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Technical Policy Brief/ KIEP/1

Samburu County's Untapped Gold: Unlocking the potential



Key messages

- Samburu County's economy is heavily reliant on pastoralism, with most residents depending on livestock for income and sustenance.
- The sector faces significant constraints, including inadequate infrastructure, limited market access, and technological gaps that hinder growth.
- The dairy value chain is poorly organized, relying on a single cooperative for milk collection and sales, and lacks modern cooling systems and processing facilities.
- While the beef value chain is more advanced, it still encounters challenges in slaughtering, meat inspection, and marketing that could be improved through technology.
- Opportunities exist in renewable energy and better waste management, but significant investments are needed to enhance milk cooling, meat preservation, leather industry and address environmental concerns.

Introduction

Samburu County, with its rich pastoral heritage, stands at a crossroads of opportunity and challenge. The economy is deeply rooted in livestock farming, where most residents depending on pastoralism for their livelihoods. This traditional practice not only sustains families but also serves as a critical economic engine for the region. However, despite its potential, the pastoral sector faces significant constraints that hinder its growth and productivity. A survey recently conducted by Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute revealed the gaps and challenges in the beef, dairy, and leather value chains, with an additional emphasis on animal feeds, environmental factors, renewable energy, and engineering services. This policy brief presents recommendations aimed at unlocking the county's potential by identifying avenues for innovation and investment that promote sustainable growth and empower local communities.

Methodology

The survey data involved literature reviews, structured interviews, focus group discussions, site visits, observational techniques, data analysis, and stakeholder consultations to understand and address challenges in Nyeri County's agricultural and livestock sectors

Findings

- Several projects have been initiated by the Samburu County government to address the challenges in the livestock sector, particularly in beef, dairy, and leather value chains.
- The livestock improvement center aims to enhance both beef and dairy production through selective breeding and distribution of livestock to local farmers.
- Abattoir construction in Samburu Central which will be equipped with chilling facilities and slaughtering equipment, will allow for high-quality beef production for both domestic and export markets.

- The pasture development program is part of a broader effort to improve animal nutrition and reduce livestock mortality during periods of drought.
- Dairy production in Samburu County is heavily reliant on camel and cattle farming with minimal value addition taking place. There is minimal use of modern slaughtering equipment or cold chains for beef preservation.
- Waste disposal from slaughtering activities is poorly managed, posing environmental risks. There is no structured plan for dealing with blood, offal, or other slaughterhouse waste.

Identified Gaps in Value Chains

The following challenges were identified in five value chains:

Feeds and Animal Nutrition

1.



- High costs of animal feeds
- Insufficient knowledge of feed formulation
- Limited availability of feed supplements

2.

Dairy Value Chain



- Insufficient cooling and pasteurization equipment
- Poor quality assurance and hygiene
- Limited product diversification
- Inadequate skills and knowledge in dairy processing
- Insufficient business management strategies
- Most of the roles in the value chain are dominated by women

3. Beef Value Chain



- Inadequate infrastructure for slaughter e.g. abattoir and cold storage facilities
- Most of the roles in the value chain are dominated by men
- Limited veterinary services including meat inspection
- Inadequate waste disposal practices
- Low product diversification
- Low market access
- No clear business model

4. Leather Value Chain



- Inadequate tannery infrastructure
- Limited adoption of value addition technologies
- Lack of skilled labour in leather processing
- Limited environmental management practices
- Inadequate market linkages

5 Dairy Value Chain



- Limited adoption of renewable energy
- Weak environmental management practices
- Water scarcity
- Nomadic lifestyle limiting adoption of renewable energy technologies
- Limited knowledge of opportunities in renewable energy technologies

Policy Brief Recommendations

i) Feeds and Animal Nutrition Value Chain

Promote local feed ingredient sourcing, training of feed manufacturers on cost-effective feed formulation through extension services and digital tools, and support the development of local feed supplement production and distribution networks

ii) Dairy Value Chain

Invest in affordable cooling and pasteurization equipment, improve quality assurance and hygiene practices through training, promote product diversification, provide capacity-building in dairy processing and business management, and empower women through targeted leadership and entrepreneurial development programs.

iii) Beef Value Chain

Upgrade slaughter infrastructure, establish formal meat inspection systems, expand veterinary services, implement compliant waste disposal practices, promote product diversification, improve market access through cooperatives and digital platforms, and develop clear business models while fostering gender inclusion in leadership and decision-making roles.

iv) Leather Value Chain

Invest in upgrading tannery infrastructure, promote the adoption of value addition technologies, provide training programs to build skilled labor in leather processing, implement sustainable environmental management practices, and enhance market linkages through trade partnerships and digital platforms

v) Environment and renewable energy

Promote awareness and training on renewable energy technologies, improve environmental management practices, develop water-efficient solutions, design portable and adaptable renewable energy systems for nomadic communities, and

provide incentives and education to increase adoption and understanding of renewable energy opportunities

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