PRINT: ISSN 0970-9274 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6608
JOURNAL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY
International Interdisciplinary Journal of Man-Environment Relationship

J Hum Ecol, 61(1-3): 31-43 (2018)
DOI: 10.31901/24566608.2018/61.1-3.04

Implications of Livelihood Strategies on Household Dietary Diversity in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa

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KEYWORDS Dietary Diversity. Food Insecurity. Integrated Farming Systems. Malnutrition. Non-agricultural Activities

ABSTRACT Two hundred (200) households were randomly selected in Tsolwani and Nkonkobe Local Municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa to determine their dietary diversity using the Household Dietary Diversity Indicator Guide. The highest proportion of respondents (60%) practised agriculture, with thirty-one percent specialising in livestock production, twenty-one percent in both crop and livestock, and eight percent in crop production only. The mean frequency of meals consumed daily by the participants was significantly higher for households practising mixed farming systems ($p<0.05$). The Household Dietary Diversity Scores (HDDS) for participants was 5.16. The higher the score, the more a household is food secure in terms of a balanced diet. HDDS was significantly higher for farmers practising integrated farming (5.97±2.416), than households practising non-agricultural activities as the main livelihood strategy (4.65±1.919) ($p<0.05$). Mixed farming systems should therefore be prioritised if South Africa is to reduce the growing incidences of malnutrition.