



Future
Agricultures

Influencing policy change in pastoral areas of Kenya

Our work with the Ministry of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands

Impact Stories

This is one of a series of impact stories from the Future Agricultures Consortium.

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In 2008, the Kenyan government established a new ministry to promote development and resilience in pastoral areas. Future Agricultures played an important role, providing evidence to create a more positive narrative about the potential of pastoralism. We worked over several years with key figures in the Ministry, parliamentary groups and beyond, and brought pastoralists and officials together to discuss new approaches.

£2.7bn

GDP generated by
livestock in Arid and
Semi-Arid Lands

Background

The Ministry of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands was born out of the political compromise necessitated by the post-election violence in 2007-8. Northern Kenya and other arid lands had long felt neglected and marginalised. Before 2008, investment had been concentrated on 'high potential' areas. Northern areas were seen as 'low potential' and pastoralist livelihoods were not considered productive or capable of development.

However, academic research had begun to create a different picture of the potential of pastoralists. About £2.7bn of Kenya's GDP is generated by the livestock sector in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands.¹ Future Agricultures research particularly pointed out this economic contribution. We also showed that pastoralists had the capacity to innovate in dynamic ways, which could be supported by the right kind of investment and development approaches.



Photo: University of the
Bush. Credit: Pastoralist
Communication Initiative

Key events

2008 Ministry of Northern Areas created with a Minister from a pastoralist background, with international development NGO experience and including an experienced Adviser.

2009 Ministry working on the Vision 2030 strategy¹ and ASAL policy with technical support from IIED and RECONCILE. Height of 2008-2011 drought.

2010 'University of the Bush' organised by Pastoralists Consultants International and Future Agricultures, attended by pastoralist elders, Assistant Minister for Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands, DFID representative and others. Future Agricultures members brief Minister on research outputs. University of the Bush approach with forums of pastoralist elders used for consultations by Ministry on the new consultation. ASAL policy submitted to cabinet office.

2011 Assistant Minister of Northern Areas attends 'Future of Pastoralism' conference organised by Future Agricultures in Addis Ababa. Ministry Education Director presents plans for nomad education at same conference. A Future Agricultures member holds a meeting with the Pastoralist Parliamentary Group. National Drought Management Agency (NDMA).

2012 The Vision 2030 strategy for Northern Kenya and Arid Lands is adopted. Education Act gives nomadic children rights to education. An informal ASAL donor group is established under EU leadership. The book 'Pastoralism and Development in Africa' is published, with major contributions from Future Agricultures researchers and a foreword by the Minister.

2013 Elections and new government. The Ministry is abolished, with responsibilities passing to the Ministry of Planning and Devolution. Future Agricultures supports the ex-Minister and his Adviser to write up the policy development experience of the Ministry as part of a handover record to the new government.

2014 The National Drought Management Authority operationalises part of ASAL policy. Future Agricultures works on two co-branded policy analyses with NDMA, and we are invited to support the East African Community's programme on pastoralism.

Key contributions of Future Agricultures

The 2014 independent evaluation found that Future Agricultures had contributed to this developing story in several significant ways, including:

- Contributing to emerging 'best practice' for pastoral development.
- Convening the 'University of the Bush' and the 2011 'Future of Pastoralism' conference, which key figures in the Ministry described as 'creating the climate to enable them to make the case for change'.
- The Working Group on Pastoralism (convened by FAO), ASAL stakeholders forum and a number of NGOs providing technical input and advocacy on pastoralist issues are reported to have made use of Future Agricultures materials.
- Future Agricultures research encouraged the setting up of the Livestock Marketing Board, which is in the ASAL policy (but not yet gazetted).
- Participation by the Ministry of Northern Areas Director of Education in the 'Future of Pastoralism' Conference seems to have contributed to continuing championing of nomadic education.
- Documenting the policy development process, making it available to wider audiences and giving it additional credibility. The grant given to Future Agricultures helped to provide space for reflection and improve the quality of the outputs.

¹ <http://www.vision2030.go.ke/>

This is one of a series of impact case studies drawn from an independent evaluation of the Future Agricultures, which was carried out by Upper Quartile for the UK Department for International Development and published in 2015. Find out more at future-agricultures.org/impact