

# **Nutritive value of important range forage species camels in Marsabit District, Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

A study carried out in the semi-arid rangelands of Marsabit during dry and wet seasons assessed the content and seasonal variation of crude protein (CP) and fibre of important forage species for camels. Using a semi-structured questionnaire, herders were interviewed and the important forage species consumed by camels identified. The respondents were mainly men and boys responsible for camel herding in the area. The identified forage species were verified through direct field observation of grazing camels. A total of 109 forages were sampled and analysed for CP, Ash and fibre. Camels preferred dwarf shrubs during the wet season, herbaceous and grass species in the dry season. The mean CP and Neutral Detergent Fibre (NDF) contents of preferred forages were 13.9iS.0% and S3.6iI3.7% of dry matter (DM) respectively. Fibre content of the forages declined while CP increased from dry to wet season. Shrubs were lower in NDF (Sl.OiI2.6%) and ash (1S.Si7.2%) and higher in DM (SO.OiI8.2%) and CP (14.7i4.9%) compared to grasses (NDF 60.4iI4.3%, ash = 18.SiS.2%, DM = 49.7iI7.8%, CP = 12.0iS.0%). It was concluded that the combination of forage species selected by the camels across sites and seasons was adequate in terms of CP.