

## A note on gender issues in draft animal technology: experiences from Nyanza, Kenya

by

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Animal traction use diffused into Nyanza Province, Kenya, in the early 1930s. Women in Nyanza Province use animal power for plowing, planting, weeding and transport. Donkeys are used mainly as pack animals. The proportion of families using the technology varies from 30% to 80% within the province. In Kuria about 90% of women handle draft animals and they are involved in all aspects of animal power use. In Luo about 40% of women use animal power. However, although Luo women handle the animals they rarely operate the implements they pull. Kisii communities use little animal power as they have small farms that can easily be tilled by hand.

The main gender-constraints to the equal adoption of animal-drawn technology are:

women do not have direct access to animal traction technology since they are in most cases reduced to assistants. Also, women's immediate problems such as transport of water, firewood and farm produce are given secondary attention by men

women have many daily activities which prevent them from participating in animal traction programmes

cultural constraints hinder the adoption of the technology by women as they are not official owners of the animals and hence all decision-making is done by men

the animal-drawn equipment that is available is designed for use by men rather than women  
women lack access to credit facilities due to lack of collateral

men are often cruel to their wives.

Many women are now becoming more involved in farming as a business, partly due to urban migration of (male) youths. In Nyanza Province many villages are now female-headed. Further studies and development of methodologies for participation of both sexes in animal traction adoption should focus on:

understanding the position of women and the status and roles of women in the particular farming community

analysis of the gender issues relating to the control of resources and access to resources  
involvement of the whole farming family in the activities of projects and programmes  
giving special attention to female-headed households in analysis, methodologies and implementation

women should participate in research and development of appropriate animal traction technology

training programmes should be gender-aware. A typical example is that in Kuria a course on animal traction was mostly attended by men even though it is not they who till the land.