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Melbe camel a unique genetic resource and their contribution towards food security of Boran region, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Borana region (between. 4°3'N to 5°0'N and 37°4'E to 38°2'E) of Ethiopia is bestowed with rangelands and is the home of the famous Boran cattle. Lack of sufficient rainfall followed by long periods of drought, over grazing has led to the degradation of the rangeland and are being replaced by thorny bushes and tree species (*Acacia*) which are well adapted to the hot arid region . The large herds of Boran cattle are being slowly replaced by goats and camels. This is because the camels and goats are better adapted to the agro ecology especially and they can browse on thorny bushes and acacia species. Melbe camel is a hetro unreported breed of dwarf camel which is reared in Dillo and Dirre districts of Borana zone, Ethiopia. The camel are native of Melbe desert by the members of “Gabra” tribe. Melbe camel is a dwarf breed of camel when compared to the commonly available breed of camel locally known as Joge. The Melbe camel has a white coat, quite aggressive and can thrive well on scarce halophyte vegetation's and can survive on highly brackish water which are avoided by the Joge camel and other livestock species. The Melbe camel can survive on less and brackish water and require water once in for several days when compared to Joge camel's. Melbe camels are tolerant towards the locally prevailing diseases and are raised for their milk and are also a source of saving for their owners. They are an important genetic resource and need to be conserved immediately

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