Factors influencing current and future prospects for intensive dairy production in Rwanda

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Introduction
Intensive mixed crop-dairy systems dominate smallholder agriculture in Rwanda. However, factors that influence the intensification and crop-dairy integration in Rwanda have not been examined. The objective of this study was to determine factors that are influencing the current and future prospects for intensification and mixed crop-dairy production systems in Rwanda.

Materials and Methods
Survey data were collected from 203 households in Bugesera and Nyamagabe districts using structured questionnaire, focusing on livelihood assets and strategies that they used in intensive dairying. Both districts are known to face biophysical, social and economic challenges to arable and livestock agriculture. Collected data were analysed using principal component analysis (PCA).

Results and Discussion
Results showed that the ability to access feed and on-farm labour were the key drivers for intensive crop-dairy integration. The most popular strategies to increase feed availability for dairy production include terraces, farm land and farm boundaries to grow fodder.

Conclusion
While farming was the major livelihood option, the active participation of others farmers which access alternative options is likely to persist in Rwanda as the most reliable livelihood option.