



Information Needs of Pastoral Livestock Keepers: Insights from Scouting Practices in Northern Kenya

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Background

- Pastoralists use strategic mobility of herds to utilize rangeland resources
- Grazing areas are characterized by high temporal and spatial variability
- To make mobility decisions, pastoralists rely on current site-specific data
- Herders gather this information through scouting

Research questions

- What specific information do herders consider to evaluate pasture areas?
- Which observation methods do herders use during scouting?
- How do herders assess the quality of pasture areas based on this?

Conclusions

- Herders combine different observation methods (direct, proxy, local detection), to make informed and strategic decisions
- Assessments are based on a) known general conditions b) current observations and c) specific needs of different livestock species across seasons
- Herders prioritise real-time information such as water availability, pasture quality, and the presence or absence of threats like predators and pests

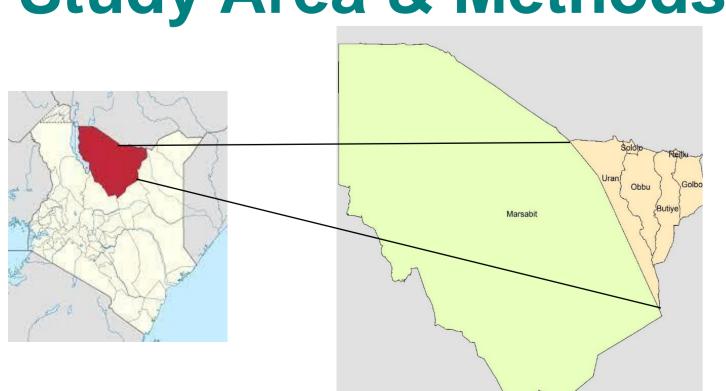


"Livestock is like an arrow, you can only release it when you have a target" (Borana elder & herder NI_240608_0045_AM, 2024)

Example: Scouting for Results camels in dry season (NI_240607_0039_Ar, 2024) Specific information herders consider to evaluate pasture areas Clean and accessible water points Grazing too far - lactating camels Ideal vegetation composition Fleas Traces of old livestock camps Few other livestock camps Presence of healthy livestock Presence of well groomed livestock Black and grey soil Sansevierid entenberg Presence of wild grazers Salty water pan Paised Kard Sulface \ Presence of vectors e.g., ticks, fleas Acacia reficiens Presence of predators Soil with rocks Many other livestock camps Acacia paolii Water logging soil N.B.: Consideration varries with season & species aree rrent to al for sh Legend grazing White Rocky waterlogged soil sheep pan cam Favourable factors Red Soil arge g Water and Unfavourable factors goats Grazing units Water collection point, in Red and sandy soil ... A Commiphora schimpen Scout's route Scale (easy) No mosquitoes (hest) Mosquitoes during the Mosquitoes during the General condition Red soil Black volcanic rocks Terminalia orbicularis Cannels & Goats Current situation Giraffes present Scout's evaluation No other livestock present No old livestock camps Pasture for camels and goats Direct observation Setse flies Local detection methods Not ideal - no past human activity/grazing

Study Area & Methods

Observation by proxy



Sololo, Marsabit County, Kenya

- Arid and semi-arid rangeland
- Home to Borana pastoralists
- Used by cattle, camels, sheep & goats



Has good pasture - grazers present

- 2 FGDs with scouts and herders (n=6, n=7)
- Narrative Interviews with scouts (n=8)
- Recordings transcribed
- Activity and Knowledge Analysis used to identify key themes
- Coding done with MAXQDA



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