



# Monitoring of Livestock Seasonal Movement on the Animal Movement Route

June 25, 2020

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### Short Report

Due to the COVID emergency in Georgia, livestock seasonal migration on the Animal Movement Route was delayed until May 1<sup>st</sup> when all six Bio Security Points of the AMR were opened and the spring transhumance season commenced<sup>1</sup>. Since then, the pandemic restrictions have not effected the operation of BSPs' and shepherds have received service at all points. The BSPs will stay open until the end of June.

In June 2020, interviews with fifteen nomadic farmers, as well as with the BSP's vets were conducted to find out how the sheep/cattle dipping and transhumance process was going. In general, the BSP's are providing the service that they were designed to provide and the shepherds are satisfied with the service they are receiving. This year maintenance had been carried out and the facilities were fully operational e.g. water troughs full and dips and showers working. Improvements can be made based around some of the observations below pertaining to information dissemination amongst shepherds, the issuing of a form certifying that dipping has occurred and questions pertaining to those sheep not using the BSP system.

The following trends were observed:

- The number of sheep and cattle moving on the AMR has significantly increased, big herds with 2000 heads of sheep and more, are more frequent this year. As farmers reported, due to successful export & sales in 2019, motivated shepherds increased the number of sheep, however temporarily closed export (borders) and local markets, have delayed livestock sales. Currently the shepherds are hoping that the borders will open soon, as the majority of them have bank credit and depend on export opportunities.
- This year, due to pandemic restrictions, transhumance started later than usual and animals stayed at winter pastures longer, which resulted in overgrazing and a dry spring worsened the situation. Due to poor nutrition sheep became weak. Therefore, some shepherds dipped their sheep locally at BSPs' or at a private sheep dipping facilities, rather than on their way to summer pastures. Only after giving a rest to a herd did they start migration. In this way they tried to evade additional stress which would weaken sheep during transhumance.
- Some shepherds did not have information about opening of BSPs, they assumed due to the pandemic restrictions, that they would not work. They were happy to discover that BSPs are working as usual and they can get sheep dipping service.
- In 2016 the NFA created a special form that should be issued at BSPs as proof that the livestock was treated against parasites. Currently none of the BSP vets are issuing this certificate. Therefore, it is impossible to know whether the herd was disinfected at a BSP or not. We informed the central office of the NFA and they have promised to take measures and make sure all BSP vets issue this forms after dipping.

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<sup>1</sup> During the COVID restrictions the MEPA/NFA decided to allow transhumance only from 1st of May 2020. They tried to spread information recommending the shepherds not to start migration before that day. The Georgian Shepherds Association helped the Ministry to inform the shepherds and to ensure that nobody will start the movement before announced date.

336,803 head of livestock were dipped/showered at all six BSPs (see Annex 1 for the data of 2016-2020). The final data on the number of animals disinfected during the 2020 spring movement will be provided by the NFA in July 2020.

**Number of sheep & cattle disinfected at BSPs during 2020**

BSP	# of Cattle	# of Sheep
Marneuli	528	81 300
Rustavi	40	66 100
Signagi	100	47 200
Dedoplistskaro	3447	66 635
Kvareli	194	55 465
Bolnisi	1 459	14 335
Total:	5 768	331 035

According to the official data provided by the NFA, on average 700,000 sheep and 18,000 cattle migrate seasonally on the AMR. Approximately 50% out of total migrating animals are dipped/showered on the BSPs. The rest are treated against external parasites on self-made private sheep baths, that are outside of state control. As the private sheep dips are self-made and unofficial, there is a very little information about these facilities. The estimated number of private sheep dipping facilities existing in Georgia is 10-15, including the big farmers who have their own sheep baths. ***It is clear that a further study is required on private facilities, including reasons for their use and whether or not they are abiding by environmental and waste management regulations or are under any NFA control.***

Average percentage of animals treated against external parasites on BSPs and private sheep dipping facilities



## Annex 1: Number of Livestock Dipped from 2016-2020

	Marneuli		Rustavi		Signagi		Dedoplistskaro		Kvareli		Bolnisi		Total livestock
	Cattle	Sheep	Cattle	Sheep	Cattle	Sheep	Cattle	Sheep	Cattle	Sheep	Cattle	Sheep	
<b>Spring 2016</b>	13,821	24,400	2,250	20,100									<b>60,571</b>
Autumn 2016	3,941	71,780	13,290	227,630									316,641
Total Livestock in 2016													377,212
<b>Spring 2017</b>	1,008	68,610	2,447	84,980	2,085	66,138	878	27,645					<b>253,791</b>
Autumn 2017	1,842	109,210	2,342	151,050	582	52,080	1,516	40,515	182	30,171			389,490
Total Livestock in 2017													643,281
<b>Spring 2018</b>	2,718	83,890	30	95,000	1,032	39,505	1,223	56,878	858	73,965			<b>355,099</b>
Autumn 2018	795	74,750	50	173,150	72	39,330	1,511	46,700	176	30,000			366,534
Total Livestock in 2018													721,633
<b>Spring 2019</b>	1,104	86,270	0	88,180	350	47,420	2,234	61,810	405	55,464	636	13,385	<b>357,258</b>
Autumn 2019	827	70,038	48	153,850	495	27,690	2,825	27,520	242	23,490	1,406	42,220	350,651
Total Livestock in 2019													707,909
<b>Spring 2020</b>	528	81,300	40	66,100	100	47,200	3,447	66,635	194	55,465	1,459	14,335	<b>336,803</b>

Total number of animals dipped/showered at all BSPs during 2016-2020: **2,786,838**