

**ASSESSING PASTORALISTS' WATER SCARCITY COPING MECHANISMS
DURING DROUGHT IN MBEERE SOUTH, EMBU COUNTY**

NAME: ELINSIA PAULINE NASUMUNI

REG. NUMBER: A106/10981/2014

SUPERVISOR: DR. MARK OTIENO

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impacts of water scarcity on the livestock production systems and the coping mechanisms adopted by pastoralists in Mbeere South, Embu County. Multiple data sources, including socioeconomic interviews with 50 households, focus group discussion, and informal interviews with pastoralists were used to capture various aspects of water scarcity and water scarcity coping mechanism. Results revealed that water scarcity events were increasingly frequent, and have negatively impacted pastoral livelihoods. In order to adapt to or cope with climatic anomalies, households are using a variety of strategies. In addition to the traditional short term coping mechanism, the long term adaptation strategy used included diversification of herd composition, livestock mobility to track forage and water resources and sending children to school for formal education as a long term investment expected to pay back through income from employment. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used, the study employed a review of relevant documents, structured questionnaires and interviews of key informants and focus groups. Sampling methods were used at the household level to determine water scarcity impacts, and also it involved laboratory work where milk samples were taken for observation. Qualitative data were coded and subjected to thematic analysis, whereas quantitative data were subjected to descriptive statistics. The impacts of water scarcity on livestock were livestock mortality, food insecurity, low livestock products, low-quality products, reduction in livestock prices.