

# The Rangelands

COLLECTED PHOTOGRAPHY *from*  
*the* PASTRES RESEARCH PROGRAMME



EDITED *by* ROOPA GOGINENI

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This photography book is part of the PASTRES (Pastoralism, Uncertainty, Resilience: Global Lessons from the Margins) project, [pastres.org](http://pastres.org), cohosted by the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex and the European University Institute in Florence. The project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 740342). This publication is in support of the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

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## INTRODUCTION



Pastoralists in the public imagination have long been flattened, rendered as primitive and stuck in time; at once romanticised and vilified. Since its emergence, photography served to reinforce these notions. Cameras, in the hands of elite outsiders, were treated as objective tools of documentation. The images they produced circulated in magazines, films, text books and postcards, cementing an essentialised vision of pastoralism that continues to shape environmental and development policy debates.

In reality, pastoralists are highly adaptable and defy easy categorisation, inhabiting rangelands that cover more than half the land on Earth. This photo book complicates the dominant visual narrative by offering many views of pastoralism in practice. The photographs emerged from the PASTRES programme (Pastoralism, Uncertainty, Resilience: Global Lessons from the Margins, [pastres.org](http://pastres.org)). Doctoral research centred on six case studies (Isiolo in Kenya, Amdo Tibet in China, Sardinia in Italy, Gujarat in India, Borana in Ethiopia, and Tataouine in Tunisia) while post-doctoral and affiliate researchers carried out complementary work across an even wider array of sites. Findings from these diverse studies are discussed in the open access book *Pastoralism, Uncertainty and Development* (2023).

PASTRES researchers used photography as a methodological tool, amassing tens of thousands of visual records over season and years. Their approaches varied. Many practised documentary photography throughout their fieldwork. Some carried out participatory photovoice

projects, inviting pastoralists to make photographs as a means of surfacing embedded knowledge and experience. Others engaged visual archives to investigate changes over time, or examined modes of self-representation through photography published on social media. Each approach carefully considered the circumstances by which images were produced and interpreted. The resulting photo narratives were shared across communities, in mobile exhibitions, printed newspapers and digital formats. An online exhibition can be viewed at [seeingpastoralism.org](http://seeingpastoralism.org).

The images that follow are but a small sample from this vast archive, a collection of moments that suggest the expansiveness of the pastoralist experience on five continents. Amongst the herders, rangelands, flocks and dwellings, certain patterns appear. We see people living in close relation to land and animals. Facing uncertainty, they integrate old ways of knowing and adapting to make use of variability. Far from 'undeveloped,' they offer prescient lessons for all of us in a turbulent world.





1. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2. Amdo Tibet, China
3. Borana, Ethiopia
4. Brighton, UK
5. Brussels, Belgium
6. Glasgow, Scotland, UK
7. Isiolo, Kenya
8. Kachchh, Gujarat, India
9. Karamoja, Uganda
10. Matabeleland, Zimbabwe
11. Mauritania
12. Mixteca Alta, Oaxaca, Mexico
13. Northeastern Turkey
14. Sardinia, Italy
15. Sikkim, India
16. Southern Andean Peru
17. Tataouine, Southern Tunisia
18. Wales, UK

*PHOTOGRAPH LOCATIONS*









































































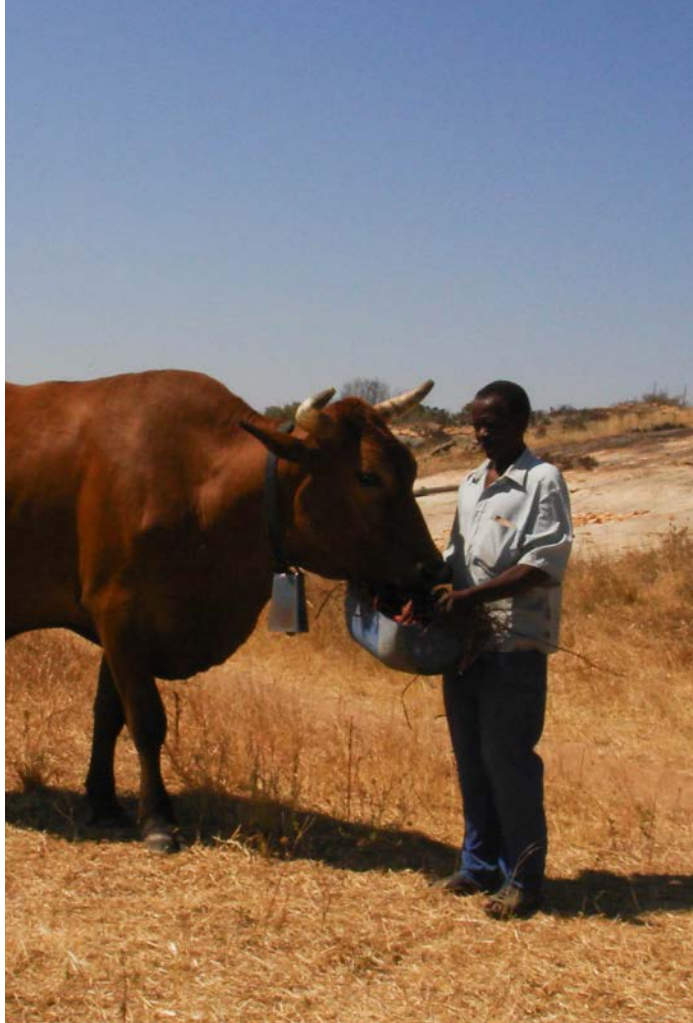




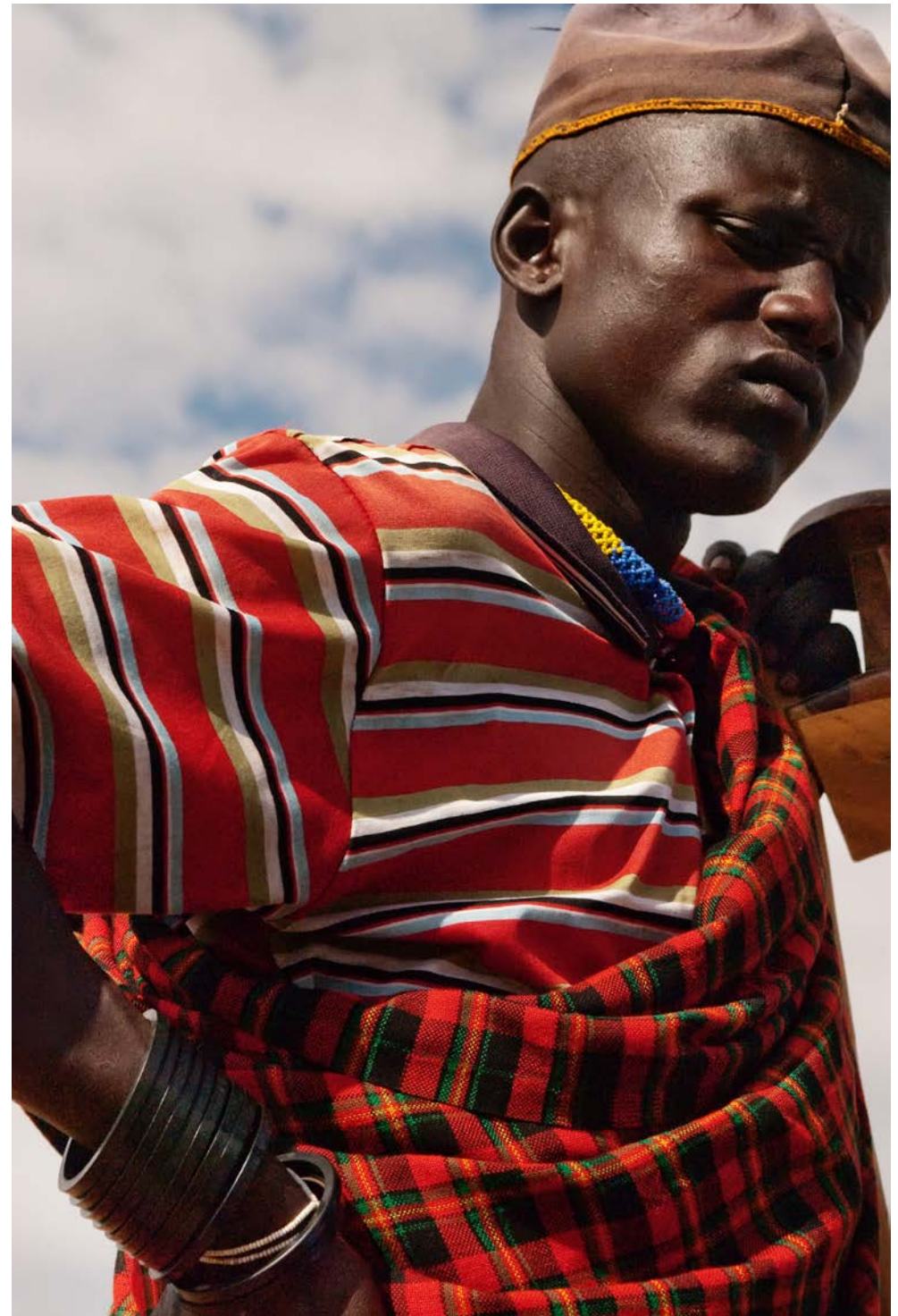






















































## CAPTIONS *and* CREDITS

- (cover) Pasture in Golok, Amdo Tibet. Credit: Palden Tsering
- 2 Prints from the inaugural PASTRES exhibition in Sardinia in September 2021. Credit: Roopa Gogineni
- 8 The cerros, the hills of Mixteca Alta in Oaxaca state, Mexico, are composed of *selva baja* (dry tropical forest) and *matorral* (shrublands). Pastoralists guide their animals up and down the hills, following different routes every day, adjusted on the go, to reach different water points and maintain a varied diet of pasture, shrubs, and leaves for the animals. Credit: Greta Semplici
- 10 The *jessours* represent a persistent technology essential for the pastoral economy. These stone walls, previously built and maintained by hand, act as water and sediment catchment systems. As they are distributed in the valleys of the mountainous region of southern Tunisia, they ensure that part of the runoff and fine sediments are retained, while the rest passes to other *jessours* located downstream. By spatially and temporally distributing water, this system not only allows the cultivation of olives and dates, but also provides good pasture for livestock throughout the mountainous region, extending the grazing season. Credit: Linda Pappagallo
- 12 The pastoral systems of the Andean south of Peru, in the regions of Puno and Cusco, are ancestral production systems which have developed in the rangelands of the *puna*, the high mountains. They are managed by indigenous pastoralists who specialise in breeding mainly alpacas, as well as some llamas and sheep. These socio-ecological systems have developed in very challenging natural conditions at high altitude (4000-5000 metres), which are intensely cold and dry. Credit: Greta Semplici
- 14 Duav is a *yayla* (high altitude pasture) within the administrative borders of Güroymak/Norşin, Bitlis in eastern Turkey. *Du* means two and *av* means water in Kurdish; Duav, as its meaning implies, is situated near two beautiful waterfalls. Every year in the last 75 years, the same Kurdish pastoralist community that belongs to the Mamediyen Ashiret (tribe) travels from Siirt (Sütlüce/Soran) to Duav pastures. They usually arrive by mid-May and leave around mid-October. Credit: Fatih Tatari
- 16 *Goath*, huts of the Dokpa herders in the rangelands of Northern Sikkim, India. Credit: Rashmi Singh
- 18 Kokonor is a sacred lake for Tibetan and Mongolian pastoralists who have lived around it for hundreds of years. According to the pastoralists from Saga village, the sacred lake started to expand in 2016. Many consider the expansion as a blessing, but others are suffering from the loss of winter pasture and their winter homes. The Chinese government is developing the area as a major touristic destination and establishing a national park around the lake. Credit: Palden Tsering
- 20 Mountain pastures of Sardinian pastoralists. Credit: Giulia Simula
- 22 Pastoralists drive their herds from Moliti well watering point near Isiolo, Kenya. Credit: Ian Scoones
- 24 Luis Copari is an alpaca and llama herder from the Apopata community in the south of the Puno region of Peru. He lives in the high Andean plateaux, with his herd made of alpacas and llamas. The *puna* pastoralists raise the alpacas with great affection, as if they were part of their family. It's as if they were fulfilling the task entrusted to them by the gods to look after the alpacas because if they did not do so, misfortune would befall them. According to the legend of the *paqarina*, if the alpacas disappear from the face of the earth, so does life. Credit: Greta Semplici
- 26 A venerated sheep statue at the temple of pastoral saint Balumama, in Kohlapur, Maharashtra. Credit: Natasha Maru
- 27 Given the desire to keep up with the times, many Rabari are shifting to the use of tractors to move camp rather than camels. The tractors allow ease of movement and a sense of incorporation into modern, mechanised, fast-paced socio-economic milieu. Credit: Natasha Maru
- 28 Victoria and Leonel, pastoralists of Mixteca Alta in Oaxaca state, Mexico, move through grazing itineraries that are always becoming. The observation of the pasture is continuous. Credit: Greta Semplici
- 29 Victoria and Leonel prepare tortillas for dinner. Victoria used to live in the city, but always dreamed of *el campo* (the countryside). "Here there is fresh air, we eat healthily, we breathe healthily, we stay healthy, far from the pollution of the town." She joined Leonel, who is from the hills, to care for his family's goats. Credit: Greta Semplici
- 30 Since the 1960s Douiret has represented resilience, with its billboard imagery of the exotic desert and the troglodytic abodes. The original town, 'old-Douiret', is a *ksour* (fortified settlement) perched on the sides of the Demmer mountains. Credit: Linda Pappagallo
- 31 The *jezz*, or sheep shearing season, marks the beginning and the end of the pastoral year in the southern regions of Tunisia. Extended family members of the various *arch* (tribes) meet in celebration, to help with the shearing of the community members' stock. This reciprocal, non-monetary form of aid is called *twiza* in Amazigh. It is an informal system that cuts across family ties



- and social status. *Twiza* is practised in ceremonies (marriage and funerals), construction (upkeep of the troglodytic homes), agriculture (building of various barriers to manage water, olive picking) and livestock-rearing (shearing). Today however, emigration and the scattering of networks is slowly resulting in the substitution of reciprocal aid for waged labour. Sheep shearing, for example, no longer maintains the same quality of celebration and *twiza* that it once did. Credit: Linda Pappagallo
- 32 A flock of sheep feed at a trough in southern Tunisia. Credit: Linda Pappagallo
- 33 Pastoralist Dida Golo guides his herds in search of water in southern Ethiopia. Credit: Dida Golo
- 34 A meagre harvest in the town of Moroto in northern Uganda. Despite all the support the community received from both international and local NGOs to produce crops, the chances to get a good harvest are minimal in Karamoja. Credit: Matteo Caravani
- 35 In Gomole, Borana, the practice of exchanging pasturelands, permanently or temporarily, for farmlands can be seen in homes. Attire and utensils once linked to livestock rearing must be moved to accommodate the new entrants. Credit: Masresha Taye
- 36 Caterpillar fungus harvest. Many pastoralists blame the rocketing price of the caterpillar fungus (a medicinal product) for the decline in livestock in Lun Mo Chee, especially for the disappearance of sheep. Caterpillar fungus harvesting is now one of the most important non-herding pastoral activities each year. The harvest lasts a total of 45 days from early May to mid-June and the price of the caterpillar fungus determines family incomes, investments in livestock (animal, forage, land leasing and so on), bank loans and other expenditures. Credit: Palden Tsering
- 37 See above.
- 38 Chairman Mao and a ceremonial scarf in a new resettlement village in Kokonor, Amdo Tibet. Credit: Palden Tsering
- 39 Racing horses are loaded onto a truck before a race in Golok, Amdo Tibet. Credit: Palden Tsering
- 40 A pastoralist in Sardinia shares old photos from a lunch shared after sheep-shearing. Credit: Giulia Simula
- 41 Shearing is a slowly disappearing collective event. Friends, family and pastoralist colleagues are invited to help. Young people tie the sheep so they are ready to be sheared and are also in charge of collecting the wool. Adult pastoralists shear for four to five hours in a row for two or three days. After shearing everyone enjoys a nice lunch and spends time together. Credit: Giulia Simula.
- 42 The pastoral systems of Andean Peru are affected by the absence of generational turnover. Previously the nuclear and extended family was in charge of pastoral systems and there was a division of labour. Now most herders are elderly, either in couples or single men and women, and the young have migrated to other parts of the country or the region. There are far fewer young people in the area than in 2010, when the average age was 63; in 2023 the average will approach 70. Credit: Greta Semplici
- 43 Making Bamako a new home. A man sips tea outside of his brother's shop in the peripheral neighbourhood of Sirakoro, where he recently arrived to help his brother. Profits from the shop are sent to their family in the north of Mali. Mali, February 2019. Credit: Giulia Gonzales
- 44 Documenting their lives through a photovoice exercise, Rabari pastoralists show various forms, modes and moods of mobility. Hemrajbhai Rabari travels from camp to camp on his motorcycle in search of a new camel to carry his family's load while on the move. Credit: Hemrajbhai Rabari
- 45 Vibho Rabari shares various moments of their migration journey. This includes an image of his brother shepherding their flock across the Surajbari bridge, the main connection between Kachchh and mainland Gujarat, and the new tractor that replaces their camel for carrying their camp. Credit: Vibho Rabari
- 46 'Bofa dheedhiitti, buutii afaan buune.' When we attempted to flee from a *bofa* snake (less deadly), we were met with a *butti* (the most poisonous snake). It is believed that rain follows locusts. Both events occurred in 2020: modest rains at the start of the long rain season (March), which increased following the arrival of a tiny swarm of locusts. However, this provided an ideal environment for locusts to multiply, and they wrought havoc on newly planted crops and fresh grassland. Pastoralists reoriented their strategy to deal with the situation, but mobility - a pastoral coping strategy - was halted by the regional and federal governments to contain the spread of COVID-19. These combinations of shocks devastated many pastoralists in Borana. Credit: Masresha Taye
- 48 An agro-pastoralist in a smallholder resettlement scheme in Matobo district, Zimbabwe, feeding one of his oxen with sweet potatoes sprinkled with salt during the 2017 dry season. He does this often to keep his draught animals in good shape ahead of the rainy season. Credit: Tapiwa Chatikobo
- 49 Since there are no more sheep in Lun Mo Chee village, local pastoralists treat the yak as the most treasured animal. Yaks are widely used for many occasions. For instance, during the annual 'Dre Mo Beauty Contest,' female yaks compete for the championship and a cash prize. Credit: Palden Tsering



- 50 Vibhabhai Rabari constantly assimilates information to decide where and when to bring his animals. Here he is the evening before crossing over from Kachchh to central Gujarat via the Surajbari bridge, the single conduit between the two regions. Credit: Nipun Prabhakar
- 51 Karamojong Pastoralist photographed in 2011 in Nakapiripirit District, Karamoja region, Uganda. Credit: Matteo Caravani
- 52 The pastoral camp is at the heart of Rabari mobility. The camp is their home while on the move, but it also provides a sense of being 'at home in movement'. The camp holds their material possessions and offers a glimpse into their daily private lives. Credit: Natasha Maru
- 54 Borana pastoralists in southern Ethiopia brought local materials to build a retirement house for an older adult. The retirement age, locally termed *Gadamodji*, happens when a person reaches the age of 80. After living a single day in his new home, the elder died, and those same members of the community built his burial ground. Obda, 52, who took the two pictures, explains, "We know death is certain, but the call [when] is unknown, so we keep making plans and executing them." Credit: Obda
- 55 Made of sheet metal and wooden boards, the majada, called majada caballo ("probably because once there were many horses", suggests Leonel), is one of two homes that Victoria and Leonel move between, like other pastoralists in the hills of the Mixteca Alta in Oaxaca state, Mexico. Credit: Greta Semplici
- 56 One of the last few sheep flocks of the Eastern Indian Himalayan region of Sikkim. Credit: Rashmi Singh
- 58 In Amdo Tibet, herders traditionally set up the black tents on the summer pasture. It is the symbol of the pastoralists, it is windproof, it is warm, and it is moveable. However, with rapid urbanisation, commercialisation, and with state investment in infrastructure development, black tents are now rarely seen. During the annual 'yak beauty contest,' organisers recruit seniors from the village to set up a tent for the occasion. As Tub, one of the organisers said, "this is a great opportunity for the kids to see the black tent because this is where their ancestors lived." Credit: Palden Tsering
- 59 See above.
- 60 Hundreds of caves and troglodytic homes are hidden along the canyons of Douiret in southern Tunisia. In front of the caves, adobe edifices three storeys high protect what were once collective family granaries (*gasr*). Credit: Linda Pappagallo
- 62 Traditional homes of Borana pastoralists in Northern Kenya documented by Swedish anthropologist Gudrun Dahl during her fieldwork in the 1970s. Credit: Gudrun Dahl
- 63 "When it rains, there is no protection because there is no longer construction of 'gose' (temporary structure for herders) as before, we just make small plastic 'qoqob' (enclosure/shelter), which does not prevent against the wild animals and the rain. I personally don't have the energy to build a gose for myself." - Amina, age 70, Bibi. Credit: Tahira Shariff
- 64 Resting at the periphery of Nouakchott. A young man takes a break from working as a contractual herder in the hinterlands of Mauritania. He stays at the house of a cousin in the Mauritanian capital, looking for urban employment. Mauritania, November 2023. Credit: Giulia Gonzales
- 65 A pastoralist in Kokonor, Amdo Tibet, gazes at his former pasture, now lost under an expanding lake. Credit: Palden Tsering
- 66 (clockwise, from left)  
Researcher Tahira Shariff interviews a pastoralist at a well in Northern Kenya. Credit: Ahmed Wako  
Researcher Linda Pappagallo in southern Tunisia. Credit: Linda Pappagallo  
PASTRES researchers pile into a Land Rover in Wales. Credit: Palden Tsering  
Researcher Natasha Maru hitchhikes to a pastoral camp. Credit: Natasha Maru
- 67 (above) PASTRES researchers visit a shepherd in the mountains of Sardinia where diminished pastoralist presence is linked to an uptick in wildfires. Credit: Roopa Gogineni  
(below) Researcher Palden Tsering conducts an interview in Kokonor, Amdo Tibet. Credit: Tsebo
- 68 (clockwise, from left)  
Researcher Palden Tsering exhibits photographs and narratives emerging from the photovoice workshops in Golok, Amdo Tibet. Credit: Palden Tsering  
Researcher Natasha Maru and photographer Nipun Prabhakar hold a photo voice workshop with Rabari pastoralists. Photographs from other PASTRES sites were used as examples. Credit: Nipun Prabhakar  
'An Uncertain World' exhibition at ONCA Gallery in Brighton as part of the Festival of Social Science. Credit: Hana Mason
- 69 (above) Pastoralists look through photo newspapers at the exhibition launch in Sardinia. Credit: Roopa Gogineni  
(below) Tibetan language newspapers distributed at a horse festival. Credit: Palden Tsering



70 (above) In Brussels, the 'Seeing Pastoralism' exhibition was held alongside the Pastoralist Film Festival, a collaboration between PASTRES, CELEP (Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism), and VSF Belgium (Vétérinaires Sans Frontières). Credit: Roopa Gogineni  
(below) 'Seeing Pastoralism' exhibition at COP26 in Glasgow. Credit: Roopa Gogineni

71 (clockwise, from left)  
The 'Seeing Pastoralism' exhibition opened at a pastoralist gathering in Sardinia. Newspapers were hung from trees on yarn spun from Sardinian wool. Credit: Roopa Gogineni  
The photo newspaper from Sardinia is shared alongside samples of pecorino cheese at a workshop on pastoralism in Addis Ababa. Credit: Roopa Gogineni  
Oromo language newspapers read at a homestead in Southern Ethiopia. Credit: Masresha Taye







