

ABSTRACT

Agricultural activities significantly contribute to household income in rural parts of Kenya. This study was conducted in Uriri, Karungu and Nyatike divisions of Migori district. The objective of the study was to examine the contribution of livestock to household incomes in relation to livelihood outcomes. Survey instruments were used to collect cross-sectional data from 212 households selected non-randomly. The study findings from income calculation indicate that there was an association between livestock ownership and mean household incomes (χ^2 5df, $P < 0.000$). Households engaged in livestock farming earned 44 percent more in per capita income than those without livestock. Livestock as an economic asset provided multiple benefits to their owners. The gross margins attained from dairy were 3, 5 and 25 times higher than the gross margins from maize enterprise in Uriri, Karungu and Nyatike divisions respectively. Inadequate knowledge on animal husbandry, lack of financial capital, livestock diseases and drought were the major threats to livestock enterprises (SWOT analysis). Livestock were shown to be important livelihood asset for small-scale farmers. The study recommends that for agricultural policy to increase rural income, the complementarity of livestock and crop production through the use of animal manure must be emphasized to increase agricultural production gains in farm households. Farmers should be educated on feed conservation and animal husbandry techniques to increase livestock productivity. Training of community based animal health workers to attend livestock health problems is necessary.