

FACT SHEET CROSS-BORDER COMMUNITY RANGELAND GOOD PRACTICES

1.0 Introduction

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member states' rangelands account for 60-70% of the total land area. They are characterized by low erratic rainfall of up to 500mm per annum; substantially below the global average of 1,385 cubic meters and lower than the minimum amount (2000 cubic meters) required to meet human needs. These rangelands are predominantly inhabited by pastoralists and agro-pastoralists that have developed several traditional strategies to control access to and manage the utilization of rangelands to adapt to harsh and variable physical environment. Their vast Indigenous Knowledge has thus contributed to their socio-ecological resilience.



2.0 Range management Practices

The community range management practices are based on community by-laws enforced by Councils of Elders who arbitrate over issues of

water use and natural resource management, migration strategies to reserved areas, land disputes, uncontrolled bush burning and tree cutting, and punish offenders. These practices are instrumental in promoting range health, sustaining peace and resource-sharing among



different pastoralist clans/societies. They have also enabled pastoralists to understand climate variability; predict it and make preparations to alleviate its effects such as moving herds to better pasture, dividing the herd and pasture conservation. The adopted range management practices can be grouped into herd and grazing management.

2.1 Herd management

This is subdivided into two: herd heterogeneity and herd splitting

2.1.1 Mixing of species

Herders keep a variety of animal species. This



ensures maximization of range utilization, efficient labour utilization and also lessens the risk of total livestock loss during disasters (drought and floods). It also contributes to reduction in susceptibility of the livestock to diseases and better use of the natural resources since different species have different feeding habits.

2.1.2 Herd splitting;

The herders split their herds into two; those that remain near homesteads and the other that feeds on pastures that are far. This promotes optimal use of resources across the landscape and prevents rangeland degradation. The animals that remain at homesteads provide food (meat, milk and blood) for women, elderly and young children who remain at home and are usually under the care of women and children.

2.2 Grazing Management

This includes planned seasonal migration, controlled stocking, reserved grazing, rangeland assessment and controlled burning.

2.2.1 Planned seasonal migration

This is the most preferred grazing management adopted by pastoral communities. It is considered a cultural asset and an effective means of rangeland management. It is a key tool in preventing and managing environmental and human induced risks like frequent prolonged dry spells, droughts, floods, conflicts, high incidence of pests and diseases. Preservation of seasonal migration requires legal recognition of existing customary tenure arrangements, especially those which provide for seasonal use of a wide variety of ecological resources.

2.2.2 Stock planning and controlled stocking

This practice involves equitable allocation of stock to specified grazing landscapes for a specified time for purposes of allowing sustained supply of pasture.

2.2.3 Rangeland assessment

This involves collection of information on numerous aspects of the grazing landscape such as pasture, water availability, pest prevalence and related social issues like diseases, security by a team of traditional range scouts for purposes of guiding the elders' councils in decision making regarding access and deployment of other practices.

2.2.4 Rotational and deferred grazing reserves.

Rotational and deferred grazing are among the drought coping rangeland management

practices by pastoral communities. These techniques are frequently used to save forage for critical periods. Accordingly, dry season pastures are deliberately not used during the wet season to enable them to regenerate for use during the dry season.

2.2.5 Burning of grazing landscapes

This is guided by systematic procedures and robust controls to keep grasslands healthy, more vigorous and productive in order to support both livestock and wildlife.

2.3 Best Practices

The IGAD member states' range users have adopted best practices including: setting bye-laws, prohibiting access to certain parts of rangelands and cutting specific trees, setting time of watering animals, transferring of indigenous knowledge to the young generation, involving both boys and girls in herding animals and adoption of planting pastures among others.

Formulation of bye-laws is the most adopted practice by the pastoral communities ($\chi^2 = 55.282$; $p = 0.000$). This is because range users have traditions, customs and cultural beliefs that function as bye-laws and these play an important role in rangeland and biodiversity conservation. Resources require some form of regulation to coordinate individuals' activities; develop rules for resource use; monitor compliance with the rules and sanction violators.

2.4 Means of transfer of practices

The pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in IGAD countries have means of transferring good practices that include; meetings, demonstration/training by extension workers, use of public media like radios and through drama and folk songs, cultural events. The most preferred means of transfer of practices is meetings presided over by elders.

Effective management of resources requires ongoing communication, sharing of information, information exchange, and building trust. There is need to support documentation and sharing of best practices among range users as Meinzen-Dick and Knox (1999) opined that indigenous knowledge, knowledge of government regulations as well as technical or scientific knowledge is required for effectiveness of the user groups.

Below are recommendations emanating from an assessment of the pastoral land use planning, available extension services system and opportunities conducted in 2022 for consideration by IGAD member states, government agencies and related stakeholders:

1. *Support documentation and sharing of Indigenous knowledge among pastoral communities*
2. *Develop appropriate frameworks that formally recognize customary systems and strengthen synergies with statutory systems*
3. *Promote socially acceptable land use planning aspects to buffer against degradation and ensure enhanced production.*
4. *Provide efficient technologies including early warning and geographic information systems to inform prompt land use planning*
5. *Promote functional participation that ensures transparency, equitable and active involvement of pastoral range communities in development planning for the success of adopted sustainable rangeland management strategies.*
6. *Support capacity building and awareness creation as key steps towards the adoption of better technologies and practices in rangeland management.*
7. *Recognize pastoralism as a legitimate and effective land use system that contributes to national economies*



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