

Abstract

Farmers in the drylands practice mixed crop and livestock production systems. Both production systems have mutual relationships and understanding of target outputs in each system is important. With increasing demand for livestock products, livestock production is expected to be the major driving enterprise during a predicted food revolution. Targeting the most valued livestock species and the premium products or services from that species will improve the farmers' interest and adoption of recommended technologies. In this cross sectional survey carried out in Kibwezi District, Kenya, this research team aimed at identifying the most valued livestock species and the premium products or services targeted. Systematic sampling method using road transects was used to select farmers to be involved in the survey. The pair wise ranking method was used in importance ranking during the survey and a focused group discussion held to discuss the survey results.

The farmers' importance ranking of the livestock species was topped by the goat followed by chicken, cattle and sheep. Draft power was ranked most important followed by beef, milk and lastly manure. To produce the top ranked product (draft power) the most valued livestock age/sex class is the entire bulls followed by the heifers, mature females, castrates and lastly the calves. Therefore, to improve livestock production in Kibwezi District, we recommend that farmers focus on improving the performance of entire bulls for draft power and mature females for milk production.