



Risk factors associated with livestock feeding and disease control practices in peri-urban slums: case of small holder farmers in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya.



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ABSTRACT

Livestock feeding practices present food safety concerns to consumers who are aware of food safety issues and their linkage to feeding practices. Livestock kept in the urban slums where human population densities are high feed on waste dump feeds and contaminated waters. There is the risk of contamination of animal foods with toxic heavy metals and associated illnesses, deaths and economic losses in lost trade opportunities. Knowledge of concentrations of heavy metals in livestock plasma, feeds, water and soils is important for assessing the effects of pollutants on foods and contaminant intakes by human. The objective for this project is to promote good livestock feeding practices within peri-urban slum producers to guarantee food safety to consumers. A study was undertaken to identify, characterize and disseminate risk factors associated with livestock feeding and disease control practices in peri-urban slums of Kisumu municipality. Primary data was collected from 291 randomly selected smallholder livestock farmers in Kisumu municipality, by use of semi-structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics in form of cross tabulations, means and frequencies were used to characterize peri-urban livestock feeding and disease control practices. Results of this study indicate that most livestock farmers are not aware of health risks associated with peri-urban livestock farming, and livestock feeding and disease control practices in Kisumu municipality contribute to contamination of animal based products. The Government should regulate urban livestock farming systems by monitoring disease management practices, quarantine, quality control and food safety regulations. This study recommends creating awareness on better livestock management practices among farmers, better waste management and associations to aid farmers in augmenting their bargaining power and profits at large.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Primary data was collected from 291 randomly selected smallholder livestock farmers in Kisumu municipality, by use of semi-structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics in form of cross tabulations, means and frequencies were used to characterize peri-urban livestock feeding and disease control practices.



RESULTS

- Majority of the livestock farmers are not aware of health risks associated with peri-urban livestock farming,
- Livestock feeding and disease control practices in Kisumu municipality contribute to contamination of animal based products.



DISCUSSION

- The main risk factors and production constraints identified by livestock farmers were diseases, lack of animal feed and inadequate veterinary services sometimes leading farmers to treat livestock by themselves.
- Majority (93%) of urban livestock farmers practice free range livestock production system which increases the risks of animals ingesting contaminated fodder and water.
- Indigenous cattle (97%) were preferred in contrast to exotic cattle ((3%) with farmers citing resilience to diseases, availability and inability to sustain exotic cattle due to lack of funds (poverty).
- Livestock farmers mostly utilized kitchen leftovers to supplement their livestock which may play a significant role in spread of diseases as these feeds are not inspected by veterinary officers
- The main diseases among different species of livestock were diarrhoea, respiratory infections and tick borne diseases.
- Marketing constraints were exemplified as: low market prices for livestock and agricultural products, exploitation by middlemen lack of credit and poor infrastructure hindering accessibility to markets and extension services.



CONCLUSIONS

- Based on this study, most livestock farmers are not aware of health risks associated with peri-urban livestock farming.
- Livestock feeding and disease control practices in Kisumu municipality contribute to contamination of animal based products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should monitor disease management practices and food safety regulations.
- Public Education to create awareness on food safety risks.



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