

Fostering New Strategies, Linkages and Possibilities for Increasing smallholders' Access to Fodder in the Kenya Highlands

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Introduction

Demand for livestock products in Africa is increasing rapidly, offering high potential benefits for small holder farmers. Livestock fodder such as leguminous fodder trees are important in ensuring sustainable milk production, increasing soil fertility, prevention of soil and moisture loss and a source of firewood.

Smallholders are not adequately accessing the available fodder technologies and are pervasively vulnerable to seasonal fodder scarcity with fluctuating quality, prices and trade malpractices. A framework for a fodder innovation system is needed for improving access to fodder either through production or purchase, by building on successful innovative solutions, available from research, extension, the private sector or farmers. Stakeholders' engagement is desired to inform mechanisms for rearranging technical, social and institutional relationships for improved income and livelihoods of dairying community.

Objectives:

1. Situational analysis of gaps in fodder demand and in dairy productivity.
2. Profiling of smallholders' successful strategies for overcoming fodder scarcity and strategies available from other sources.
3. Analyzing stakeholders' (such as volunteer farmer trainers) roles and linkages for strengthening the fodder innovation system with a focus on the role of women.
4. Identifying mechanisms for strengthening sharing on fodder innovation among local dairying community.
5. Testing of frameworks for strengthening fodder innovation among smallholder dairying community.

Methodology

1. A survey will be carried out to benchmark the status of fodder accessibility from a random sample objectively categorized into upper, middle and lower terciles of dairy groups basing on milk production yields and a fourth group comprising of individuals not affiliated to any group.
2. Engaging the community through participatory methods will yield rich information on levels of fodder access and knowledge applicable to the local context.
3. Appreciative inquiry seeks to empower farmers to envision change and view themselves as change agents able to provide sustainable solutions to the fodder issue.
4. Participatory action research will strengthen sharing and learning among stakeholders on innovation.

Study area

Kipkaren sub-county, Nandi County, Kenya is a dairying community with frequent fodder scarcity but with a few positive deviant farmers such as those growing fodder trees

The area has a Dairy Farmers Business Association (DFBA) known as Tanykina- initiated by EADD, supporting services provision such as extension through volunteer farmer trainers. The dairy hub provides a platform for stakeholder interaction



Methods

- Interviews
- Venn diagramming
- Key informant interviews
- Stakeholder meetings
- Focus group discussions



Data analysis

- Quantitative analysis : Gap analysis , frequencies, stakeholder analysis, chi-square test,
- Qualitative : Theme interpretational analysis.

Expected results

An innovation framework that supports smallholder dairy farmers' strategies, enhances stakeholder linkages and with appropriate mechanisms for sharing and learning on increasing fodder accessibility will lead to improved dairy productivity.

References

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