

The efforts made by households in Makueni District, Kenya, to manage trees in crop and grazing lands are reviewed, using survey data from 4 villages in Wore and Kibwezi Divisions covering the period 1989-1998. The impact of external initiatives in tree seedling production and promotion over the same period is reviewed and the effect of government management of gazetted forests is examined. It appears that investments by farmers in tree management have taken place during the past 5-15 years, and that there has been a gradual and long-term shift from cutting down trees to conserving and planting them. Key constraints to tree production include: (1) low seedling survival due to drought (combined with irrigation water shortages); (2) termite and livestock damage; (3) households' poor access to markets for tree products; and (4) a lack of suitable drought tolerant varieties. A recent policy change that is shifting some of the control of the forestry sector from the government to private and community organizations is discussed. It is concluded that deforestation is going on alongside afforestation, and that farmers' investments in tree planting and management of trees on grazing lands are an indication that farmers value and invest in trees, even in low rainfall areas. From author's summary. KEYWORDS: TROPAG | trees | management | deforestation | afforestation | investment | constraints | decentralization | KENYA | Eastern Province | Makueni