

## **Abstract**

The zebu cattle constitute about 80.8% of the total cattle population in Kenya but only contribute 13.2% to the annual total milk production. Conversely the exotic dairy cattle population constitutes about 19.2% of the total population and contributes 74.6% of the total milk produced per annum. The Zebu cattle are mostly found in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) which take about 80% of the total landmass. Milk production from this group remains very low and the communities that rear the cattle mostly the subsistence ones remain poor and food insecure. 1957 African farmers were allowed to use A.I to upgrade their E.A Zebu to improve production. However since then indiscriminate crossbreeding with exotic cattle either using AI or natural service has remained a continuous process of erosion of the genetic material in the Zebu population. The small East African zebu cattle germplasm must be conserved to retain the resistance to disease and draught genetic benefit. The small east African zebu remains relatively unfavourable in most of production parameters that are carefully selected for in exotic cattle breeds. The reason is that there has been very little work put on design of proper breeding schemes to upscale the productivity parameters, conduct detailed study on reproductive physiological parameters and conserve the unique germplasm of the EAzebu. Consequently, EAzebu farmers having no direction in breeding apart from crossing with exotic cattle continue to breed their animals indiscriminately giving rise to inbred smaller and low producing cattle. Time has come to focus on the EAzebu cattle taking into account their unique genetic benefit and draw a breeding programme that involves selection of the best individuals in milk production and multiply them using biotechnological techniques like embryo transfer..