

### **Livestock management today and in the future**

#### **Method:**

During a transect walk in Kongelai we interviewed representatives of 6 different households. We asked the representatives about their livestock management methods today and what people planned to do in the future.

#### **Results:**

- Our observations as well as the interviews have indicated some differences and tension regarding the issue of enclosure, especially in relation to livestock. As we walked through Kongelai the areas varies from open areas to temporary fencing to fixed fences but that have been intruded to completely fenced and unintruded areas. The fencing materials also varied using thorns, wood, bushes, trees, sisal, aloe, and wire, with varying intensions and results, while the aim of enclosures differed for different farmers.
- We found that in the future, more people wanted to strengthen the fences on their farms to avoid intrusion. It seems intrusions are the cause of some neighbourly quarrels as well as causes for diseases spreading for the livestock.
- With many animals moving around, there is a risk of diseases. Since many diseases spread easily it is important to prevent and treat diseases as a community. Many we talked to felt diseases were a big problem and feel a need for more expert support and knowledge about this.
- There is a worry about pasture and population growth especially together with the reoccurring problems of drought. Some respondents were considering reducing or moving their cattle to better suit the constraints of the land.
- Another alternative for many was the possibility of improving livestock to fetch better and more animal produce and prices when selling. For example, many wanted to improve from the indigenous cattle to the Sahiwal cross-breeds.
- Most people are aware that this demanded extra effort in the management for pasture and fodder production for quality and quantity. Livestock feed and water is an important key for better production.

#### **Conclusions:**

Livestock in Kongelai have an important social role. Our results suggest that livestock movement between families for example through dowry means that livestock have a role of distributing resources among families, perhaps as a form of balancing between those that have less and those that have more. This special role of livestock is something that seems to differ from the role of livestock generally in Kenya and perhaps something that needs to be thought about more.

***We are grateful the farmers who volunteered information to this study.  
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