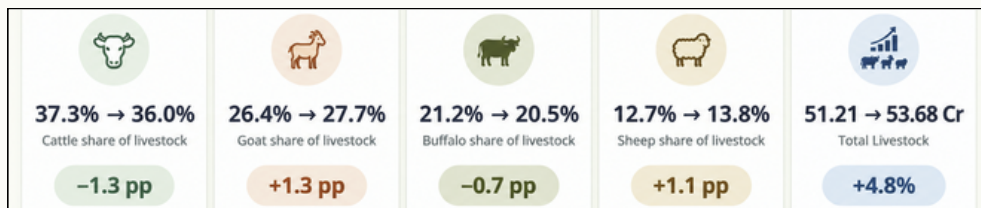


India's Livestock Portfolio Is Shifting



Between 2012 and 2019, India's livestock mix shifted toward sheep, goats and poultry - while camels and horses, already flagged as India's most genetically at-risk breeds, saw their populations collapse by more than a third in just seven years.



WINNERS & DECLINERS: 2012 → 2019

Change in population (in crore) and percent change

	Poultry	72.92		85.18	+12.26	+16.8%
	Sheep	6.51		7.43	+0.92	+14.1%
	Goats	13.52		14.89	+1.37	+10.1%
	Cattle	19.09		19.35	+0.26	+1.4%
	Buffaloes	10.87		10.99	+0.12	+1.1%
	Pigs	1.03		0.91	-0.12	-12.0%
	Horses & Ponies	0.06		0.03	-0.03	-45.2%
	Camels	0.04		0.03	-0.01	-37.1%
	Donkeys	0.03		0.01	-0.02	-61.2%

— ----- Change in population (crore) ----- +

100 ANIMALS IN 2012 BECAME...

(population in 2019)

Poultry



117

Sheep



114

Goats



110

Cattle



101

Buffaloes



101

Pigs



88

CONNECTS TO DATA STORIES #00 & #05

Story #00 opened the entire Atlas with 53.68 crore animals and 85.18 crore birds as the foundation of India's ₹15.06 lakh crore livestock economy. This story is what's actually inside that number — and shows the growth behind it also came from goats, sheep and poultry, not solely from cattle or buffaloes. Story #05 found camels face conservation risk at nearly 4x the national rate (6 of 9 breeds, 66.7%) and horse & pony breeds at 55.6% — the two most genetically endangered species in India's registry. This census shows the same two species also had the steepest population declines of the decade: camels -37.1%, horses & ponies -45.2%. The genetic warning light and the population count are pointing at exactly the same animals.

Source: 20th Livestock Census, DAHD, GoI compiled in BAHS 2025. Figures are actual enumerated Census counts, not projections. India's 21st Livestock Census (2024) remains provisional at the State level only; national totals were not yet available at the time of writing.



The Herd Is Being Reshaped From Within

Data Story #02 found India's economic stability concentrated in a handful of states. Data Story #04 found breed diversity concentrated in a handful of species. This story finds the same pattern again — growth concentrated in a few species, while the rest quietly shrink.

The Number Story #00, unpacked: India's 53.68 crore animals and 85.18 crore birds underpin a ₹15.06 lakh crore livestock economy. But growth is uneven: the increase also came from goats, sheep and poultry, not only cattle or buffaloes.

Volume and value tell different stories: Livestock headcount grew only 4.8% between 2012 and 2019, while Story #01 projects livestock GVA growing 12.8–14.8% annually toward \$1 trillion. The gap suggests value growth is being driven mainly by productivity and prices, not animal numbers.

Poultry, sheep and goats led growth: Poultry rose 16.8%, sheep 14.1%, and goats 10.1%, well above the 4.8% overall growth rate. Cattle (+1.4%) and buffaloes (+1.1%) were nearly flat. Five species grew faster than the national average; four did not.

Cattle show a striking contradiction: Story #04 found cattle account for the largest share of India's breed registry — 62 of 262 breeds (23.7%) — yet their population share is shrinking, from 37.3% to 36.0%. Breed diversity and population dominance are moving in opposite directions.

The strongest link is to Story #05: Camels and horses/ponies had the highest shares of breeds at risk — 66.7% and 55.6% — and also recorded the steepest population declines: -37.1% and -45.2%. Genetic risk and population decline are pointing to the same emergency.

Why this matters for Policy : a species can be declining on the population axis, the genetic-diversity axis, or both - and only tracking one hides the other. Camels and horses are currently failing on both counts simultaneously, which makes them the clearest candidates in this entire Atlas for urgent, targeted conservation investment rather than broad-based livestock policy.

Data Table

Species	2012 (Cr)	2019 (Cr)	% Change
Cattle	19.09	19.35	+1.4%
Buffaloes	10.87	10.99	+1.1%
Sheep	6.51	7.43	+14.1%
Goats	13.52	14.89	+10.1%
Pigs	1.03	0.91	-12.0%
Horses & Ponies	0.06	0.03	-45.2%
Camels	0.04	0.03	-37.1%
Donkeys	0.03	0.01	-61.2%
Total Livestock	51.21	53.68	+4.8%
Poultry	72.92	85.18	+16.8%

Source: 20th Livestock Census, DAHD, GoI compiled in BAHS 2025. Figures are actual enumerated Census counts, not projections. India's 21st Livestock Census (2024) remains provisional at the State level only; national totals were not yet available at the time of writing.

