

Feedback from students field work in the PhD course **Restoration of degraded semi-arid landscapes -Livelihoods, Livestock and Land use**

Drivers of the changing agricultural practices (crop and livestock) in Yewalateke

Yewalateke has four sub-locations and a population of more than 12 000 habitants. The season for cultivation of crops starts in March/April and finish in October/November.

The aim of this study was to identify the different drivers that may influence the changing of agricultural practices in Yewalateke location. To understand which they are and also at what extend and intensity those drivers induce changes in for instance livestock holding and crop production is a priority if we want to support and ensure that those changes benefit developing communities. It is also of importance to study which institutions have contributed to changes of agricultural practices at farm level through time but also to identify needs of institutions for challenges in the future.

The methods used to approach this study were mainly tools use frequently in participatory research. Firstly, we gather basic information from the place by talking to few key persons with good knowledge of the place. Secondly, we did our own observations by walking through out a part of Yewalateke to get an overview and identify agricultural practices at farm levels. And thirdly, we carried out farm visits to do semi-structured interviews in order to confirm previous information collected from key informants and also to fulfill knowledge gaps.

Some reasons for changes:

- Increasing population
- Reducing land sizes for grazing,
- Changes to Individual land tenure,
- High demand for milk and soft meat.
- Goats reduced as they affect trees and crops.
- Demands for school fees.
- Sell improved breeds (high live weight at slaughter, tender meat)
- Changing lifestyles
- Climate change,
- Market availability
- Institutions like KARI, Vi Agroforestry facilitating learning on new crops and livestock mgt.
- Need for soil erosion control,

Some recommendations:

- Need for education/extension on best management on e.g. Zero grazing systems
- Avoid rushed sales of livestock in January
- Enclosures need to be more solid.
- Poultry keeping is an important source of food and manure.
- Embrace more drought resistant crop types
- Community needs to embrace growing of agroforestry trees around their farms.

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

