## Mavens And Their Potential Role In The Diffusion Of Marketing Information

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Mailu S.K<sup>1</sup>. Rutto J.K<sup>2</sup> and Njuguna EM<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>KARI Naivasha, O. Box 25, 20177 Naivasha

<sup>2</sup>Moi University, School of Business and Economics, P.O. Box 3900, Eldoret

\* Corresponding author: kmailu@gmail.com

## Abstract:

Small ruminants play an important social and economic role in the lives of many pastoralists who inhabit many parts of Northern Kenya. The area is poorly served by modern communication services although things are slowly changing as mobile telephone services are rolled into these areas. This possibility will likewise improve the chances of providing this population with up-to-date market intelligence which in turn should improve the returns from the sale of livestock in distant markets. To operationalise this, the use of the internet as well as SMS delivered market intelligence through the National Livestock Marketing Information System (NLMIS) was launched in 2007.

As a novel idea in the region, it was expected that information about its existence would pass through a series of intermediaries such as mavens. Based on a study of 250 pastoral households, this paper attempts to explore the concepts of mavens, opinion leadership and innovativeness in the marketing of small ruminants from the larger Marsabit and Isiolo Districts of Eastern Province, Kenya. It concludes that though the NLMIS is still relatively unknown, the presence of market mavens who in this data are indistinguishable from opinion leaders could catalyze the spread and eventual use of the system.

**Keywords: Market mavens, Opinion leaders, Innovativeness**