

Turkish-Somalia Relations in Agriculture & Livestock Sectors



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Abstract

Somalia is a country with abundant agricultural and livestock resources; however, it has not been able to fully utilize its potential due to a prolonged civil war, political instability and insecurity. Türkiye, on the other hand, possesses advanced technology and wide experience in various fields, including agriculture and livestock. Türkiye has actively engaged in Somalia's reconstruction efforts since 2011, when then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan led a large delegation to Mogadishu.

Thus, both countries can collaborate in various areas, particularly in agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. This article will examine ways to strengthen the relationship between the two nations in the agriculture, livestock and fishery sectors to achieve mutual benefits. The article argues that consistent investment in these sectors could foster economic growth and stability in Somalia.

Keywords: Agriculture, livestock, fishery, banana, Somalia.

1. Introduction

Relations between the current territories of Somalia and Türkiye date back to the Middle Ages. Türkiye's historical ties with Somalia date back to the Ottoman Empire era. In some parts of Somalia, the heritage of the Ottoman Empire can still be seen in the construction of water canals, castles, and mosques (NANÇ, 2014). The Ajuran Empire and the Adal Sultanate maintained good commercial and military relations with the Ottoman Empire. The Ajuran Empire was assisted by the Ottomans by importing firearms through the Muzzaffar port of Mogadishu during the Ajuran-Portuguese wars (Strandes, 1961). Ottoman-Somalia cooperation in the Indian Ocean reached a high point in the 1580s when Ajuran clients of Somali coastal cities began to sympathize with the Arabs and Swahilis under Portuguese rule and sent an envoy to Turkish corsair Mir Ali Beg for a joint mission against the Portuguese. He agreed and joined a large Somali fleet that began attacking the Portuguese colonies in southeast Africa. The Ottoman Empire also had a great relationship with the Sultanate of Adal were allies in the Abyssinian-Adal conflict, where the Ottomans sided with the Adalites and the Portuguese sided with the Abyssinians (Black, 1996).

In Modern Days, Somalia and Türkiye had a strong relationship as they were among the founding members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1969. Modern Turkish-Somalia relations began with the opening of the Somali Embassy in Ankara in 1976, where Türkiye appointed its first ambassador to Mogadishu in 1979 and maintained a diplomatic presence until the collapse of Somali government in 1991, but then ceased operations for security reasons (Sıradağ, 2016).

As Somalia was hit by prolonged civil war, Turkish President RecepTayyipErdoğan visited the war-torn capital of Mogadishu on 19 August 2011 with a large delegation including his family members,

politicians, artists, singers, ministers, the President of the Turkish Religious Affairs, and businessmen to draw the world's attention to the severe droughts that have taken place in Somalia. Erdogan's visit comes after a country was hit by a huge famine that caused the deaths of many people and livestock. Mr. Erdogan was the most prolific visitor to Mogadishu. Since then, Türkiye has actively developed its relations with Somalia in a wide range of fields (Sıradağ, 2016). Turkish involvement in Somalia consists of many areas, including development aid, humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, state-building, and peacemaking through mediation (Akpınar, 2013). According to the International Crisis Group, despite Türkiye's late involvement in Somalia, positive results have been achieved (Crisisgroup, 2012). Türkiye has become a very welcome country in Somalia compared to the other countries that have been in the country for many years, as a result of the widespread Somali gratitude for Turkish humanitarian efforts and the status of the country as a Muslim. In 2011, Somalia became the fourth country to be followed by Pakistan, Syria, and Afghanistan, as a result, Turkish raising interest in Somalia resulted in a flow of over \$365 million in aid into the country (TIKA, 2011).

Somalia is a foundation of Türkiye's emerging foreign policy, as it highlights its commitment and leadership in an area that the international community has been unable to resolve and has been unwilling to commit fully. Besides, Türkiye has been able to influence politics in Somalia without incurring external or internal punishment for their actions (Gullo, 2012). Türkiye has found fertile ground in Somalia because it combined government-coordinated funding, business ventures, and humanitarian work. Somalia has provided Türkiye with an opportunity—a very risky opportunity that appears to have been worth the risk. Türkiye's willingness and ability to take many bold risks in Somalia, therefore, meant a greater return on its investment. Türkiye's risks in Somalia have resulted in a potential increase in Somalia's dependence on Turkish

goods, expertise, and services. Somalia has become a major destination for Turkish goods and services, including construction materials, medical equipment, educational and school development, engineering expertise, and household goods ranging from teapots to clothing (Cannon, 2016).

Türkiye has contributed to different aspects of the country's development, including the building of schools, hospitals and infrastructure, as well as providing of scholarships for many Somalis studying in Türkiye (Asiedu, 2017). Since 2011, Türkiye, through TIKA, has participated in more than 150 projects in Somalia, including Modern Hospitals, Boreholes, Roads, Government Buildings, Education, and Health Infrastructure. TIKA has also established an agricultural school in Mogadishu, which provides advanced agricultural studies to more than 400 students across the country (Mukami & Dhaysane, 2019). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye Report 2019, Turkish humanitarian and technical development assistance to Somalia in the context of development projects such as health, education, municipal services, and infrastructure has exceeded USD 1 billion since 2011. On the other hand, bilateral trade volumes between countries showed a dramatic increase from USD 72.3 million, USD 187.3 million, and USD 250.850 million respectively in 2017, 2018, and 2019. While the total value of Turkish investment in Somalia has reached US\$100 million (MFA, 2019). Since 1992, 1,092 Somali students have received Turkish higher education scholarships. Türkiye also trains Somali soldiers at its largest overseas military base in the capital of Mogadishu and also in Türkiye to restore the long-awaited peace of the Horn of Africa. On 30 September 2017, the Turkish Government opened its largest military base abroad in the Somali capital of Mogadishu. The ceremony was attended by the Turkish Chief of Staff, Hulusi Akar and since the opening of this base, the Somali government has extended authority to many cities (Asiedu, 2017). On 19 February 2019, the Qatar Government, through the Qatar Fund, laid the foundation stone for the two main roads of Mogadishu-Afgoi and

Mogadishu-Jawhar (Qatarfund, 2019), which will help facilitate trade between the agriculturally rich regions and the capital.

Now that political recovery and transition are slowly underway, the country's economy is facing new barriers (OCHA, 2014). It is time for countries to launch mutual benefit projects. In addition to aid, Somalia and Türkiye can cooperate in many sectors, including agriculture and livestock. The article will focus on how to enhance the relationship between countries in the agriculture, livestock, and fisheries sectors to achieve mutual benefit between countries.

2. Agriculture and Livestock Sector

Increased agricultural trade is recognized as a vital means of alleviating poverty and stimulating international growth (BEIERLE & DIAZ-BONILLA, 2003). In recent decades, trade in agricultural and food products has increasingly shifted to higher-value food products, with the largest share of agricultural exports being traded primarily in developed and developing countries (Gombkötő, 2019).

In Somalia, the agriculture sector is one of the main driver of the economy of the country. More than two-thirds of the country's labor force is employed in agriculture, and the sector accounts for more than 60% of the country's output (Abukar, 2004; Pyrtel, 2012). Decades of civil war, neglect, administrative mismanagement, and a series of environmental disasters have seriously damaged Somalia's agricultural productivity, but despite these challenges, Somalia's agricultural economy can recover if the civil conflict ends and peace and stability are restored. Since about 55 % of Somalia's population is considered to be nomadic pastorals, livestock production is the country's primary economic activity, accounting for approximately 50% of gross domestic product and more than 80% of export revenues (Handulle & Gay, 1987).

In Türkiye, agriculture plays a significant role in the Turkish economy, accounting for 9% of GDP, 29.5% of employment, and 4.25% of export value (Boyaci&Yildiz, 2016). Türkiye produces a wide range of agricultural products, including grains, pulses, fruit, vegetables, and livestock, employing nearly 23 % of the total in 2012. (Berk, 2013). The cultivated area in Türkiye is around 24.5 million and the majority of farms are specialized in field crop production (25.7 %), mixed crop and livestock production (21.8 %), and fruit and vineyard production (19.8 %) (Keskin&Sekerli, 2016).

Türkiye plays an important role in the food supply and is the world's leading producer and exporter of certain agricultural products (Berk, 2013). On the contrary, Somalia is a general consumer, and agricultural production is very small below average, but in some crops, including bananas and sesames, Somalia is a well-known exporter in the world. Bananas are the main cash crop in Somalia, accounting for nearly 50% of export earnings (M. M. M. N. N. Isak& A. Y. S. Ali, 2015).

2.1 Banana

Banana is a subtropical, evergreen, perennial plant belonging to the Musa genus. It is one of the most popular fruits in the world and is considered a staple crop in many countries. It is the fifth most popular agricultural plant in the world trade after coffee, cereals, sugar, and cocoa. India, China, the Philippines, and Ecuador are the world's leading banana producers. Türkiye had a banana harvest area of 700 ha with a production of 5200 t in 1961, after which it showed a dramatic increase to 5350 ha and 251,994 t in 2014 (Eyduran et al., 2020). Despite the increase in banana production in Türkiye, it still represents a small fraction of what is needed to meet domestic consumption, but the gap between consumption and production is made up of imports(Hatirli, Jones, & AKTAŞ, 2004). The value of imports of bananas into Türkiye amounted to \$181 million

in 2019. Banana sales increased by 172% compared to 2018 at \$114 million. Bananas' share of total imports to Türkiye increased by 0.056 p.p. Compared to 2018 (Trendeconomy, 2020).

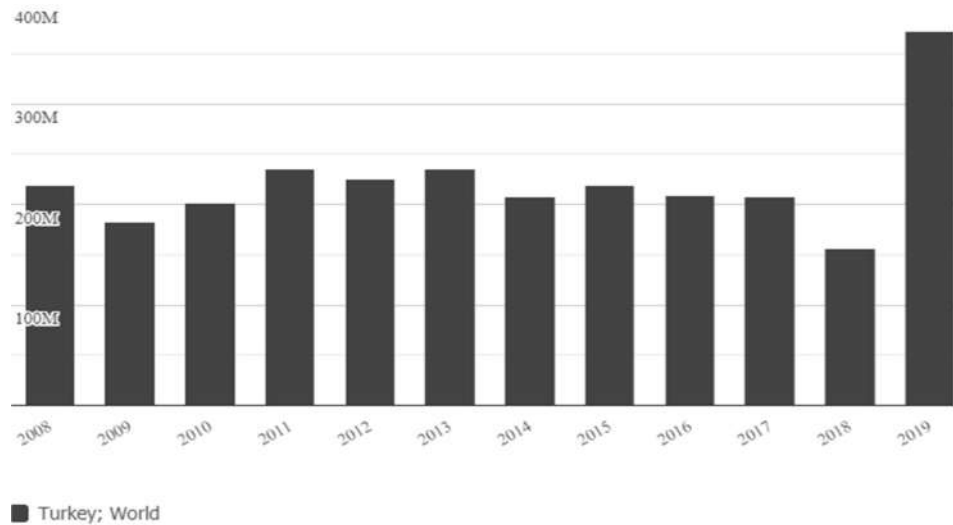


Figure 1 Turkey Banana Imports (2008-2019)

Türkiye's main banana importers in 2019 were Latin American countries, including Ecuador, which imported 86% of banana imports into Türkiye in exchange for \$157 million, while Costa Rica and Columbia imported 8.8% and 3.3% in exchange for \$15.9 and \$6.03 million respectively (Trendeconomy, 2020). Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Colombia account for more than 55% of the world's total banana exports (Hatirli et al., 2004).

Somalia's main exports are livestock, bananas, skins, and fish, but despite the country's export value of US\$204.3 million in 2016, it has decreased by 70.4% since 2015 and decreased by 58.2% from 2018 to 2019. The latest country-specific data available shows that 92.9 % of products exported from Somalia were purchased by importers in Saudi Arabia (40.1 % of the global total), India (10.7 %), Japan (9.6 %), China (9.1 %), Bulgaria (8.2 %) and Türkiye (3.1 %) (Exports, 2019).

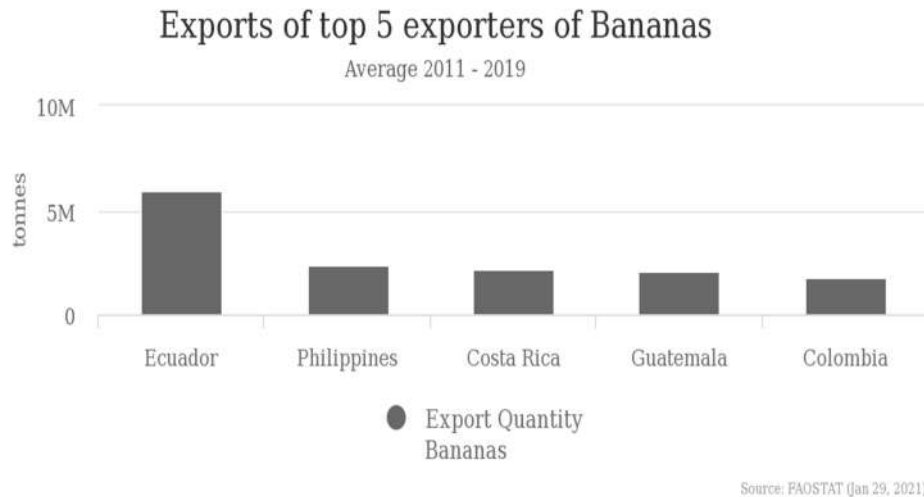


Figure 2 World's Top 5 Banana Exporters

In December 2019, the Turkish-Somali Agriculture Expo, organized by Somalia and Türkiye, was held in Mogadishu, attracting hundreds of participants, including business leaders from all sectors of agriculture and the Turkish Ambassador to Somalia, Mehmet Yilmaz (Mukami, 2019). Businesses from both countries have presented their products to other companies to make them a market. Somalia can be the missing part of Türkiye's need for agricultural products, with a cheaper and more reliable source, while many Somalis can change their lives at the same time as creating many jobs and boosting the country's economy.

2.2 Livestock and Meat

Global livestock trade is estimated at \$173 billion (Tambi, Maina, & Bessin, 2004). Livestock plays a key role in the economies of most African countries and generates significant amounts of foreign exchange used for other development purposes. In 2000, African countries earned about USD 1 billion from exports of animal and animal products. Major exporters of live animals are Namibia, Chad, Mali, Niger, Central African Republic, Somalia, and Sudan (Tambi et al., 2004).

Somalia has a traditional livestock sector based on nomadic pastoralism, and a growing private sector is leading the export sector. The livestock sector is central to the economic and cultural life of Somalis. Approximately 43 % of camels, 2 % of cattle, 10 % of sheep, and 5 % of goats living in Africa are found in Somalia (Elmi, 1991). Small ruminants are the main domestic animals in the country where the population of camels exceeds the number of cattle.

YEAR	CAMELS	CATTLE	SHEEP	GOATS	TOTAL
1978	5.6	4.0	9.8	16.0	35.4
1979	5.8	4.5	10.7	17.2	38.2
1980	5.8	4.5	10.3	16.8	37.4
1981	5.8	4.4	10.3	17.0	37.5
1982	6.0	4.5	10.8	18.0	39.3
1983	6.2	4.6	10.6	19.0	40.4
1984	6.1	4.2	11.2	18.0	39.5
1985	6.2	4.3	11.8	18.3	40.6
1986	6.4	4.5	11.8	19.0	41.7
1987	6.4	4.6	12.3	19.3	42.5
1988	6.6	4.8	13.2	19.7	44.3

(Source:Ministry of National Planning,1990)

Figure 3: Estimates of total number of livestock population (in millions) in Somalia from 1978 to 1988

The livestock sector provides food and income to more than 60% of the country's population (OCHA, 2020). Somalia is the main exporter of livestock and livestock products to the Gulf States, among the countries in the Horn of Africa (Reusse, 1982). Millions of live animals are sold on the international markets of the Middle East. Somalia exports 3 million sheep and goats, 176,000 cattle, and 11,000 camels per year, plus varying

quantities of carcasses from 340,409 (2005) to 718,903 (2006) and 377,395 (2008) respectively (M. Isak& A. Y. S. Ali, 2015). Most of the livestock was exported through the ports of Berbera and Bosasso.

In Somalia, more than half of the total exports of goods and more than 90% of agricultural exports consisted of animal and animal products (Tambi et al., 2004). Northern Somali livestock trade involves an annual export of at least \$200 million worth of live animals, which is said to be the largest movement of live animal trade anywhere in the world (Majid, 2010). The livestock sector and exports, therefore, have a major impact on the country's food deficit and overall food security, which has recently worsened, and therefore the need for increased growth in the livestock sector is even more pressing (M. Isak& A. Y. S. Ali, 2015). Saudi Arabia is the main foreign importer of Somali livestock, and goat is the main export of livestock varieties, although camels and cattle are also common (Acharya, Harding, & Harris, 2020). In 2014, Somalia exported a record 5 million livestock to markets in the Gulf of Arabia; this is the largest number of live animals exported from Somalia in the last 20 years. Export data collected by the FAO-managed Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) show that Somalia exported 4.6 million goats and sheep, 340,000 cattle, and 77,000 camels in 2014, worth an estimated \$360 million (FAO, 2015).

Since 2010, Türkiye has imported 2.6 million head of live animals worth 1.3 billion dollars. Türkiye has been importing breeding cattle for years and the total import quantity of breeding cattle reached a record 80,000 head in 2011 for \$293 million but fell to 23,676 head in 2014 for \$72 million (USDA, 2015). Türkiye imported 895,000 head of cattle valued at \$1.2 billion in 2017, which is 81% higher than in 2016. Slaughter imports of cattle increased fourfold in 2017 by 96,493 head compared to 2016 to reduce the high prices of meat in Türkiye. Live cattle imports reached 706,000 head in 2018 between January and June and are projected to

reach 900,000 head. The slaughtering of cattle by June 2018 amounted to 52,000 head (USDA, 2018).

Somalia, a country with a large livestock population, can have a good market for livestock and various types of meat with Türkiye, while Türkiye can help Somalia with veterinary health and provide international certificates to help Somalia gain access to a large livestock market.

2.3 Fishery

Globally, trade in food products has been valued at around USD 500 billion annually (Watson, Nichols, Lam, &Sumaila, 2017). Seafood has been a commodity traded for thousands of years. From the start, the quantity traded was limited, because the perishability of seafood and the conservation of fish were time-consuming, costly, and often inefficient. However, improved storage and preservation technologies and cheaper transport have dramatically increased trade in fish over the last 30 years (Asche& Smith, 2010).

Seafood is one of the most valued food commodities, exceeding the commercial value of sugar, maize, coffee, rice, and cocoa combined (Asche, Bellemare, Roheim, Smith, &Tveteras, 2015; Sumaila, Tipping, &Bellmann, 2016). Fish and fishery products are among the most widely traded food commodities in the world. The export share of total production increased significantly from 25% in the mid-1970s to nearly 37% in 2012, reflecting the increasing degree of integration of the sector in the global economy. A high proportion of total seafood exports (54%) are exported from developing countries to developed countries (Bellmann, Tipping, &Sumaila, 2016).

Somalia is geographically located in a favorable region of the world, with the longest coastline in Africa (3,330 km), the Gulf of Aden in the North,

and the Indian Ocean in the East. Somali waters are home to some of the richest fishing grounds in Africa, with a vast potential for fishing and coastal development (Hassan & Gichinga, 2018). According to the latest survey, some of the only fish stocks in the world that are actually "underfished" are in deep waters off the Somali coast. There is no doubt that Somalia is home to an extensive list of fish species, including lobster, swordfish, shark, and many others.

Annual fish catch estimated at US\$ 36 million was 32,600 metric tons in 2006. The exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with an area of 830,400 km² has a productivity of approximately 882 mg per m² per day (Solutions, 2015). Despite high productivity, the annual catch of fish is low compared to the US West Coast with a similar EEZ area and ocean productivity. Somali fisheries resources remain largely under-exploited, partly due to the lack of a good infrastructure for post-harvest catch management, but despite the growing local, regional, and international demand for fish that could be exploited. The average fishing yield in Somali waters was approximately \$46 million per year between 1997 and 2006, which is only 1% of Somalia's estimated GDP in 2010. (Hurlburt & Spivak, 2013).

In the pre-war era, especially in 1989, exports of fishery products earned US\$15 million per year, but currently, exports of fishery products account for around 3% of total exports and 2% of GDP. After the war, high-quality fish and lobster are exported to the neighboring Arab Gulf States, also dry shark meat and dry shark fin exports bring high prices (FAO, 2013). Somali waters invite millions of tons of migratory fish species each year, creating one of the most profitable fishing grounds in Africa. The annual production of fisheries currently ranges from 25.000 to 30.000 MT/year (Satg, 2016).

Türkiye is surrounded by four seas on three sides: The Black Sea in the north, the Mediterranean Sea in the south, the Aegean Sea in the west,

and the Sea of Marmara, which connects the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea with a coastline of more than 8,300 km (Yucel-Gier, Uslu, & Kucuksezgin, 2009). Despite Türkiye's long coastline and large freshwater bodies, fisheries are an underdeveloped industry compared to other sectors. Türkiye's total fishery production in 2006 was 661,991 tonnes. Production reached 772,323 tons in 2017 and decreased to 646,310 tons in 2008 (Harlioğlu, 2011). Due to insufficient production of fish, Türkiye imports fish from abroad, the total imports of fishery products from Türkiye are approximately 80% frozen fish, the majority of which are processed into canned fish and again exported mainly to EU countries (Harlioğlu, 2011). In 2016, Türkiye imported \$172 million worth of fish and seafood products, with salmon as the top individual variety (Worldfood, 2018).

Overall, developing countries whose exports accounted for only 34% of world trade in 1982 saw their share rise to 54% of total fishery export value by 2012. (Bellmann et al., 2016). Somalia can be a solution for Türkiye's fishery products if Türkiye helps improve Somalia's untapped marine resources.

3. Conclusion

Türkiye is developed country in various areas, including economy, manufacturing and technology, boasting extensive industries and a significant presence in the global market. On the contrary, Somalia is on the path to recovery after enduring years of conflict and crisis. However, it possesses abundant resources, including fertile land ideal for agriculture and livestock, and the longest coastline in Africa, teeming with various fish and marine products. These two countries have the potential for fruitful collaboration, particularly in the fields of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. As a result, they can establish a mutually beneficial bilateral relationship where each country can reap advantages from the other.

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