamenda, Wum, Nkambe, Jakiri, Oku, and Mbiame, many indigenous youth could be seen especially in the evenings selling roasted meat. They placed their roasters in front of busy joints like bars, markets places, night clubs, snacks and motor parks. Some carried their roasters mounted in wheel-barrows to facilitate quick movement (Jumbam, 2005) Also Faay wo Taantoh, interview, December 30, 2006).<sup>9</sup> The *Soya* roasting profession was indeed another form of hot employment cherished by youths partly because the job kept their lips constantly chewing and partly because the remuneration came immediately after the sales.

*Soya* roasting triggered off another job opportunity (preparing sticks onto which the roasted meat was fastened). Young men prepared sticks onto which meat was fastened for roasting. They went to raffia palm bushes, cut bamboos and transported them home. At home, the hard skin of each bamboo was peeled off. The peelings were then cut into desired lengths, trimmed to size, sharpened at one end and tied in bundles. Each bundle had at least 100 sticks. They were then taken to *soya* sellers who bought the sticks at the cost of 100 FCFA per bundle (Fai wo Taantoh, 2008) .

## **PIGGERY**

The cattle sector contributed immensely to pig rearing in the Bamenda Grassfields and therefore can be classified as an indirect form of employment also generated by the cattle sector. Formerly, pigs were fed with grass, boiled plantains and food remains collected from homes and garbage cans. Thanks to the cattle brought by the Fulani, pig rearers were able to fatten their pigs. They went to slaughter houses and collected much blood in containers. The blood was boiled and used as feed for pigs (S. Wiylika, interview, March 29, 2011).<sup>10</sup> Pigs that fed on boiled cow blood were often distinguished by their exceptional bulk and flesh. They were sold at higher prices compared to those fed on normal kitchen stuff. The result was a marked increase in pig populations in many parts of the Bamenda Grassfields, particularly those with cattle ranches and slaughter houses. In Bui Division, for example, the pig population increased from 5175 in 1998. (ABDDLFAI. -Archives of the Bui Divisional Delegation of livestock, Fisheries Animal Industries, 1999) to 8973 in 2003 (ABDDLFAI, 2004). One of the reasons for this increase was the massive usage of the cow blood meal. The number of people employed in the pig rearing sector also tremendously increased.<sup>11</sup> A senior veterinary officer wrote to the resident of the Bamenda Province on 29 October 1951, requesting the construction of more slaughter houses in the province. He stated that these would boost pig rearing, and bring other advantages. He stated in his own words that “There will be a large supply of various by-products ideally suited for intensive pig farming...” (NAB. 1951). Consequently as many slaughter houses were constructed, the pig rearing sector benefited from abundant supply of by-products principally cow blood.

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<sup>9</sup> Faay wo Taantoh, owned a soya roaster in Kumbo town. He informed us that much of his soya was sold at weekends and on eventful days.

<sup>10</sup>.This view was held by pig rearers in Wum and Nkambe.

## **CRAFTWORK**

The craft sector also benefited from the cattle sector and made a lot of progress in the Bamenda Grassfields as many people got committed to it. It offered self-employment to many local inhabitants. Before the introduction of the cattle sector, local craftsmen concentrated on wood carving, bamboo art and other locally fabricated articles. The advent of the cattle Fulani was also embraced by some local craftsmen as a blessing. They used the horns from slaughtered cows to produce trading articles of varied designs. They produced cups, traditional trumpets, sculpted birds, fish, elephants, chameleons, crocodiles and so on. The cups they made were mostly bought and used by titled men or dignitaries who took them to *manjong* (traditional militia) houses, traditional meeting places and other groupings or gatherings where palm wine was served. These items were bought not only by indigenes but equally by tourists and foreigners who visited the Bamenda Grassfields. They were kept in houses as decorations or brandished with dexterity as insignia of rank. Some of the carved objects were taken to distant markets for sale. Out of the Bamenda Grassfields, some were taken to big cities like Yaounde, Bafoussam, Garoua, Buea and so on (S. Ndze, interview, March 30, 2011) <sup>12</sup>

## **CATTLE MARKET EMPLOYMENT**

The cattle chain runs from breeding to distribution. In the distribution network, cattle is sourced from the periphery markets to the core markets in the centres. By 1942, a total of 11,255 cattle were leaving Bamenda Division for markets in the South notably Victoria, Calabar, Douala, Enugu, and Katsina Ala (NAB. 1943). Profit realised from the cattle trade was estimated at £30,000. This high profit necessitated the establishment of cattle markets where the Fulani and local cattle owners bought and sold their surplus cattle (NAB. 1943). As a prelude to the establishment of cattle markets, temporal buying and selling centres were set up in Jakiri, Ndu, Ntumbaw, Santa and Sabga. These centres brought together Fulani, local inhabitants, and traders from within and out of the Bamenda Grassfields. Cattle traders also came from the coast of Cameroon, principally from Victoria, Enugu and Calabar in Nigeria (NAB. 1943). The decision to officially establish permanent cattle markets was taken in May 1955 due to increasing pressure from the Fulani cattle owners. The District Officer for Bamenda wrote to the Commissioner of the Cameroons in Buea stating the advantages of permanent cattle markets in the Bamenda Grassfields (NWRAB. 1955) According to the District Officer, permanent cattle markets were highly needed to regularise the sale of cattle. These markets would also prevent the exploitation of the Fulani cattle owners and the consumers (local inhabitants and people who bought cattle for consumption) in the Bamenda Grassfields. When the Commissioner of Southern Cameroons reacted favourably, authorising the establishment of such markets, the temporary cattle trading centres of Jakiri, Ndu, Ntumbaw, Santa and Sabga were made permanent and others set up in Oshie, Binka, and Binshua (NWRAB. 1947). By 2008, major cattle markets could be found in Binka and Binshua in Donga Mantung, Aghem in Menchum, and Jakiri in Bui Division. They were well constructed and modernized.

The cattle markets established in the Bamenda Grassfields left a tremendous impact on the entire region. Besides serving as buying and selling centres for cattle, food items were also brought there for sale. At these markets, a section in each case was often constructed with traditionally thatched sheds reserved for the sale of spices and food items such as onion and Garlic, corn, beans, and potatoes among others. Some of the sheds were meant for corn beer as well as palm wine and other liquors.

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<sup>12</sup>. We also discussed with many sculpture designers in Bamenda Town. Horns were gathered by the artisans from abattoirs and at times from places where a cow or cows were slaughtered.

Therefore sellers of food items and drinks besides other things in the cattle markets were indigenous people considered employed in unfettered jobs.

### **HIDES AND SKIN TRADE**

Directly linked to the cattle trade was the sale of hides and skins, which equally flourished leaving a positive impact on the area under study. The skin from slaughtered cows was often peeled off with sharp knives and well dried. Some Hausas and trained indigenous butchers specialised in this domain. When the skins were dried, they were wrapped in rectangular forms and sold locally. They were bought and roasted to clear off the fur. After roasting, it was specially cooked and sold or eaten. It was common in Ndop and Bamessing to see children with dishes full of cooked skin running to vehicles that stopped to sell. It was eaten with hot pepper prepared and spiced with local ingredients. The cooked skin was locally referred to as *katanga*. *Achu*, a special dish in the Bamenda Grassfields, was eaten with yellow coloured soup specially prepared with *katanga* (N. D. Lantum, interview, July 13, 2007).

The market for hides and skins soon attracted traders from out of the Bamenda Grassfields and neighbouring countries. The trade with outside non-Grassfielders started in the area in 1932. In that year, about 200 hides were ferried to Wukari Division in the Benue Province of Nigeria by Hausa and local traders (NWRAB. 1932). Realising those cattle hides could be a good source of revenue if effectively managed, the District Officer for the Bamenda Division on 5 December 1942 wrote to the Resident of the Cameroons Province, Buea urging him to develop interest in the development and promotion of the trade in hides and skins in the Bamenda Grassfields. Part of his letter read:

...Here in Bamenda Division, the export trade in Hides and skins so far has been negligible and no attempt has yet been made to develop this trade... the majority are used for the local manufacture of leather goods in common use, many are used by the pagans for food and very small percentage leave the country and find their way eventually to the trading firms at Calabar, Onitsha, Enugu....(NWRAB. 1942)

From this correspondence, it would be understood that much of the hides obtained from slaughtered cattle in the then Bamenda Division was consumed locally. The District Officer wanted to see the new trade promoted and regulated so as to generate revenue in the area. As a consequence of this correspondence, hides and skin sales attracted many local dealers who in such ventures could be classified people employed in unfettered jobs attached to the cattle sector.

### **CONCLUSION**

Cattle production contributed sustainability in the Bamenda Grassfields through the use of uncultivable land for food production, conversion of energy and protein sources that cannot be used by humans and highly nutritious animal-sourced food. The paper has analysed employability in the cattle sector in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon from a multidisciplinary perspective by showing that its expansion created many jobs for its inhabitants. The study reiterates employability sustainability led to the progress of the Bamenda Grassfields, its people and the cattle industry. Sustainable development in agriculture is the efficient production of safe, high quality agricultural products, in a way that protects and improves the natural environment, the social and economic conditions of farmers, their employees and local communities, and safeguards the health and welfare of all farmed species. While generating income and supporting livelihoods for millions of people, a sustainable cattle sector cannot be implemented without constant innovation in its qualitative and quantitative inputs which labour is one. In this case, it cannot be implemented in isolation because the views of policymakers and relevant

stakeholders are needed supported by informed consumer choices. Thus a need for a balance among the different pillars of sustainability is vital.

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