



Tropentag, September 17-19, 2018, Ghent

“Global food security and food safety:  
The role of universities”

## Determinants of Livestock Market Participation among Pastoral Communities of Tana River County, Kenya

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### Abstract

Livestock production in arid and semi-arid areas is an important source of household food and income. To increase livestock productivity and market value for the animals, it is important to address livestock marketing challenges as a way of ensuring food security, employment creation, and increased incomes for majority of players who are pastoralists. This study sought to determine factors that influence livestock marketing behaviour at the household level among the pastoral communities of Tana River County, Kenya using the Heckman two-stage model. The results of this study show that the extent of market participation depends on maintenance of large herds which allow greater margins for liquidating animals through the market. It was found that non-price constraints significantly affect the amount of livestock offered for sale at any given price level. The existing market inefficiencies characterising livestock markets, especially exploitation by middlemen and high transport costs also act as disincentives to pastoralist's market participation. Sufficient understanding of the social dynamism of pastoralism in terms of herd maximisation is thus essential in increasing pastoralist's marketing responsiveness. Therefore sole emphasis on livestock marketing may not significantly manage risks unless there is proper understanding of pastoral long term incentives to keep livestock. Enhanced livestock market participation can therefore be realised when the mobile pastoral communities are fully resilient in a connected systems context, with corridors to enable reciprocal access of resources which allows them to maximise herd sizes.

**Keywords:** Herd maximisation, livestock, markets, pastoralism