Challenges of camel production in Samburu District, Kenya

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Abstract

The objective of the study was to identify the challenges to camel production in Kenya’s Samburu district. The data was collected through administration of structured and semi-structured questionnaire to a representative sample of the pastoralist household heads. The major causes of camel loss in the district were identified as predation (50.9%), drought (28.7%) and camel diseases (20.4%). Severe drought was reported to have occurred in the years; 1984 (12.4%), 1995 (9%), 2005 (42.1%), and 2006 (37.6%), and the livestock species most affected by the drought were cattle (98.1%), sheep (63.9%), donkeys (57.5%), goats (50.8%) and camels (31.2%). Water was reported to be inadequate in the district by 54.6% and 62.1% of the respondents respectively for livestock and human use. Herdsmen reported watering their camels from; rivers (24.6%), dry river beds (40%) and spring (7.7%). The livestock grazing area was reported to be getting smaller (45.7%), overgrazed (21.7%), and destroyed (13%), while only 13% believed that the grazing area had increased. Amongst the pastoralist who responded to the question on their source of income, 78.8% had no alternative source of income apart from livestock keeping. Conclusion: More resources should be allocated by the governments for improvement of camel production and the carrying capacity in pastoral production systems needs to be re-evaluated to ensure optimal productivity.