

The Role Played By Mobile Phone Communication in Diffusion of Dairy Goats Rearing In Kitui County, Kenya

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Abstract

The study investigated how dairy goat farmers used mobile phones communication in dairy goat rearing to improve their livelihoods. Farmers targeted were widows, Caregivers and Orphans in Kitui County Kenya. Two types of goat reared were Toggenburg and Galla. Sampling was done in two stages proportional to get five clusters and random within a cluster to get 100 respondents. Women consisted 71% of the sampled farmers. Forty two percent of farmers use their dairy milk for home consumption and cited it as a strategy to improve family nutrition. Average goat milk production was 2.6 litres and retailed at KES70.00 per litre. Eight six percent of farmers have owned their mobile phone for more than one year. Farmers (69%) called Livestock extension officer and Veterinary officer, both of whom are instrumental in the general management and disease control of the dairy goats. 99% of farmers interviewed own or have access to mobile phones. Ninety six percent of goat farmer have used Mpeas services (money transfer service) at least once in a month. The top challenges was high cost of airtime at 32%. The high farmer mobile phones ownership or having access to use of mobile phones have increased communication contacts amongst farmers, sellers, buyers and extension agents. Challenges notwithstanding, the technology has shaped the dairy goat keeping technology to a great extent in Kitui County. The result is improved family nutrition and household income to local residents. The role played by mobile in agricultural production can not be undererated. The aspect of mobile phone communication must be embedded in the programming of the projects by poilcy makers.

Keywords: Galla, Livelihood Milk, Mpesa, Toggenburg