

Research Application Summary

Information access and preference for delivery pathways by peri-urban and rural smallholder dairy farmers in Central Kenya

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Abstract

This study investigated access to information and preferences in delivery pathways for smallholder dairy farmers in two divisions in Central Kenya. The study used a cross-sectional survey design using systematic sampling procedure where 345 respondents provided their information sources, pathways preferred and gave reasons for most preferred pathways. Interviews were conducted involving seven information providers to establish constraints and gaps in information delivery. Data are being analysed using descriptive statistics, pair-wise ranking and aggregate scores subjected to logistic regression to explain the factors influencing preference of information pathways. Preliminary results show preference for milk co-operative societies as the main information provider for peri-urban smallholder dairy farmers. Local radio FM stations and Artificial Insemination providers were the more important information providers in rural smallholder dairy farming. Direct contact was the most preferred information pathway in both peri-urban and rural smallholder dairy farming.

Key words: Kenya, information pathway, information provider, smallholder dairy

Résumé

Cette étude a porté sur l'accès à l'information et aux préférences dans les voies de diffusion pour les petits producteurs laitiers dans les deux divisions au Kenya Central. L'étude a utilisé une conception de l'enquête transversale en se servant de la procédure d'échantillonnage systématique où les 345 répondants ont fourni leurs sources d'information, les voies privilégiées et ont donné les raisons pour la plupart des voies privilégiées. Les entrevues ont été menées concernant sept fournisseurs d'information permettant d'établir les contraintes et les lacunes dans la livraison de l'information. Les données sont analysées à l'aide de statistiques descriptives, de classement par paires et de classement global soumis à la régression logistique pour expliquer les facteurs qui influencent la préférence des voies d'information. Les résultats préliminaires montrent une

préférence pour les sociétés coopérative laitière en tant que fournisseur d'information principale pour les petits producteurs laitiers de la périphérie urbaine. Les stations locales de radio FM et les fournisseurs d'insémination artificielle ont été les plus importants fournisseurs d'information dans l'agriculture des petits exploitants laitiers en milieu rural. Le contact direct a été la voie la plus préférée de l'information dans l'agriculture périurbaine et rurale des petits producteurs laitiers.

Mots clés: Kenya, voie de l'information, fournisseur d'information, petites laiteries

Background

The main service delivery systems to the agricultural sector include technology generation by research, technology transfer (extension), facilitating access to credit and inputs, and development of markets (GoK, 2005). Under government extension, several methods have been employed in dissemination of technical information (Wambugu, 2000). These include farmers' workshops, field days, tours, barazas and farm demonstrations. However, milk production in smallholder farms is low averaging 7kg/cow/day, far below the expected potential of 15-20kg/cow.day. There is need to enhance information delivery to smallholder dairy farmers in rural and peri-urban areas to produce sufficient milk whose quality meets local and international market standards both during the wet and dry seasons.

Literature Summary

Ballantyne (2007) has shown that agricultural development depends, to a great extent, on how successfully knowledge is generated, shared and applied. For instance, information on credit access has been shown to play a role in adoption of dairy cattle technology in the Kenyan highlands (Baltenweck and Staal, 2000). In a study of dairy adoption in western Kenya, Makokha *et al.* (2004) reported that access to technologies, information and households' priorities were the key factors influencing dairy adoption. A well developed information pathway that identifies who needs what information, who can supply the information, what format and delivery method will allow knowledge providers and consumers to communicate and share information for enhance productivity (Winrock, 2003).

Study Description

This study was conducted in South Kinangop and Limuru Divisions in Nyandarua South and Kiambu West Districts respectively in central Kenya. South Kinangop covers an area of 348.1 km². It has three locations and 13 sub-locations (District

Commissioner's office, Nyandarua South, 2008). South Kinangop Division is located more than 50 km (based on the Kenya Highlands Road Network, 2000) from the main Nairobi milk market, relies principally on agriculture for livelihood and dairy farming is a major enterprise. Limuru Division covers 155.5 km², has 12 locations (Kiambu District Development Plan 2005-2010). Limuru is within 50 km radius of the main Nairobi milk market, accessible, has high agricultural potential, most farmers (90%) are smallholders (Republic of Kenya, 2002) and agricultural production more intensive.

Research Application

Preliminary results show that farmers in peri-urban areas rely on milk co-operative societies, government extension and local language radio FM stations for dairy information. In rural areas, farmers rely more on local language FM stations. Other information providers include private artificial insemination providers, agricultural training centres, agrovets, and progressive farmers.

Direct contact was the most preferred pathway in both peri-urban and rural smallholder farming systems. Farmers attributed this choice to provision of dialogue and demonstration.

The findings of this study will be useful in targeting of information to improve efficiency in information dissemination, enhance production and improve dairy household incomes.

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