INTRODUCTION

- Many livestock keepers in Africa are facing a highly volatile situation characterized by rapid changes in climatic conditions. But little is known about how climate interacts with other drivers of change in agricultural systems and broader development trends (Thorntorn et al., 2008). The impacts of climate change on the vulnerability of resource-poor livestock keepers need to be better understood as well as mitigation measures being undertaken by the community.
- The southern Maasai rangelands of Kenya are also experiencing effects of climate change.

Objectives

1. To identify major environmental and socio economic changes in the Southern Maasai rangelands between 1991 and 2011
2. To identify the coping strategies used by pastoralists to become resilient in the wake of climate change.

METHODOLOGY

- A cross sectional survey of 380 households, 10 focus group discussions and 12 key informant interviews were conducted in Mashuru sub county, Kajiado county.
- Data was analysed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Environmental changes
- Reduced and unreliable rainfall patterns
- Less forage and tree cover
- Dry rivers
- Emergence of dominant and invasive weeds (parthenium hysterophora) and tree species inhibiting growth of pasture (Camiphora africana- Osilalei)
- Disappearance of many tree species useful for herbal medicine

COCLUSION

- Climate change has had adverse effects on both the environment and livelihoods in Maasailand. The coping strategies adapted by the community include fodder conservation, upgrading of local cattle for milk and beef production and irrigation to produce horticulture crops

RECOMMENDATION

From our studies, the Maasais are not opposed to socio economic change as perceived by outsiders. They are naturally cautious because living in rangelands means