

Abstract

Pastoral livestock production in Kenya is subject to unpredictable rainfall and drought occurrences. These adverse climatic conditions have led to vulnerable and insecure pastoral livelihoods. Despite the potential to alleviate food insecurity of pastoral communities through continuous provision of milk and other products, the potential of camel milk is yet to be fully explored. This study was carried out to examine the contribution of camel milk to pastoral household food baskets and incomes. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect information targeting camel milk producers in Isiolo County, upper eastern region of Kenya. The findings show that camel milk contributes significantly to pastoral households. The contribution of the milk to a household food basket was found to be significantly higher ($P \leq 0.05$) during the dry season than in the wet season. Camel milk sales contributed significantly ($P \leq 0.05$) to household incomes throughout the year. These results show the role of camel milk as a complementary source of food and income for pastoral households. Therefore, interventions aimed at supporting pastoral households need to consider the promotion of camel milk production and marketing as an option for building pastoralists' resilience against unpredictable weather.