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"Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation: Trade-offs and synergies"

Extent of livestock and cropping enterprises in selected counties in Kenya: An assessment

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Abstract

Mixed farming systems in East Africa continue to interplay. While livestock and crops play critical roles in practicing households including human nutrition, incomes, and as a form of savings/insurance; synergic and complementarity e.g use of livestock manure to fertilise croplands, and crop residues for livestock feed, prevail, an important driver contributing to the practice. Within the wider content of deriving livelihoods under such systems, it becomes important to understand dynamics of the enterprises especially competing for land allocation. How the communities perceive and assign land to the mixed farming activities including gender decision making, especially from incomes realised, is important in designing interventions. In this context, we selected two administrative counties in Kenya (Kisii, Meru) where mixed farming is important and administered Gendered- Feeds Assessment Tool (G-FEAST). The tool involves engaging the communities, and returns perceptions on land sizes, main crops grown and household decisions on incomes. Small land (ha) is taken as <0.25 in both counties, while large land is considered as >2 (Meru) and >3 (Kisii). Improved dairy cattle take the largest Tropical Livestock Unit (TLU) ranging between 2–5, while the leading crop (ha) is *Zea mays* with land allocation of 0.16 in Kisii, and tea in Meru 0.27 ha. A mix of gender decisions on household incomes was observed where men are more involved in cash crop and dairy income in both counties, and women on off-farm business and poultry eggs in Meru and, poultry meat and eggs in Kisii. While targeting improvement options in the studied farming setups, would be important to consider the context presented here, including the gender that may influence uptake of the technologies and advisories under consideration.

Keywords: Gender, livestock, mixed farming

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