



# Feasibility of Organic Certification of Sheep and Goats produced in Pastoral Systems in Northern Kenya

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## Introduction

### Constraints in marketing of pastoralists' livestock

In pastoral systems of northern Kenya:

- Sale of small ruminants: **main regular income source** for more than 2/3 of households (Chantararat et al., 2013)
- Current livestock trade: **has low profitability** for pastoralists and local traders
- Opportunity: Goats and sheep from Marsabit County are have qualities preferred in the market

**Marketing is hampered** by several factors:

- Undifferentiated commodity market: no direct link to end buyers
- Limited market information for producers and traders
- Volatile prices in the different markets (Bailey et al., 1999; Barrett and Luseno, 2004; Roba et al., 2018)

How feasible is marketing meat under a common brand?  
How feasible is the branding of pastoral livestock products? ?



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## Objectives

Assessing the requirements and feasibility of organic certification of the pastoral livestock production

The **specific objectives** are:

1. to assess the **compliance and non-compliance** of pastoral livestock production with organic standards
2. to assess **challenges** in fulfilling requirements of organic standards and of group certification
3. to develop **ideas to overcome these challenges**.

## Conclusions

1. Production system already fulfils many of the requirements for organic certification (e.g. animal feeding, housing and reproduction)
2. Support to meet requirements (e.g. using pain relievers during branding, establishing traceability systems and paying for inspections)
3. Fastest path towards added-value for pastoralist livestock producers: Marketing under a common brand or through Geographic Indication (GI) system

## Results

### Compliance of pastoral livestock production with organic standards



- Nutrition of herds mainly based on natural vegetation

- No practice of livestock tethering
- Mobility allows access to fresh pastures away from towns and settlements
- Diverse forage positively impact meat quality



- Housing: Herds live in open range lands and have unlimited space

- Livestock only kraaled at night with ample spaces
- Kraals are cleaned regularly



Use of other methods such as AI is none existent in the area

- Reproduction: only natural mating

### Challenges to meeting organic standards

#### Veterinary infrastructure

- **Limited veterinary infrastructure** limits possibility of organic certification
- Low trust in vaccination
- Trial-and-error method in drug use

#### Group certification

- **External Inspections** are time and cost intensive
- Dry season: main herds are hard to reach due to distance and inaccessible areas
- Monitoring challenges: limited infrastructure

#### Livestock production management

- Use of supplemental feeds for homebased animals during drought: risk of forbidden ingredients
- Mutilations (ear notching, branding, castration) - but painkillers are not available

#### Traceability & record keeping

- Traceability: No formal livestock identification and traceability systems (LITS)
- Lack of written records about production
- No recorded of veterinary treatments → not possible to assess whether organic requirements are met

### Ideas to overcome the challenges

#### Veterinary treatments

- Study on current veterinary drug use and drug residues in livestock products
- Increased vaccination by creating community awareness about benefits

#### Certification

- Group certification: to share certification costs
- Financial support & producer training are needed for pilot testing
- Inspections: Cost-benefit analysis of organic certification

#### Mutilations

- Exemption of cultural practices or Ear tags to replace traditional identification
- Increased availability of painkillers thro' veterinary infrastructure

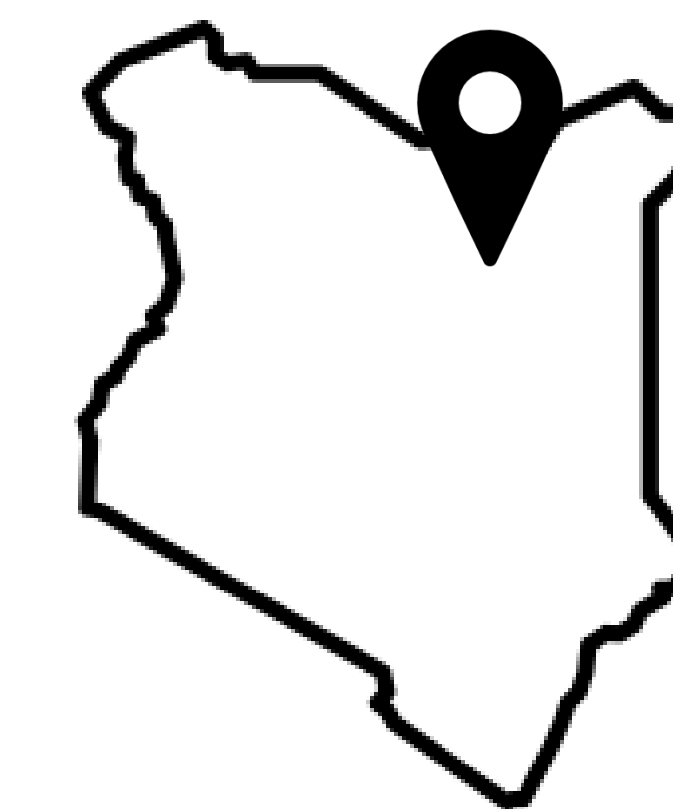
#### Traceability

- Introduction of visible ear tags with ID back-ground information filed in electronic form (previous projects: Bett et al. 2015, KLMC 2013)

#### Record keeping

- Development of innovations for record keeping by illiterate people

### Study Location



#### Laisamis Sub-County, Marsabit county in northern Kenya

- Arid landscape
- Population: predominantly Rendille pastoralists: raise livestock for livelihoods
- High illiteracy and poverty levels, poor infrastructure (roads, telecommunication, markets, water)

### Method

- Fieldwork: August to October 2019
- **Collaborative learning approach** (Restrepo et al. 2014)
- **Qualitative data collection:** 28 Focus group discussions
- 4 Pastoral community groups: Rendille, mostly women, engaged in livestock trade
- Introduction of requirements of organic standards & group certification via posters and discussion
- 2 Multi-Stakeholder meetings & 21 individual interviews



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