

Provision of livestock feed supplements

Problem Statement

Livestock production is the main economic activity in ASAL's. 60% of the livestock population in Kenya are reared in the region, employ approximately 90% of the local population and contribute over 80% of the household cash income.

Droughts occur frequently in the region, causing significant losses of livestock and collapse of local livestock markets. This results in household food insecurity and malnutrition.

The 2016 short rains (October–November–December) delayed for two to four weeks in most counties. This was the third consecutive poor/below normal rains season between 2015 and 2016. The poor rainfall performance caused deterioration of vegetation cover, which exacerbated the negative impact of the July and October 2016 drought.

Pasture and browse conditions in most pastoral areas ranged from fair to poor and whatever little forage regenerated after the short rains was quickly depleted. Drought early warning bulletins from December 2016 painted a picture of rapid deterioration and widespread vegetation deficit in many ASAL counties.

As the above situation unfolded, migration within (in-migration) the counties to dry grazing areas was witnessed in November/December 2016. However, further deterioration of vegetation led to outward (out-migration) of livestock to neighbouring counties in search of pasture and water, leaving satellite herds behind.

The Drought Contingency Fund (DCF) specifically supports coping strategies and livelihoods of affected populations, in particular pastoralists, to protect their productive assets. Thus, one of the important drought response activities financed under the DCF during the 2016–2017 drought was provision of livestock feed supplements, especially drought pellets, to reduce mortality of animals and ensure some milk production at household level.





Top: A truck loaded with livestock feeds during official flag-off.
Above: A farmer feeds his cows on livestock supplementary feeds provided by the NDMA in Kajiado County.

The drought pellets provided by the NDMA with support of the European Union are of very good quality and are giving almost immediate results. Sheep and goats start showing improvement in body condition in less than a week

– *Chief Philip Aramait,*
Loima Subcounty, Turkana

Implementation

Provision of livestock feed supplements targeted the core breeding and milking herds that are normally left behind after migration of the other herds in search of water and pasture.

Drought pellets (range cubes/drought survival mash) and urea molasses mineral blocks (UMMB) were distributed to households left behind, mainly women, children and elders.

NDMA entered into a partnership with Kenya Defence Forces, which saw military trucks assist in distribution of livestock feeds, especially in expansive and hard-to-reach areas in ASAL counties.

Impact

- 230,671 bags of drought pellets were distributed to supplement the feeding of 1,006,437 animals (448,338 cattle and 558,099 shoats) contributed to saving livestock and ensuring some milk production (146,586 households supported).
- Livestock feed supplements in the form of compacted drought range cubes were easily transportable and more efficient in terms of increased tonnage delivered.
- The feeds supplied had an immediate impact on moribund/recumbent stock, thus saving livestock from imminent death.
- Provision of livestock feed supplements saved livestock assets estimated at KSh 1,646,648,971 (15M Euro). The supplements (drought pellets and UMMB) had an immediate impact on moribund/recumbent stock.
- Pastoralists interviewed in six counties were of the view that provision of the livestock feed supplements was the most relevant and appropriate intervention as it protected their productive assets, assuring them of their livelihoods after the drought.
- In 2016-17, livestock mortality in most ASAL counties stood at 1-30% compared to estimated peaks of 60-70% during 2009 drought.