

ditions set by the World Bank, the IMF, and other multilateral lenders have forced the Zambian government to reduce subsidies for the poor and freeze employment and wages, increasing malnutrition, reducing life expectancy, and creating a vicious circle of increased poverty and debt.

Contributions by Omole, Mulinge, Kaya, and Osei-Hwedie reinforce the introduction, elaborating on the cover's statement that the book "centres on the welfare implications of indebtedness, especially as these affect the poor and the most vulnerable in society." However, the other chapters fail to link poverty specifically to debt. Case studies analyze instead how poverty can be alleviated by foreign aid, employment, a solution to the HIV/AIDS crisis, community projects, social inclusion, female microfinance and empowerment, education, information technology, landmine clearance, orphan care, and other social policies.

E. Wayne Nafziger
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

Mitiku Haile, Diress Tsegaye, and Tegegne Teka, eds. *Research and Development on Dryland Husbandry in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern African (OSSREA), 2004. Distributed by African Books Collective Ltd., Unit 13 Kings Meadow, Ferry Hinksey Rd., Oxford OX2 0DP. viii + 174 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. \$19.95. Paper.

Elly N. Sabiiti and Tegegne Teka, eds. *Dryland Husbandry in Uganda: Community Participation and Development*. Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 2004. Distributed by African Books Collective Ltd. vii + 98 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. \$19.95. Paper.

Nashon K. R. Musimba, et al. *Dryland Husbandry for Sustainable Development in the Southern Rangelands of Kenya*. Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 2004. Distributed by African Books Collective Ltd. x + 117 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. \$19.95. Paper.

Muna M. M. Ahmed, Mohamed Fadl Elmoula Idris, and Tegegne Teka, eds. *Dryland Husbandry in the Sudan: Grassroots Experience and Development*. Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 2004. Distributed by African Books Collective Ltd. xii + 109 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. \$19.95. Paper.

These four volumes, published by the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern African (OSSREA) and distributed by the African Books Collective, describe four dryland husbandry projects (DHP) that ran in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda from about 1995 to 2003. Essentially they are reports written by the professionals who designed, implemented, and evaluated the projects in the respective countries. Each volume contains a chapter that discusses organization and

objectives—economic development, management of dryland ecology, improving quality of life of pastoralists—and situates these within current debates on development concepts and approaches. Then follow a number of background chapters documenting the demographic, ecological, and agricultural context of the particular regions (but with no discussion of culture or social structure of the pastoralist groups involved). These are followed by chapters reporting on project activities (e.g., reseeded of rangelands, water harvesting, or gender projects) and/or technical chapters discussing different aspects of the livestock husbandry system (e.g., rangeland conditions, water resource potential). All volumes have numerous color pictures, figures, graphs, and tables.

The four projects used a similar design, which was then adapted to local circumstances. The approach is described as grassroots, bottom-up, participatory, or action-research, although the main actors seem to be extension agents, local government officials, and other experts rather than pastoralists and agropastoralists themselves. This is evident in the descriptions of three key activities of the projects—water harvesting, range improvement, and training of paravets—which were remarkably similar in design across the different national and ecological contexts (save for details such as which indigenous grasses were used for reseeded pastures). Other common themes in the projects were gender and indigenous knowledge. All projects documented women's role in the local economy and subsequently developed activities that were specifically targeted at women. The projects also examined indigenous knowledge of animal diseases and/or plants, although it is unclear how the knowledge was then integrated into other project activities. Some individual DHP projects had their own additional focus. The Uganda volume, for example, contains a chapter on marketing problems, which includes an interesting discussion of the transformation from a nomadic to an agropastoral system involving processes of intensification, integration, and privatization. The quality of the chapters in the books is uneven. Some are well written and contain clear and useful discussions of project activities. Others consist primarily of lists, end abruptly, or use awkward terms and unclear definitions (e.g., "bushy farms," which are defined as "households with less than 25% of the grazing land cleared" [Sabiiti & Teka, 39]).

The big question is—who will find these volumes interesting? The editors never make clear for whom they are intended. Although one of the prefaces hints at national audiences in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda, it does not indicate whether these would consist of pastoralists, development specialists, or scholars. I doubt the volumes will prove very useful for scholars of pastoral systems or development, since the technical contributions are weak. In part this is due to the design of action research, which does not lend itself well to the production of scholarly knowledge. The authors of the Kenya volume note, for example, that because of the grassroots nature of the project, "there was little opportunity to produce

academic or technical material for publication" (107). Thus the volumes remain primarily reports of project activities and experiences.

I suspect that the volumes will not be useful for practitioners either; the descriptions of the project activities are too brief and too general to be of real value. This is unfortunate, since some of the small-scale projects in rangeland improvement and water harvesting may represent promising developments. For example, DHP-Kenya provisioned small dams and water holes that last only a short time during the dry season to avoid overgrazing caused by permanent water in drylands. The DHP project in Uganda conducted rangeland improvement trials with few external inputs because these would not be economically sustainable. While the projects' small scale and grassroots approach ensured that fewer mistakes were made and their effects were not as disastrous as those of earlier top-down projects in pastoral development, in the end it remains unclear what was achieved. The editors of all the volumes *claim* success, even when there were few tangible results, but they present no evidence that allows readers to determine *how* successful they were.

Overall, I think it would have been better had the editors at the OSS-REA synthesized the results and lessons from the four DHP projects in a single volume, decided on practitioners as the audience, and focused their discussion on the lessons for future projects in pastoral development.

Mark Moritz
Western Oregon University
Monmouth, Oregon

Noah Zerbe. *Agricultural Biotechnology Reconsidered: Western Narratives and African Alternatives*. Trenton, N.J.: African World Press, 2005. x + 238 pp. Graphs. Bibliography. Index. \$29.95. Paper.

Ostensibly, this is a book focusing on agricultural biotechnology in Zimbabwe. In many respects, however, it is two books in one. The author is supremely competent to write the one on the colonial and postcolonial injustices that Zimbabwe has suffered, but for the other part—on agricultural biotechnology—he is not. His chapter on Zimbabwe's colonial inheritance is an absolute gem, succinct and to the point. This inheritance down through and including the Lancaster House Agreement is replete with injustices to the indigenous African population, and Noah Zerbe does a magnificent job of identifying and analyzing them.

Though opposed to agricultural biotechnology or biotechnology in general, he unexpectedly comes out in favor of an "appropriate" biotechnology. Zerbe seems not to know that there has been a graduate program in biotechnology at the University of Zimbabwe since 1991. Its graduates have gone on to prestigious molecular biology programs in South Africa or around the world for their Ph.D.s, and many have returned to Zimbabwe