

Veterinary Service Delivery in the Pastoral Regions, the Case of Baringo County, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

Baringo County falls largely in the categories of arid, semi-arid lands, receiving an average annual rainfall of 600mm. The communities are mainly pastoralists, keeping cattle, sheep, goats, camels and donkeys.

It is recognized that livestock productivity is generally low due to among other factors, poor veterinary service delivery due to inadequate numbers of veterinary staff on the ground, and poor funding.

A cross-sectional survey was carried out using a questionnaire administered randomly amongst 60 smallholder households in Nginyang and Marigat divisions. The objective was to establish and rank the most commonly treated diseases in the small ruminants, the frequency of anthelmintic use, and the service providers.

The results of the study show that a lot of emphasis has been on provision of drugs with little effort on development of diagnostic and surveillance services. With nine qualified veterinary officers and 26 paravets the government was generally thin on the ground.

The role of NGO's and CBO's as service providers is increasing in ASAL's. It is recommended that surveillance and disease reporting systems need to be developed to comply with international des epizooties conditions for international trade, especially in provision of basic data on important livestock diseases.

Key words: Arid-semi arid lands, veterinary services.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Baringo County lies in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya, about 90% of the total land mass is estimated to fall under the category of arid, semi-arid lands (ASAL), receiving an annual average rainfall of 600mm. The communities in this county are mainly; pastoralist, keeping cattle, camels, sheep, goats and donkey (AU/IBAR, 2003; Chabari & Mathooko, 1996).

The importances of livestock to the ASAL communities go beyond economic values, their survival, lifestyle, livelihoods and cultural rituals all depend on the livestock.

It is a well recognized fact that livestock production and productivity are low due to many factors, amongst them poor animal health services delivery; primarily because government animal health service is thin on the ground due to inadequate number of veterinary staff, low financial support and poor transport. ASAL also have underdeveloped private animal health sector, due to low economy, high cost of service delivery, poor infrastructure, insecurity and unconducive environment for conventional private veterinary practice (Chong, 2002). From 1997 annual report of the veterinary department and the entire counties with 12 divisions had only nine veterinarians and 26 certificate level officers. The county was served by only five vehicles (AU/IBAR, 2003).

2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional questionnaire survey was administered to 60 randomly selected smallholder households in two divisions of Nginyang and Marigat. The questions sought to establish and rank the most commonly treated diseases amongst small ruminants and the frequency of use of anthelmintics. Another set of questions centered on service provision by the Veterinary Services Department (VSD), Non-governmental Organizations (NGO) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The respondents were asked to indicate the type of service e.g. provision of drugs, treatments, vaccination, regularity of routine visits.

3.0 RESULTS

The results of the questions on the routinely treated and vaccinated diseases in Table 1 indicated that Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP) was a common disease amongst 83.3% of the goat wards, with other conditions, diarrhoeas (41.7%) in both sheep and goats, enterotoxaemia (36.7%) amongst sheep, mange (28.3%) in goats, footrot (25%) in both sheep and goats, orf (16.7%) in goats and swayback (11.7%) in kids were also noted. The single most frequent treatment, however, was deworming reported by 83.3% of the respondents.

The results of the questions on service provision are summarized in Table 2. The staff of the veterinary department had the most frequent contact of 90% with the respondents. This was however, mostly due to the

mass CCPV vaccinations which were frequently carried out. There were occasional sales of drugs and treatments from the government staff. About 71.6% of the respondents indicated that their contact with government staff was infrequent, ranging from once in a year or less.

There were three key NGO service providers; the Kositei Catholic Mission, the Kenya Freedom from Hunger and the World Vision who together had a frequency of contact of 20% with the respondents in the provision of drugs and treatments of sick animals.

Three Community Based Organizations; Nginyang Pastoralist Association, Kolloa Pastoralist Association and Marigat Pastoralist Association has a contact with 38.3% of the respondents in provision of drugs.

A total of 70% of the pastoralists obtained drugs from various Agroveter shops, while 83.3% of them regularly used traditional medicines, making ethnoveterinary a significant and integral part of veterinary services.

4.0 DISCUSSION

With only about nine government veterinarians on the ground supported by 26 certificate level officers, in addition, to unavailability of transport and low funding, the government was thin on the ground in this county. For a long time, the government was the main provider of animal health services. However, the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that focused on beneficiaries participating in cost sharing, privatization and liberalization of services, have led to low budgetary provisions and freezing of employment of veterinary staff. This adversely affected provision of animal health services in ASAL area (Kajume, 2002). There is growing participation of NGOs and CBOs in the delivery of animal health services in the ASALs.

In some ASAL regions in Kenya the NGOs are Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) who are linked to the veterinarians and Animal Health Assistants (Kariuki, 2002).

Based on the result of the study, there seems to be a lot of emphasis on provision of drugs with little being done to develop diagnostic, surveillance and diseases reporting systems. In the light of the world trade organization agreements relayed by office International des epizooties, exporting countries are obliged to develop national veterinary services with effective disease reporting systems able to provide basic data on important livestock diseases (Kenya, 1997).

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Table 1: Commonly treated and vaccinated diseases.

Reported diseases condition	Frequency reported	Animal species
Pneumonias/CCPP	50(60) 83.3%	Goats
Worms	50(60) 8.3%	Kids, Lambs
Diarrheas	25(60) 41.7%	Sheep, Goats
Enterotoxaemia	22(60) 36.7%	Sheep, Goats
Mange	17(60) 28.3%	Goats
Footrot	15(60) 25%	Sheep, Goats
Orf	10(60) 16.7%	Sheep, Goats
Swayback	7(60) 11.7%	Goats, Kids
Abortions	4(60) 6.7%	Goats
Bloat	2(60) 3.3%	Sheep

Table 2: Service providers, types of services and the frequency

Service provider	Type service	Frequency
Government		
- Veterinary department	- vaccinations; exclusive provider - drugs - treatments	(54/60) 90%
Non-government organizations	- drug	(12/60) 20%
- Kenya Freedom from hunger	- treatment	
- Kositei Catholic Mission		
- World Vision		
Community Based Organization	- drugs	(23/60) 38.3%
- Nginyang pastoralist association		
- Kolloa pastoralist association		
- Marigat pastoralist association		
Agrovet shops	- drugs	(42/60) 70%

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