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“Resilience of agricultural systems against crises”

Analysis of Animal Health Service Delivery in Uganda: An Application of the Social Network Approach

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Abstract

As a result of continued fiscal challenges from late 1980s to date, most developing countries liberalised the provision of most of the animal health services. Clinical services are provided by the private sector while preventive services like vaccination and disease surveillance are being provided by public and community sector (NGOs) without coordination. As a result, many actors of varying capacities, interests and relevance are involved in providing animal health services. With resurgence of infectious diseases, increased economic and health risks especially to the rural poor, there is need to understand relational patterns of actors to ensure good governance in the animal health sector so as to address emerging and re-emerging animal diseases risks in given political environment. This paper applies social network analytical tools to map out actors involved in delivery of both clinical and preventive veterinary services in both pastoral and intensive livestock productions systems, rank their influence levels, and elicit governance challenges. Preliminary results reveal that the important social relations in animal health service delivery are: cooperation of the private veterinarians and paravets, private veterinarians and government veterinarians in intensive production systems, while in pastoral areas it is the cooperative effort of NGOs, government veterinarians, and community based animal health workers (CAHWs). However, low level of education among CAHWs, absence of government staff, and poor market infrastructure in pastoral areas, and absence of relevant incentives and policies to strengthen the existing workable social relations are limiting factors to service delivery. At local government level, staff absenteeism and corruption are major threats to animal health service delivery. At national level, conflicts between technical staff and administrative staff of the ministry of agriculture, conflict between agricultural ministry and the national agricultural advisory services have greatly affected animal health service delivery. We argue that the government intervention should focus on increasing staff in pastoral areas by recruiting diploma staff other than degree staff, improve on personnel management, invest in infrastructure and pass policy governing the veterinary and para-veterinary relations.

Keywords: Curative services, preventive services, social network analysis, veterinarians, paravets