Indigenous camel mineral supplementation knowledge and practices on manyatta based camel herds by the Rendille pastoralists of Marsabit district, Kenya

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Abstract

A study was conducted to document the traditional mineral supplementation strategies on Manyatta (settlement) based camel milking herds by the semi-settled Rendille pastoralists of Marsabit district in Kenya. During the survey, 33, 28, and 30 respondents were individually interviewed in Kargi, Korr and Ngurunit locations of the district respectively. The results indicated that a combination of rain water standing on salty soils referred to as marmar, and forages growing on such soils were the key sources of mineral supplements to Manyatta based camels, with commercial mineral supplements playing only a minor role. Salty water and forages located within a 15 km grazing radius of the camels were used mainly during the wet season, while commercial salts were used during dry periods. Natural salty water springs and moderately salty boreholes were also used during the dry season. The findings suggested that while Rendille pastoralists knew the importance of mineral supplementation and could describe the deficiency signs, the major salty water springs in the area were beyond reach for most of Manyatta based camels, predisposing them to multiple minerals deficiency. Enhanced grazing and watering management could ameliorate this problem in the short term. In the long term however, there was need for a mineral supplement to be made available to the Manyatta based camels in order to meet their mineral requirements.