

A gendered analysis of constraints to cattle production in Ijara sub-county, Kenya

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Abstract

The livelihoods of communities in Arid and Semi-arid lands are under growing threat due to recurring droughts and presence of animal diseases. This study was carried out among women, men focus groups and key informants in 2013 to establish the perceptions of men and women livestock keepers to constraints in cattle production. Participatory methodologies were employed to rank problems, identify cattle diseases through listing and ranking, estimate incidence of diseases and describe relative impact of disease on products through proportional piling. Trypanosomosis and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) were ranked as the most important diseases of cattle by both men and women focus group discussions. This study demonstrates the factors that should be considered in livestock/animal health policy formulation for men and women pastoralists.

Introduction

In Kenya, the livestock sector accounts for 90% of employment and more than 95% of family incomes in the Arid and Semi-arid lands (ASALs) (ROK, 2003). The ASAL communities' livestock dependent livelihoods securities are under growing threat due to recurring droughts and presence of animal diseases (Alila and Atieno, 2006).

Owing to the importance of cattle in livelihood securities, CBPP constitutes one of the most outstanding contributors to the devastation of these securities in terms of food security, productivity, mortality losses and the loss of access to markets associated with quarantines and trade bans (Perry and Grace, 2009).

These livestock are important for the livelihoods of both men and women livestock keepers. Despite their contribution in livestock productivity, women's roles are seldom recognized.

The aim of this study was to understand the perceptions of both men and women livestock keepers to constraints to cattle rearing, with emphasis on CBPP and its control. This study is part of the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF) funded project to develop a vaccine for eradication of CBPP in Africa. The results are envisaged to be critical in advising the vaccine role out strategy.

Materials and Methods

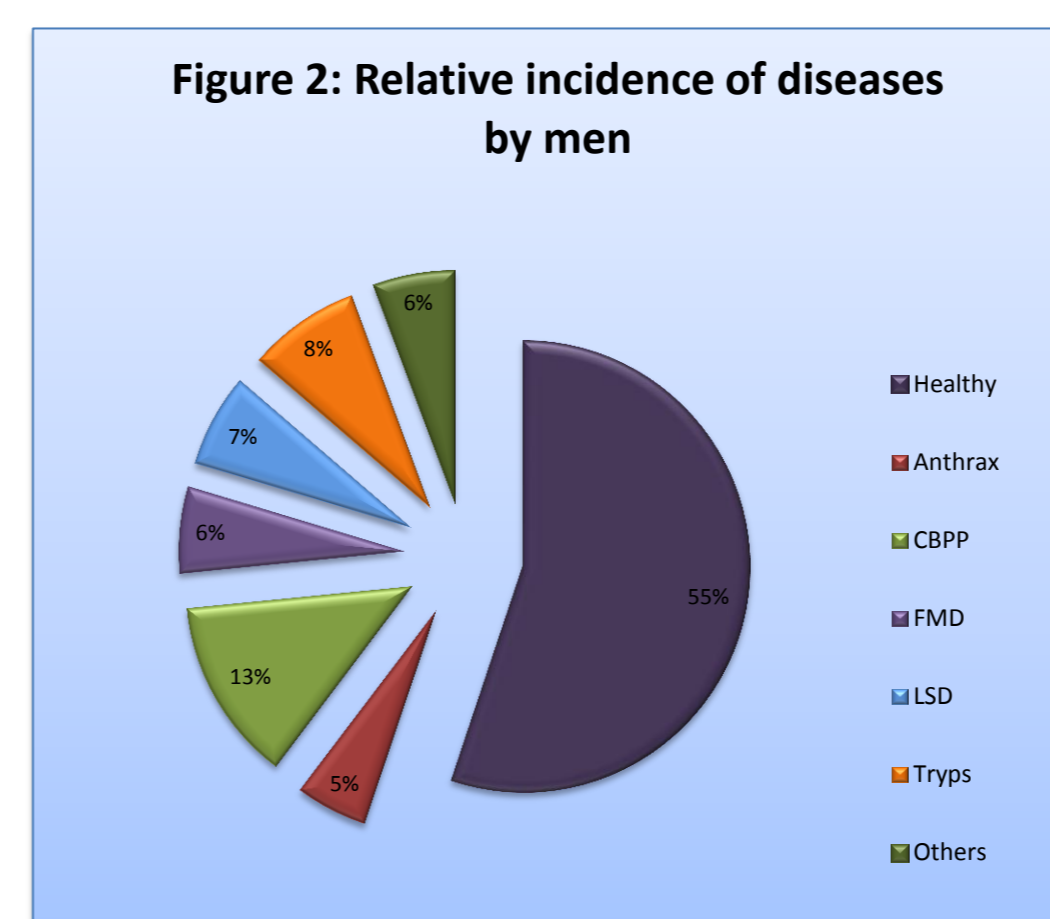
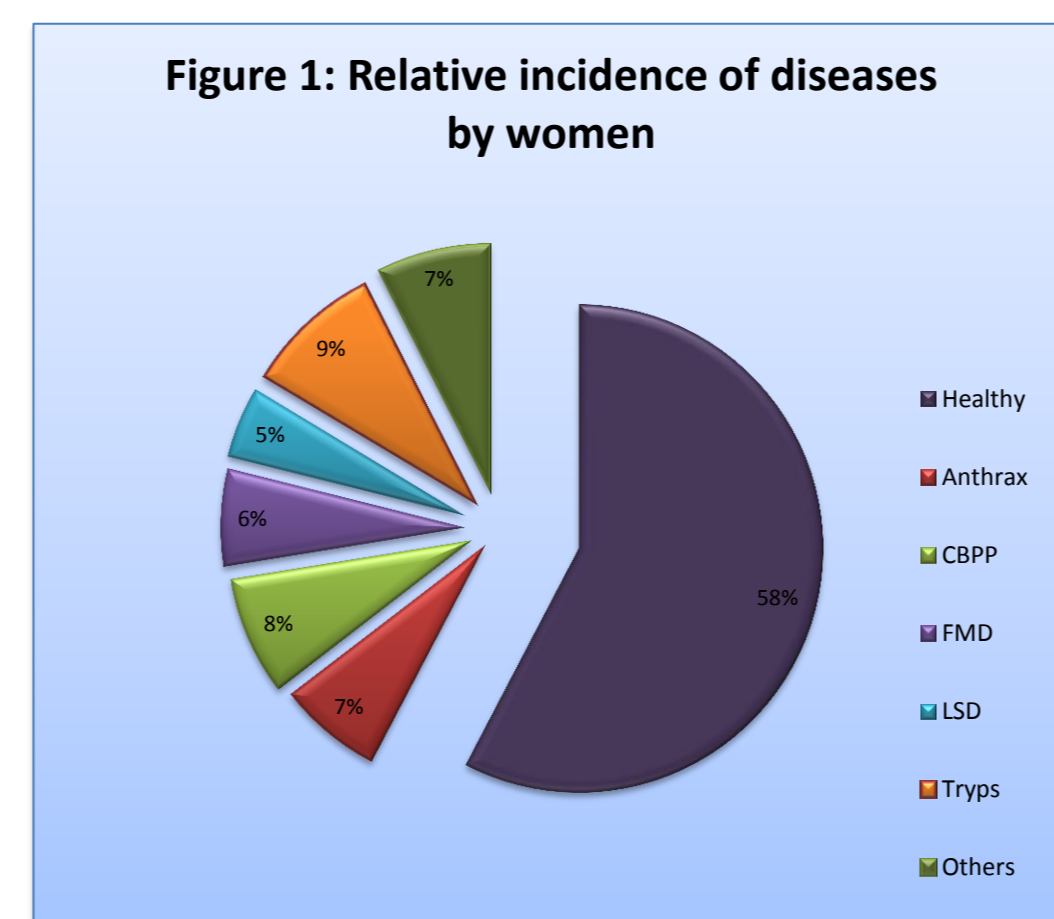
- ❖ Secondary data collection from DVS reports, animal health stakeholders and literature search
- ❖ Qualitative and quantitative data collection through men and women focus group discussions and key informant interviews
- ❖ Application of participatory epidemiological tools such as proportional piling, pairwise ranking, disease incidence scoring, seasonal calendar construction
- ❖ Triangulation to cross check information was carried out by using different tools and interviewing different people with diverse views.

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Table1: Ranking of Livestock constraints by Gender Groups

Disease	Ranking	Men FGD	Women FGD	Overall Rank
Wildlife	First rank	84.2%	50.0%	1
	Second rank	15.8%	50.0%	
Drought	First rank	11.1%	4.2%	3
	Second rank	33.3%	41.7%	
	Third rank	38.9%	41.7%	
	Fourth rank	16.7%	12.4%	
Disease	First rank	0.0%	41.7%	2
	Second rank	52.9%	8.3%	
	Third rank	35.3%	41.7%	
	Fourth rank	11.8%	8.3%	



Women focus group discussion during a ranking exercise.

Results

- ❖ The main constraints to cattle were identified as diseases, drought and wildlife menace in order of importance (Table 1).
- ❖ Diseases were ranked as the most important constraint by 84.2% men groups and 50% women groups; the ranking differed significantly ($p = 0.044$)
- ❖ The reasons for ranking diseases highest include mortality, resources used in treatment, inadequate animal health services, loss of products and loss of markets.
- ❖ Drought was also ranked highly by women groups (42%) reasons being loss of livestock and products as well as increased workload
- ❖ Relative annual incidence of diseases in a herd were estimated at 42% (Fig. 1) and 45% (Fig. 2) by women and men respectively.
- ❖ Trypanosomosis ranked highest among diseases that affect men's and women's livelihoods. CBPP was ranked second (Fig. 3).
- ❖ The Kruskal-Wallis Test showed no significant differences in median scores for diseases among the gender group (p value > 0.05).
- ❖ Further, respondents described the impact of diseases on cattle products; milk was perceived as the product greatly affected at a mean score of 42%.
- ❖ Other products were scored at 16% for both meat and ghee, 14% for cash from sales and 11% for hides.

Conclusions

- ❖ Diseases are ranked as the most important constraint in livestock rearing in Ijara sub-county; this differed according to men and women groups.
- ❖ Women groups also perceive drought as an important constraint due to increased workload and loss of livestock and livestock products.
- ❖ Trypanosomosis and CBPP significantly impact on the livelihoods of men and women in Ijara sub-county.
- ❖ Interventions geared towards constraints in cattle production should consider the different perceptions of both men and women to address the gaps.

References

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