Pastoralism in Kenya and Tanzania: Challenges and opportunities in animal health and food security

James Wakhungu1,2,3, Jesca Wesongah 3, Galgalo Tura4, George Msalya 4, Delia Grace 1, Fred Unger 1 and Silvia Alonso 1
1 International livestock research institute, 2 Jomo Kenyatta university of Agriculture and Technology, 3 Field epidemiology and laboratory training program, 4 Sokoine University of Agriculture

Introduction

Amongst pastoral communities, livestock is a form of savings, source of food, financial capital and the basis of wealth description. Opportunities for pastoral farmers immensely depend on the livestock assets that they own. However, they do also face social, economic and environmental challenges that hinder their capacity to harnessing these opportunities.

Objective

To describe the challenges currently being faced by pastoralist and to discuss opportunities available for these farmers in Kenya and Tanzania.

Materials and methods

This was a cross-sectional study among pastoralist communities in Kajiado County (Kenya), and Tanga and Morogoro regions (Tanzania). A structured questionnaire was administered to 177 pastoral farmers and interviews with key informants.

Results

Challenges

• 37% (n=65) dependent on cattle rearing for livelihood.
• Limited access to quality veterinary services.
• Government veterinary offices are more 5 km away to 71% of the respondents.

Opportunities

• Increase in human population within the region high demand for tasty animal protein from pastoral areas.
• Weekly animal market days within major Townships in pastoral areas offers constant thriving marketing avenues.
• <1% of pastoral farmers are selling their milk to processors and only 15% sell to milk vendors opportunity for processing and value addition.
• High quantity farm yard manure available in animal bomas sold to supplement household income.
• Good political will in county governments to invest in livestock.

Research into use

• Social transformation: capitalizing on women through capacity building on clean and consistent milk production and marketing.
• Diversification of economic activities: more focus on marketing of other livestock products (e.g. manure, hides) will significantly reduce over dependency on sale of live livestock.
• Encouraging public-private partnership investments in the animal health sector within the pastoral areas to increase capacity.

Acknowledgements: The CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and Field epidemiology and laboratory training program (FELTP-K). The enumerators and the technical staff that participated in the field work. Funding: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany), the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) and Field epidemiology and laboratory training program (FELTP-K)