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USAID Nawiri Learning Brief: Livestock Service Delivery Assessment

Background

This brief presents key findings from an assessment examining constraints to and opportunities for improved veterinary, fodder and extension services in Kenya Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) counties. The objective of the study was to identify and prioritize opportunities for Nawiri to support livestock services during phase II of the project.

Summary Findings and Lessons Learned

- The assessment identified the following constraints to animal health service delivery: (i) pastoralists' nomadic lifestyle which, coupled with remoteness, sparse population and vast area makes it expensive to deliver animal health services due to high transaction costs, (ii) limited number of trained animal health providers (vets and livestock health assistants) and extension officers especially at the grass root level, (iii) inappropriate and somewhat discriminative government policy that: (a) prioritizes crop agriculture over livestock production, (b) underinvestment in the livestock sector, and (c) criminalizes community animal health workers (CBAHWs) yet they have been shown to offer vital and affordable animal health services in ASALs that are characterized by low professional veterinary service investment, (iv) uncoordinated/scattered efforts by various organizations, which wastes resources due to duplication and lack of prioritization, and (v) unregulated cross-border herd movements make it difficult to mount effective disease control initiatives.

- With regard to extension services, the following constraints were identified: (i) nomadism that makes it difficult and too expensive to offer extension services, (ii) inadequate staffing and lack of mobility of extension services due to inadequate facilitation by county governments, (iii) lack of prioritization of extension services by county governments as they are not “politically visible”, (iv) lack of a favorable extension strategy that takes into consideration pastoral production issues, and (v) insecurity, remoteness and vastness of these areas, which makes it both risky and expensive to offer extension services.
- The main constraints hindering effective fodder production in northern Kenya are: (i) a harsh biophysical environment that does not allow robust fodder production in ASALs, (ii) lack of certified indigenous grass seeds that are well adapted to the ASAL environment, (iii) unclear property right regimes, (iv) limited knowledge of pastoralists on both rainfed and irrigated fodder and pasture production techniques, and (v) invasion of grazing areas by invasive *Prosopis juliflora*, which reduces the area suitable for fodder production.

Applying the Findings and Lessons Learned

- Several opportunities were identified in each of the three domains. For animal health services, the main opportunities were: (i) existence of community disease reporters (formerly CBAHWs) who complement disease surveillance and control efforts of veterinarians, (ii) availability of mobile platforms such as epi-collect that enhance animal health and disease data collection and reporting, (iii) bilateral and multi-lateral cross-border livestock movement agreements, and (iv) existence of the one-health program supported by USAID. Opportunities for extension services were (i) existence of Department of Livestock in all counties which although understaffed, still has well-trained extension service officers, (ii) possibility of linking livestock health assistants, livestock production assistants and other cadres of animal health workers to work as a team of extension service providers in remote areas, and (iii) availability of mobile platforms for livestock extension. Fodder production could benefit from (i) ongoing and past successful fodder production projects which could be used for peer-to-peer learning/demonstration, and as source of grass seeds, (ii) existing fodder producer groups which provide entry points for collective action, (iii) major rivers in many arid counties which could be used for irrigated fodder production, (iv) existence of certified local pasture seed and other exotic species suitable for ASALs, and (v) political goodwill by county governments in support of fodder production and community facilitation.
- Addressing these constraints while scaling up the identified opportunities could increase livestock service delivery in northern Kenya. This could redress the socio-political and developmental neglect that this region has endured since colonial times. The next step for Nawiri is to take stock of the long list of constraints and consider which of the opportunities might warrant support from the program. A critical overarching issue is the policy environment in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties and the possibility of shifting policy to be supportive of approaches that have proven to be successful in other countries, and which have been legalized and normalized. A case in point is privatized community-based animal health systems involving private veterinarians or animal health assistants as business owners, working with networks of CBAHWs. These systems are operational in Ethiopia and Sudan, and are supported by national and local governments, as well as international bodies such as the World Organization for Animal Health.

Key Lessons Learned	Adaptation or implication	Link to the DIP or TOC
1. The study identified numerous constraints to livestock service delivery, many of which could be addressed through privatized community animal health systems that have been successful in similar contexts.	1. Support the establishment of privatized animal health and livestock feed/fodder providers. Specific interventions include: <i>(a) Link pastoralists to improved animal health services</i> <i>(b) Improve livestock health management and fodder production and preservation</i>	P4 SP 4.1 & IO 3.1.2
2. Service delivery is particularly weak at the community level due to the absence of trained animal health workers	2. Continue to advocate for legislation in support of community animal health workers in Kenya	P4 SP 4.1

[See the full Nawiri's Nawiri Livestock Services Assessment Report, Isiolo and Marsabit Counties, Kenya](#)



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