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Analysis of Stratified-Livestock Production Models as Option for Enhancing Cattle Marketing in Pastoral Areas, Kenya

BULLE HALLO DABASSO¹, OLIVER WASONGA², PATRICK IRUNGU³, BRIGITTE KAUFMANN²

¹*Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Range Ecology, Kenya*

²*German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), Germany*

³*University of Nairobi, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Kenya*

Abstract

Livestock marketing in pastoral areas is often characterised by low and fluctuating prices, and weak access to high-value markets, thus perpetuating food and income insecurities among pastoral households. Improved livestock marketing is hence considered imperative for poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. Previous marketing interventions including introduction of group ranching, commercial destocking and support for collective actions have either failed or lack sustainability. Alternative livestock marketing approach is now emerging in Kenya, which involves bringing lean animals produced in pastoral areas to areas of comparative feed advantage for the purpose of fattening and accessing high-value markets. Such arrangement of livestock production into separate stages is term as stratified livestock-production in the context of this study. However, whether stratified livestock-production have potential to enhancing cattle marketing in pastoral areas is seldom investigated. Using interviews of key informants and analysis of literatures, we characterise existing models of stratified-cattle production and analysed their constraints and opportunities as option for enhancing cattle marketing. We found the models of individual traders and that of ranch-companies in which the breed of Borana cattle is often purchased from pastoral areas and managed by providing daily watering, weekly dipping or spraying and deworming. Efforts to meet sanitary and phytosanitary standards through vaccination against foot and mouth disease, anthrax and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia were also observed but largely constrained by informal livestock movements and wildlife-livestock integrations. This create little prospect for reaching export markets but opportunity exist in targeting high-end domestic markets that offer prices based on animal live-weight and level of fat-content achieved.

Keywords: Beef, fattening, high-value markets, pastoralists, ranchers, traders