

# **Drivers of the transition from pastoralism to vegetable farming in Africa's arid and semi arid areas and implications for soil fertility management: The case of Kenyan pastoralists**

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## **Abstract**

The arid and semi arid areas comprise a large percentage of the land area in Africa. Communities in these areas have over the years depended on livestock production for livelihood. Livestock has traditionally served as source of food and a store of wealth in the arid and semi arid areas. However, the challenges posed by the harsh environmental factors, especially climate-change induced shocks are causing significant changes in livelihood strategies in the arid and semi-arid areas. Increasing numbers of households are shifting from pure pastoralist livelihood to crop farming with many growing vegetables commercially. This paper examines the factors driving this transition from pure pastoralist system to vegetable farming. It then assesses the strategies used by these new farmers to manage the fertility of the vegetable fields and the factors driving the use of these strategies. The paper finds that the shift to vegetable farming is driven by, among others, access to other sources of income, hence desire to diversify livelihoods. It also finds that, in general, these vegetable growers use a number of soil fertility management practices. The intensity of adoption of soil fertility management practices is driven by, among others, access to information and prior participation in govern soil conservation programs. The paper highlights the policy implications of these findings.