Tropentag, September 17-19, 2018, Ghent

"Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities"

Is Fodder Production in the Drylands Profitable? Analysis of Fodder Value Chain in Southern Kenya

Erick Omollo[1], Oliver Wasonga[1], Yazan Elhadi[2], William Mnene[3]

[1] *University of Nairobi, Dept. of Land Res. Manag. and Agric. Techn., Kenya*
[2] *Adaptation Consortium (ADA), National Drought Management Authority, Kenya*
[3] *Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation, Kenya*

Abstract

Pasture scarcity is a major hindrance to livestock production among communities living in the drylands of Kenya. The situation is normally worsened by droughts which have become more severe and frequent in the drylands. This has led to increased livestock mortalities and weaker adaptive capacity of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities to climate variability and change. Fodder production and marketing have been embraced by pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Kenya to enhance pasture availability for their herds and also to diversify households' sources of livelihood. This study was motivated by little empirical evidence on the adoption of fodder production, efficiency and profitability of fodder marketing among households in the drylands of southern Kenya, where various fodder production technologies have been widely promoted. The study was conducted through household and key informant interviews, as well as focus group discussions. The results indicated that the most adopted fodder production technologies were range reseeding and enclosing natural pastures to allow regeneration, which were adopted by 48 % and 36 % respectively. A large proportion (83 %) of those who adopted range reseeding were members of social groups. Hay and grass seed traders and Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation were found to be the most influential actors in the fodder value chain in the study area. Profitability analysis indicated that hay and grass seed production is a profitable venture (cost benefit ratio of 1.73). However, market performance and efficiency analysis revealed low comparative profitability by the producers as traders buy seeds at low prices ($2/kg) and sell mainly to NGOs at much higher prices ($8/kg), while incurring less than one dollar in marketing. This could be attributed to the informal and unregulated nature of the fodder market, which gives the traders undue advantage over the producers. It is necessary that fodder markets are formalized and appropriate structures put in place to enhance market efficiencies and access to marketing information. This will open up alternative markets allowing producers to access better prices. This will support outscaling of fodder production and its economic benefits thus enhancing adaptive capacity of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities to climate change

Keywords: Agro-pastoral, livestock, marketing, pastoral, technologies

Contact Address: Erick Omollo, University of Nairobi, Dept. of Land Resource Management and Agricultural Technology, P.O. Box 29053-00625, Kangemi, Nairobi, Kenya, e-mail: omolloerick88@gmail.com