

Abstract

Livestock farmers in Baringo and Kitui counties in Kenya have complained that their goats lose their teeth with time when feeding on *Prosopis juliflora* pods and leaves. On this basis two studies were done: (i) to establish the extent of this complaint by a survey in Kwa Vonza ward in Kitui county; and (ii) determine the effects of the *Prosopis* browse on the physical characteristics of the teeth and bones in an experiment, set up in South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU).

The laboratory study revealed that *Prosopis* browse caused the teeth and bones taken from slaughtered goats to crack or break into small pieces when soaked in aqueous suspensions of the meal from *Prosopis* pods and leaves and that the effects were worse for the pods than the leaves. The farmer survey revealed that 79% of the respondents indicated that *Prosopis* plant had negative effects in mature goats, especially loss of teeth and resultant loss of body condition, which impacted negatively on the returns to the farmers. The respondents noted that *Prosopis juliflora* was a real threat to livestock production in the pasturelands and that alternative uses should be explored like generation of biofuels.