

Abstract

Purpose; This study analyses factors affecting access to food for pastoralists living in Mandera County, Kenya. The County is an arid region on the North East most part of Kenya that borders Ethiopia and Somalia to the North and East respectively and face serious challenges of access to food. The community predominantly practice pastoral nomadism. Pastoralism in the Horn region presents unique challenges with accessing food and this calls for special approaches to ensure regular and sustainable access to food. **Materials and Methods;** The study employed a combination of methods that included secondary data collection from the government and other institutions in the region, literature review, use of household questionnaire, key informant interviews, focus group discussions as well as field observations. **Results and Discussions;** Food sources in Mandera were found to be based on pastoral nomadism way of life, a practice graviously affected by weather factors and therefore fragile and unreliable. Others factors affecting access to food were identified as high poverty levels, income sources, population growth, insecurity, relief food, poor infrastructure and telecommunication, limited access to credit and extension, crop production factors, food consumption preferences and low levels of education, The community has adopted a number of coping mechanisms. Some of these mechanisms target short term shocks such as prolonged droughts but have adverse effects on access to food in the long term. **Conclusions;** Factors affecting food security should be managed properly and in a sustainable way to ensure access to food is predictable and reliable. Access to food should address those fundamental factors and this should be a priority for Mandela County. This should be done through establishing strong and long term strategies for enhancing access to food.