

Livestock industry is one of the major contributors to the country's GDP and provides one third of the total available food in the country. Mineral deficiencies and imbalances in soils and forages can be a challenge in relation to production in grazing cattle in developing countries. A number of factors influence the availability of such minerals in terms of proper growth and development of cattle. The study was done in selected parts of Uasin Gishu and revealed severe nutritional deficiencies in soils and forages. The study also revealed a number of factors that influenced mineral concentration in the region. The study has suggested recommendations to help identify and alleviate any constraints on animal health and production.

INTRODUCTION

Livestock industry is a major contributor to Kenya's GDP and provides one third of total available food in the country (NDP, 2000). Grazing cattle in the tropics and especially in Uasin Gishu depend on a variety of plant species for their nutrient supply (MFP,2001). One area of concern is to provide balanced mineral requirements. Grazing cattle in tropics do not usually receive mineral supplement except common salt and thus depend on forages to meet their nutritional mineral requirements. The effects of mineral imbalances is manifested in such cases as low fertility, bone abnormalities, nutritional muscular dystrophy, retarded growth and maturity, hair disorder and low meat and milk production (NDP,2000). Soil – plant mineral interaction have been used to provide information on mineral interrelationships which can be used to predict mineral levels in animals. Samples such as animal blood, hair, liver and bone specimens have been used to determine mineral status in animals (Oduor, 2002; Siva, 1996; Jumba, 1989). Uasin Gishu is one region that used to produce high quantities of meat and milk products.