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## Institutional Innovation for Pastoral Access to Emerging Export Markets for Small Ruminants: Case from East African Rangelands

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### Abstract

Poor access to markets is an often-cited complaint of Borana pastoralists in the eastern Rangelands, when engaged in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) efforts. When it is decided to sell some stock, the animals often must be trekked for long distances to reach the few available markets. The major form of livestock export has been live animals and there was one major outlet.

The export strategy in the livestock sub-sector in Ethiopia is increasingly shifting from live animals to chilled/frozen red meat, which is dominated by chilled chevron (goat meat) to a large extent followed by mutton to Middle Eastern countries. The shift towards chilled meat export and the sourcing of supplies from the southern rangelands led to the initiation of pilot pastoral livestock marketing activities within the existing saving and credit groups organised by the Global Livestock Pastoral Risk Management Project (GL-CRSP PARIMA). The market linkage pilot activity is a joint effort of GL-CRSP PARIMA, AU IBAR, and other partners in the region.

This paper outlines the process (a mixed mode of public engagement, extension education, and participatory action research) that has been undertaken over a couple of years in assisting pastoralists to voluntarily engage in grass-roots savings and credit associations, livestock marketing efforts, and various forms of livelihood diversification. We have documented sequential outcomes from over 20 local and regional tours, workshops, meetings, and short-courses for pastoralists, marketing agents, and policy makers conducted in the rangelands. The overall goal of this suite of interventions is to develop a sustainable capacity to better empower pastoral communities to manage risk. By taking this approach there is also a fundamental recognition of the need to help build human capital.

We postulate that a modest degree of pastoral economic diversification, as facilitated through improved livestock marketing systems, could have large benefits for pastoralists in terms of risk management, wealth conservation, improved resilience to shocks, and heightened food security.

**Keywords:** Economic diversification, local institutions and innovations, market linkage, pastoral food security, pastoral livelihood