



## **A review of government policies and programmes on pastoral livestock marketing in Kenya: lessons for future planning**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Government policies and programmes have profound importance in triggering national economic growth and promoting sustainable livelihoods. A review of policies and programmes, therefore, provides valuable insights for guiding future government development plans. This study presents analyses of historical and recent government policies and programmes on pastoral livestock marketing in Kenya in terms of their relevance and shortcomings. The paper is based on a comprehensive review of scientific papers and grey literature as well as analyses of secondary data where necessary. Among the key government policies and programmes identified and discussed in this paper include establishment of grazing schemes and group ranching, promotion of livestock purchase and fattening programmes, disease-free zones (DFZs), and value addition of livestock products. Whereas some of these interventions had merits, others appear to have mixed results with respect to their roles in promoting pastoral livestock marketing. The study concludes that in addition to stakeholders' consultation to ensure that government policies and programmes for pastoral livestock marketing in Kenya match local context and priorities, regular review to confirm their relevance is necessary in order to make adjustments where appropriate.

Keywords: Government, Kenya, livestock policies, pastoral livestock trade, policy analysis

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Les politiques et les programmes gouvernementaux ont une grande importance pour stimuler la croissance économique nationale et promouvoir des moyens de subsistance durables. Un examen des politiques et des programmes fournit donc des informations précieuses pour orienter les futurs plans de développement du gouvernement. Cette étude présente une analyse historique des politiques et programmes gouvernementaux en matière de marketing de l'élevage pastoral au Kenya en termes de pertinence et de lacunes. Le document est fondé sur un examen complet des documents scientifiques et de la littérature grise, ainsi que sur l'analyse des données secondaires, au besoin. Parmi les principales politiques et programmes gouvernementaux identifiés et discutés dans ce document figurent la mise en place de programmes de pâturage et d'élevage collectif, la promotion de programmes d'achat et d'engraissement du bétail, les zones exemptes de maladies et valeur ajoutée des produits de bétail. Alors que certaines de ces interventions avaient des mérites, d'autres semblent avoir des résultats mitigés en ce qui concerne leur rôle dans la promotion de la

commercialisation du bétail pastoral. L'étude conclut qu'en plus de la consultation des parties prenantes pour s'assurer que les politiques et programmes gouvernementaux pour la commercialisation du bétail au Kenya correspondent au contexte et aux priorités locaux, un examen régulier pour confirmer que leur pertinence est nécessaire afin d'apporter des ajustements au besoin.

Mots-clés: Gouvernement, Kenya, Politique de l'élevage, Commerce d'élevage pastoral, Analyse des politiques

## **INTRODUCTION**

Livestock production in Kenya contributes 10 – 15 % of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Behnke and Muthami, 2011), and about 42% of the agricultural GDP (GoK, 2008). About 70% of the national large ruminant herd is reared in pastoral areas (GoK, 2012), indicating the importance of the pastoral livestock production to the national economic growth. For the pastoralists, livestock has also non-monetary values including food, means of transport, inputs to crop production (through the provision of manures and draught power), insurance against risks, and acts as a source of wealth for meeting social or religious responsibilities. Despite the importance of pastoral livestock production to the national economy and to the livelihood of the pastoralists, pastoral livestock marketing in Kenya has remained poorly developed. Pastoralists continue to face challenges of dilapidated marketing infrastructure (Knips, 2004), low and fluctuating livestock prices (Barrett, 2003), weak market access and poorly organized market information (Roba *et al.*, 2018). Development of appropriate policies and programmes is key in addressing these challenges and for enhancing socio-economic development of the pastoralists through improved integration into the market economy. A review of historical and recent policies and programmes provides crucial insight from which development planners draw a valuable lesson for future prospects. A recent review on livestock marketing policies and practices in Kenya and Ethiopia

conducted by Aklilu (2008) only outlined restructuring of the government ministries and institutions, as well as policy developments in the two countries. A synthesis of historical and contemporary policies and programmes that can guide the development of future policy for pastoral livestock marketing in Kenya is therefore lacking. The objective of this study was to review historical and recent government policies and programmes on pastoral livestock marketing in Kenya and to draw lessons from their successes and limitations.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was based on a comprehensive review of available literature on government policies and programmes for pastoral livestock marketing in Kenya. Using internet search engines (Google, Google Scholar and Web of Science), journal articles, reports and other literature on historical and recent livestock marketing policies and programmes were identified. The following were used as keywords in searching for the literature; Kenya livestock marketing strategies, Kenya livestock development plan, Kenya livestock bills, Kenya livestock program, Kenya colonial livestock policies, Kenya historical livestock policies, Kenya pre-independent livestock policies, Kenya post-independent livestock policies, Kenya livestock sessional papers, Kenya arid and semi-arid policies and Kenya drylands policies. Where necessary, an analysis of secondary data was done to supplement the information from the reviewed literature.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historically, Kenya government policies and programmes for pastoral livestock marketing had a connection to the development of the dairy sector in humid and sub-humid areas of the country. The pre-independence government introduced exotic dairy cattle breeds in the 1920s for commercial dairy production in the humid and sub-humid lands of Kenya (Jahnke, 1982). The breeds included Ayrshire, Guernsey, Holstein-Friesian, Jersey and their crosses (Muriuki, 2003). To protect these breeds from the common contagious diseases, the government made a campaign to vaccinate pastoralists' herds against rinderpest, East Coast Fever, and bovine pleuro-pneumonia. Waller (2004) observed that the pastoralists did not fully embrace this campaign, mainly because for them, diseases could also be controlled through environmental means such as environmental exposure to gain immunity, mobility to avoid areas of disease infections, as well as regular burning of rangeland vegetation to kill ticks. The author further indicated that the pastoralists were then misunderstood as generally ignorant and resistant to modern methods of disease control and therefore there was a need to control the movement of their livestock into the humid and sub-humid areas through a quarantine regulation. The government then enacted Cattle Cleaning Act in 1937 through which the movement of pastoralists' herds from arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) into the humid and sub-humid areas was restricted (Conelly, 1998). The government also presumed that severe overgrazing was happening in the pastoral areas, mainly because of the livestock population in the pastoral areas. This assumption was rooted in the perception that the pastoralists kept many animals, and the practice was considered economically inefficient and environmentally destructive. The perception was largely influenced by the tragedy of the commons theory by Hardin (1968), which suggests that rangelands are open access and therefore every

herder seek to maximize utility by adding more animals. However, the notion of open access to grazing resources in pastoral areas was a misunderstanding as pastoralists use traditional regulations to control access to the common grazing resources. To address the perceived challenges of overgrazing and rangeland degradation, the government considered policies that could reduce the livestock population in the pastoral areas through commercial off-takes.

**The concept of grazing schemes and group ranching.** In 1955, the government piloted grazing schemes in the various pastoral areas and provided extension services that mainly advocated for livestock sales (Veit, 2011). This author explained that the concept of grazing schemes was not successful as pastoralists opted to move out of the schemes in search for better pasture, particularly during droughts. After the pastoralists failed to adopt the grazing scheme concept, the government further tried to provide land tenure security and incentives for pastoralists to sell livestock by introducing group ranches, particularly in the southern rangelands (Mwangi, 2007). The concept of group ranches was however accepted, mostly to protect land tenure security, amid the need for livestock mobility across the ranch borderlines (Mwangi, 2005). Based on the non-equilibrium theory, which suggests that livestock population in rangelands crashes before reaching a level that can cause environmental damage and that rainfall play a key role in determining vegetation change, rather than livestock numbers (Sullivan and Rohde, 2002), it was therefore not a prudent idea to control livestock population in the pastoral areas. Moreover, livestock mobility is an essential tool for opportunistic utilization of spatially and temporally variable grazing resources in drylands (Niamir-Fuller, 1999). Thus, the concept of group ranch fell short of meeting its objective to also jeopardized sustainable use of the heterogeneous rangeland environment.

**Livestock purchase and fattening programmes.** Concurrently with the introduction of grazing schemes and group ranching, the government put up a meat-canning factory in Athi River in the late 1930s to produce corned beef for export (Raikes, 1981). Lean and emaciated cattle were purchased from pastoralists and slaughtered at the meat factory. However, the low prices offered did not motivate pastoralists to sell, making the government to resort to a compulsory culling campaign, which was stopped following political protests (Anderson, 2010). Raikes (1981) explained that as an alternative strategy to supply pastoral livestock to the meat factory, African Livestock Marketing Organization (ALMO) was formed and facilitated to establish field abattoirs and stock routes in the pastoral areas. As Raikes (1981) further explained, after the Kenya independence in 1963, ALMO was substituted with Livestock Marketing Division (LMD), which shifted focus from producing corned beef to producing quality carcasses for export and high-end domestic markets. Immature cattle were purchased from the pastoralists, screened for diseases and fattened in ranches before they were slaughtered at the meat factory. However, livestock marketing infrastructure including stock routes, quarantine centres and livestock holding grounds, which were established by the LMD in the early 1960s become dilapidated and affected operation of the livestock purchase and fattening programmes (AU-IBAR and NEPDP, 2006). This collapse could be a possible ramification of the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, in which the government was advised to invest more national resources to develop areas that were considered to yield better economic returns. Areas with good infrastructure and abundant rainfall for crop farming were given a priority for government investments while drylands, where pastoral livestock production was a dominant

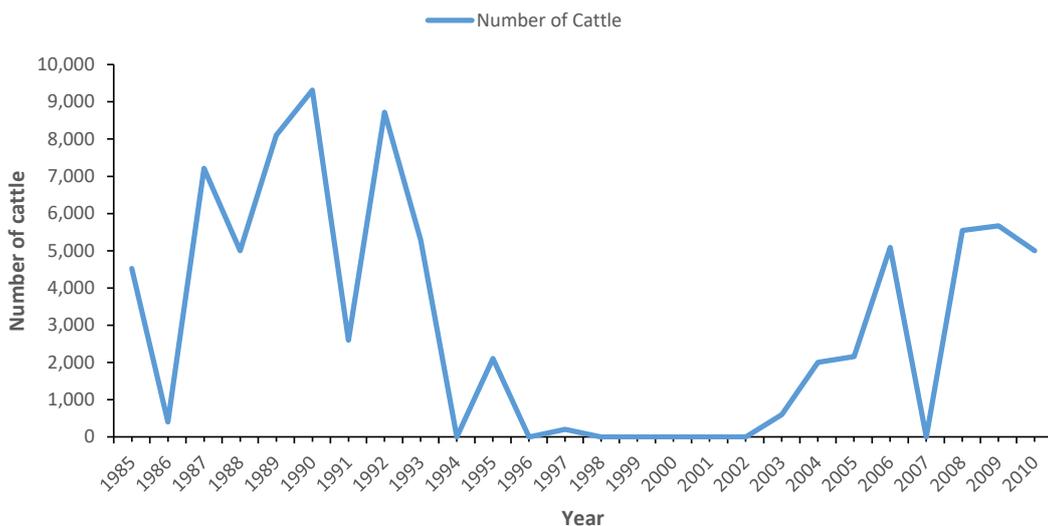
livelihood had minimal resource allocations (GoK, 2017). The meat factory (renamed as the Kenya Meat Commission in 1950) also had an insufficient supply of cattle for slaughter after the government allowed decontrolling of beef pricing and marketing in 1986/1987, that caused stiff competition from private butchers and slaughterhouses (van der Valk, 2008). The government was then unable to enforce sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards (SPS) of livestock products and therefore lost 4,000 metric tons of beef quota from the European Union (Irungu *et al.*, 2014).

**The concept of disease-free zones.** Following the re-opening of the KMC (the company was poorly performing from 1986/1987 and completely stopped its operations in 1992) as an export facility for use by the private sector; Kenya had an increasing trend in beef, mutton and goat meat export (Farmer and Mbwika, 2006). This was an indication of the economic potential of pastoral livestock marketing. To utilize this potential, the government focused on reviving the dilapidated marketing infrastructure and enforcing of SPS to target export markets. In the national government plan for the realization of Vision 2030 development goals, the government envisages establishment of four disease free zones (DFZs) in the ASALs as an effort to enforce SPS standards and to meet the regional and international market demands (GoK, 2007). Also in its Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (2010-2020), the government acknowledges that the concept of DFZs will facilitate access to export markets and indicated need to invest in export abattoirs, holding facilities, quarantine stations, laboratory services, staff training and livestock breeding programmes (GoK, 2010). Nonetheless, a recent review (Aklilu, 2008) of pastoral livestock marketing flawed the concept of DFZs and suggested a need to explore alternative ways of controlling livestock diseases. Aklilu (2008) observed that

the concept of DFZs might not be successful mainly because of the potential inconsistency of export demands, conflicts with wildlife conservation and tourism, and the recurrence of Rift Valley Fever, which cannot be controlled through land demarcations. Fluctuations in the number of cattle exported from Kenya from 1985 to 2010 (Figure 1) are attributable to either inconsistency in export demands or reoccurrence of disease outbreaks.

As suggested by Aklilu (2008), Kenya might just need to strengthen its disease surveillance and veterinary services and establish cottage industries for value addition of livestock products. This suggestion is in line with the recent national livestock policy of 2008 in which the government outlined a number of measures for improving livestock marketing (GoK, 2008). These measures include provision of incentives to private sector for establishment of cottage and large-scale industries that do value addition of livestock products (milk, hides, skins, bones, horns and hooves), in addition to other measures such as improving marketing

infrastructure, provision of market information, and support to producers and marketing groups. Also, considering that Kenya is a meat deficit country, importing 20-25% of beef cattle from the neighbouring countries (Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Somalia) (AU-IBAR and NEPDP, 2006), the focus should have been to meet the local demand for meat rather than satisfying requirements of export markets through the establishment of DFZs. During stakeholders' conference on Kenya's extensive livestock production in 2015, it was also suggested that export of livestock products could optimize profits and also create local employment and therefore has an advantage than exporting live animals (The Extensive Livestock Expo Secretariat, 2015). In analysing benefits of exporting livestock from pastoral areas of Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan, Aklilu and Catley (2010) observed that for poor pastoral households, improving access to local markets through development infrastructure and communication networks is more important than export markets that tend to benefit those with large herds and has influence in international livestock trade.



**Figure 1. Number of cattle exported from Kenya, 1985 – 2010 (Source: Farmer and Mbwika, 2006; Irungu *et al.*, 2014)**

## **CONCLUSION**

As an effort to improve pastoral livestock marketing, the Kenyan government established various policies and programmes that included establishment of grazing schemes and group ranching, promotion of livestock purchase and fattening programmes, DFZs, and value addition of livestock products. Discussion on the relevance and effectiveness of these policies and programmes shows shortcomings for some and merits for others. The concept of grazing schemes and group ranching failed to understand the functioning social system of pastoralists and ecological dynamics of their environments, thus had no impact in promoting pastoral livestock trade. Plans to establish and enforce DFZs as a way to facilitate export of live animals from the country could be constrained by the potential inconsistency of export demands, competition from domestic markets, and land demand for other development sectors. Importantly, strengthening of veterinary services, improving marketing infrastructure and value addition of livestock products are some of the interventions that could play important role in improving pastoral livestock marketing in Kenya.

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## **STATEMENT OF NO-CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this paper.

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