

## Abstract

Yearlong feed availability in adequate quantities and at affordable prices is a major requirement in livestock production. However, feed scarcity has continued to constrain livestock production especially during the droughts in Kenya. The Arid and Semi- Arid Lands (ASALs) are home to a wide variety of natural pastures produce large quantities of high quality feed materials. In addition, farmers in the ASALs also produce large quantities of crop residues. If properly managed, the natural pastures and crop residues can provide feed materials for yearlong livestock feeding. A team of scientists from four countries in ECA used reconnaissance and systematic surveys to identify feed plant species in the natural pastures of some selected pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. The team also gathered data on strategies used to avail feed to their livestock. The qualitative data collected was analyzed using the descriptive tool in SPSS version 12.

Some of the valued feed plant species in the natural pastures included *Cynodon plectostachyus*, *Echinochloa haploclada*, *Aristida adscensionis*, *Grewia tenax*, *Lwsonia inermis*, *Acacia tortilis* and *Prosopis juliflora*. Crop residues include maize stover, beans haulms and bananas stems and leaves. Feed conservation is not common (<25%) in most of the communities studied. The reasons for not conserving feeds included lack of skills (69%) and lack of storage facilities (21%). We conclude that there is need to identify and conserve feed species in the natural pastures and to build the capacity of pastoralists to improve feed conservation and utilization strategies for enhanced feed availability and livestock productivity in the ASALs.