

Pastoralism

Livestock keeping in African drylands

Did you know?

- **Over 90 per cent** of meat consumed in East Africa comes from pastoral herds.
- **The pastoralism sector** is estimated to be worth US\$800 million in Kenya alone.
- **Increased sustainable livestock production** and its contribution to food security, poverty reduction and economic development constitutes an FAO Strategic Objective for 2012-2013.
- **Climate change will** amplify differences in land use efficiency, making pastoralism an even better option in drylands.

Facts and potentials

- In Sub-Sahara Africa 70 million people live from livestock keeping in (semi-)arid rangelands, of which 20 million in East Africa. They include age old cultures such as the Masaai and the Turkana.
- The common perception is that pastoralists exist at subsistence levels. That is not true. They are closely integrated in the national and regional economies through input, output and processing value chains. In Kenya alone, the sector is worth €550 million a year.
- Pastoralism is a highly rational and efficient land-use system, ideally suited to preserve the natural resource base and to cope with environmental variability and climate change, while adding value from marginal lands.
- Pastoralism has large potential value for additionally contributing to food security, poverty reduction and sustainable economic development, particularly in an increasingly climate constrained world.

Policy shifts

- Widespread misunderstanding of pastoralism has left the sector undervalued, making it an (unintended) victim of uninformed policy. Instead of harnessing this huge asset, millions of pastoralists risk being trapped in a cycle of poverty, conflict and environmental degradation.
- What is needed is a market-based approach which recognizes and harnesses the livestock sector's actual and potential contribution to food security, poverty reduction and sustainable development;
- ... and a governance approach which recognizes the legitimacy and rationale of pastoralists' institutions for managing unpredictability to secure its resource base and to increase efficiency in the sector value chains.

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Pastoralism

Pastoralists' added value

Pastoralism

- **provides employment**, income and an insurance and savings mechanism to millions of people;
- **generates economic value** through marketed products such as milk, livestock, hides, leather and raw material inputs through various supply chains;
- **produces indirect economic value** for agriculture (manure, draught power) and tourism - as well as various environmental values. Unlike agriculture, pastoralism is very well able to coexist with wildlife and it has shaped the environment that today supports huge populations of wildlife that form the backbone of East African tourism.

Policy issues

- **Secure access to pastures and water**, to provide an enabling land tenure policy at local, national and regional levels.
- **Legally regulate and support seasonal livestock mobility** and temporary access to key natural resources within and between countries.
- **Improve rural infrastructure and market access**, to enable pastoralists to benefit from regional and international commodity-based trade.
- **Improve response to food emergency crises**, including protection of a core breeding stock and early market-based interventions such as commercial destocking and credit provision.
- **Provide complementary and alternative livelihoods**, in processing and marketing, production and sale of fodder and other natural products, community-based tourism.
- **Connect to the pastoralists' own organizing and innovating capacities.**



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