

Climate change drives pastoralists from pastures to deeper poverty

After more than 5,000 years of living in harmony with nature in one of Africa's harshest environments, pastoralists now face a bleak future. The lives of more than 10 million pastoralists in Kenya and the Horn of Africa hang in the balance.

In addition to the effects of political and economic marginalization, contracting rangelands, increasing competition over natural resources and the debilitating effects of recurrent droughts, pastoralists must now deal with the crippling effects of climate change.

Scientists working on a Practical Action/IDRC/DFID project in northern Kenya anticipate that global warming will result in increases in ambient temperature and the frequent occurrence of extreme climatic events such as floods and prolonged droughts.

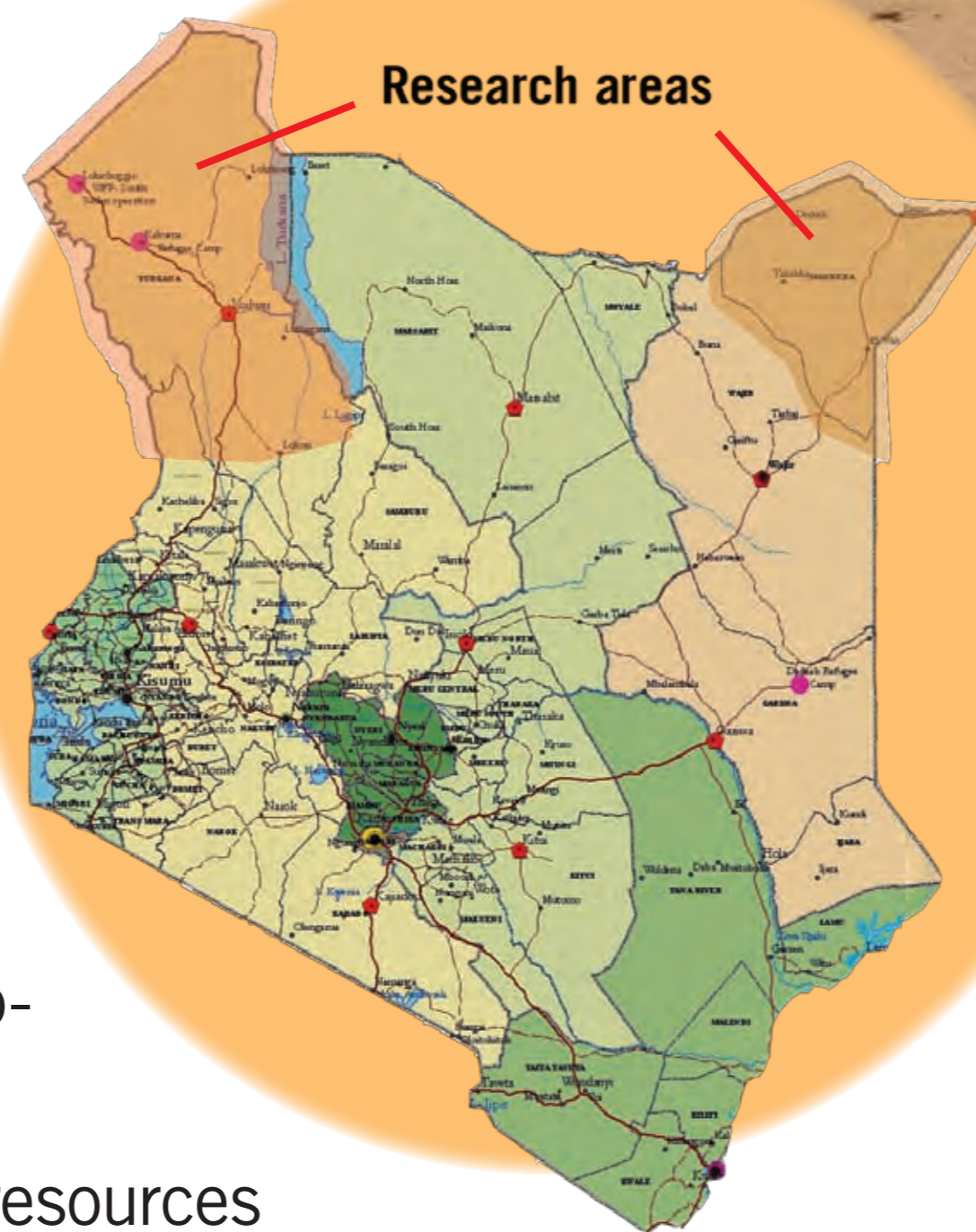
A precipitous decline in rangeland productivity is expected; disease incidence in both human and livestock populations is expected to increase; violent conflicts will escalate as pastoralists fight over diminishing resources.



What must be done?

Pastoralists must adapt to climate change through:

- Scaling up efforts to conserve the natural resource base.
- Adopting innovative marketing strategies that will enable them sell better since selling more is highly improbable.
- Modifying livestock management practices to cope with changes in range land productivity.
- Acquiring alternative livelihood skills and resources that will permit some to emigrate from pastoralism.



The international community must:

- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Support developing countries to effectively respond to climate change.

The government and society must adapt to the changing needs of pastoralists

- Improve terms of trade for livestock and dryland products.
- Adapt social services to the lifestyle of pastoralists by investing in mobile schools, health facilities, financial services, and security services.
- Guarantee secure land tenure rights and the freedom of mobility.
- Provide opportunities for livelihood diversification.
- Institute participatory approaches to decision-making, including policy formulation.

When should we start?

Yesterday was late!



Contact information:
 Practical Action Eastern Africa
 AAYMCA Building 2nd Floor,
 State Hse. Crescent, off State Hse.
 Ave.,
 P.O. Box 39493, Nairobi, Kenya
 Tel: +254 (02) 2713540
 E-mail: KE-VERT@practicalaction.or.ke

