

nothing
Changes

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Nothing Changes

Photojournalism 2019 GIPA - Final Project

Pictures taken at Animal Market
in Marneuli, Georgia
November 2019
Follow up Pictures March 2021

by Sameer Kermalli

Camera Nikon D800 and Nikkor 50mm F/1.8

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BEFORE SUNRISE

Top: Experienced sellers come with tools that reduce the burden of tending to their flock. Price discussions can be done with warm hands.

Left: 'Birds of a feather flock together.'

Full Left: Before the sun rises, temperatures close to freezing are not the problem, but the open area the livestock market is located in and around brings in a cool breeze that adds to the chill factor for the early risers.



LIVESTOCK SECTOR RESEARCH IN KVEMO KARTLI REGION
Conducted by International Association of Agricultural Development

A survey carried out by IAAD at the Marneuli livestock market. End of autumn is livestock selling season as it coincides with the livestock movement period also.

Livestock is brought to the Marneuli Livestock Market from several municipalities like; Tsalka, Tetrtskaro, Gardabani and also from Samtskhe - Javakheti Region. Traders are represented as resellers and most of them are from Azerbaijan or from the ethnical minority groups around the Samtskhe - Javakheti Region.

Recently, the state passed a decision that, “slaughtering of cattle can only be done at slaughterhouses.” Farmers and traders protested this due to the cost implications. Farmers calculated an increase in production cost at almost 450gel per 250kg cow. This has resulted in reduction of supply and a hike up of beef price.

The price of 1kg of beef ranges between 16 and 20gel, in comparison the price of 1kg live cattle is between 4-5gel at the Marneuli Livestock Market. The farmers opt to sell live cattle to escape the additional costs they would need to incur. Inadvertantly this led traders to take cattle to neighboring countries markets; Azerbaijan and Armenia respectively.

Non bordering countries like Iraq, Kuwait and other Middle-east countries are also interested in purchasing Georgian sheep. Representatives from these areas purchase sheep at summer pastures of Tsalka and other municipalities. Between 16,000 to 18,000 heads of sheep are taken abroad from the mentioned municipalities every year.

More than 90% of respondents at the Marneuli livestock market did not want to answer the question about where they would take purchased cattle. They did not want to admit that they purchased it for farther sell for better price.

<http://alcp.ge/pdfs/958f0af1936d1e8df94fb16fa2194d1b.pdf>



It's too high to jump down from the back of the truck and run.



"Mary had a little lamb..."



QUIET OR FIESTY

Top Left: Easier to handle a few than many at the same time. Tied on their horns or around their necks, fate is what they await.

Top Right: As the sun rises, more traders show up. The seller to buyer ratio tipped towards supply.



Bottom Left: A lapse in concentration could spell disaster. Having to run around for a four legged animal could be tough

Bottom Right: Nothing changes, despite being competitors in the market, a helping hand is not far away from a runaway sheep



YOUNG or OLD, MAN or WOMAN

Left Page:

Lambs do not run away. They stay near the watchful eyes of their parents who are tied up. The seller passing time on his smartphone, while waiting for a customer.

Vugar, another seller did not want his picture taken, but mentioned that he was new at the market and was selling his own sheep, and was not there as a middle man.

Right Page:

Left: Dominated by men, the livestock market also welcomes that rare woman. Silently going about choice.

Right: Succession planning in action. The family business has to be inherited by someone. Father from grandfather and son from father, nothing changes.





GENERATIONS

Ramal Babaksyiv is 13 years old and a student at Shestoi School in Marneuli. He comes to the market with his father who is a butcher, looking to buy sheep.

His younger brother Ruslan who is 12 moves around stealthily, avoiding the camera.



GENERATIONS

Burcud Ally (55) is almost retired now, yet he handles sales of his sheep, as the buyers know him. His son Devlet Ally (23) waits at the pen, and helps the buyers to secure sheep bought from his fathers pen.

"I have been working from this spot for 15 years now, I started when I was very young, and this is something I will continue doing," says Devlet



LIKE FAMILY

Top: A hot drink with friends adds warmth to the cold weather at the end of autumn.

Top Right: Helping his friend keep a watchful eye for customers, every ready to offer a better price on his flock.

Right: Despite being Azerbaijani or Kartuli (Georgian), conversations go beyond just trading.

Next Page: A bond of eons. More than just friends. Moila Askerov with his buddy Celal Huseynov.





Moila walks from one seller to another, looking for the best deal. This morning in March is not as cold as the morning in December, and so the attire is different also. Celal is not here today, "He probably did good business yesterday," says Moila.



There is always a good deal somewhere, all you have to do is be willing to walk a distance.



Getting warmed up at Ramik Gocayev's coffee stop, before diving into bargaining.



Vardo (50) is Georgian and is from Koda, which is the town between Tbilisi and Marneuli. His friends Datto and Irakli are from Asureti and Kumisi. Vardo wears a #stopcorona mask, the second mask amongst sellers in March 2021.

The pigs are sold off trucks on the roadside. "These pigs are just 6 weeks old and Dattos are 2 and a half months old," says Vardo. "They taste really good," as he offers to sell them to me, before knowing that I am Muslim.



A GOOD DAY

Left: When all of them are good and healthy. Easier to deal with one person than multiple people early in the morning.



Right Page: Success is being able to count money and go home before time for breakfast. An unusual situation for today, otherwise nothing changes







A TRUCK FULL

Nothing like getting a good deal.
The traders win-win situation.



Malik Vahid (43) and has a horse to sell. He awaits for someone interested to approach him, so business can be done. He warms himself with a cigarette and a short conversation with a friend he met 3 years ago when he started coming to the market



Malik Vahid (43)



NO PHOTOS PLEASE.

Some sellers and buyers are not as carefree as others who do not mind being photographed and interviewed.

They would rather remain anonymous. Some would actively run away as soon as the camera is raised, while others look from the corner of their eyes despite having to be a part of a business deal that is on going.



Sukrat Allahtin (35), has been doing business on the horses side for over 20 years. "I been coming here without fail for all these years." he says, as his horse is marked into the book of sales before getting loaded into Aras' truck, to be driven off to Tbilisi.



Aras Gamidov (26) is a driver of a transport truck. "I usually wait here until all deals are done and then I do my job, but in the mean time I can take a ride if I want to," he says after dismounting from the donkey.

Aras lets the haul of the day loaded onto the truck, however has to move the horses and place them properly so that they are not tipping the balance of the truck which he has to drive from the market to Tbilisi, which is a good 50kms away.





"I am going ahead."



Leave them and they make a dash for it



Unorthodox mode of transportation for an animal

CLOSE OF BUSINESS

When the day ends, or when the thermos is depleted.

Until next weekend, same place,
same time and same faces.
Nothing really changes.





Tbilisi is dotted with this artists work.
This one can be seen on Rustaveli st.
opposite the Hardrock Cafe