



Tropentag, October 5-7, 2011, Bonn

“Development on the margin”

Pastoralist Groups and the Management of Small-stock Marketing Projects in Marsabit County, Kenya

MICHAEL NGUTU¹, ISAAC SANGA KOSGEY², BRIGITTE KAUFMANN³

¹*Kenya Agricultural Research Institute - Marsabit Research Centre, Kenya*

²*Egerton University, Department of Animal Sciences, Kenya*

³*German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), Germany*

Abstract

The main economic activity undertaken in the Kenyan arid and semi-arid lands is pastoral production using local livestock breeds. The main species kept by Rendille and Gabra pastoralists include camels and small stock (sheep and goats). Small stock are considered as a source of ready cash for many pastoralist and they are the species first sold when pastoralist have a monetary need. Low access to markets is seen as a factor leading to low off-takes. This study sought to establish if creation of pastoralists' groups that allow for communal marketing activities could lead to enhanced livestock marketing. Its aim was to assess the feasibility and profitability of the pastoralists' groups engaging in livestock marketing. The study was conducted with two pastoral groups at the two locations of Malabot and Farakoren, both in the lowlands of Marsabit County. A sociological sample survey design was used using semi-structured questionnaires as the data collection tools. Data was collected on livestock off-take, returns from sale of livestock and benefits accruing to the group and individual group members. Twenty five group members and 200 community members were interviewed monthly over a one year period. The collected data was analysed using ANOVA, chi-square (χ^2) and correlation analysis. Results indicate that the marketing activity was able to give good returns ranging from 15 % to 30 % return on investment. The activity also led to increased small-stock off-take rates from an average of 1 goat per household per year to between three and five with prices offered being rated as fair by a majority of community members when sold through the group. Individual group members benefitted by receiving money, livestock and employment. Issues to do with banking and disease spread by concentration of livestock were established as challenges of the group marketing approach in remote pastoralist areas. However overall, pastoralists' groups were found to be both feasibility and profitability and are recommended as an additional avenue to enhance livestock off-take in a pastoralist setting.

Keywords: Groups, marketing, pastoralist, small-stock