



Tropentag, September 17-19, 2014, Prague, Czech Republic

“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

Using Choice Experiments: Facilitating Priority Setting in Provision of Animal Health Services

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Abstract

Livestock sector is one of the drivers of poverty reduction in developing countries owing to its contribution to agricultural employment, its role in the economic welfare of rural families, as well as the nutritional importance of food products of animal origin. Consequently, increasing livestock productivity and production is one of the major means of improving the livelihoods of poor livestock keepers, reducing poverty, and attaining food security. Livestock development in Africa is, however, seriously constrained by animal diseases, with major economic, nutritional, and health consequences. For farmers and especially the poorest ones, animal health services, especially for the poorest farmers, is generally not accessible, and of poor quality. Dairy hubs (organised, farmer-owned collective marketing systems) are initiatives that work towards enhancing farmer access to milk markets and dairy related services (including animal health services) in East Africa. In an effort to provide a better understanding of farmer decision making when faced with animal health service choices, we applied choice experiment, a multi-attribute preference eliciting method, to identify preferences for adopting animal health services in the dairy hubs in Kenya (a dairy industry model for neighbouring African countries). The results reveal that, dairy farmers prefer to have animal services offered rather than having no service. In order of priority, based on the estimated welfare gains from the service characteristic, the farmers prefer animal health services that are offered alongside training or advice on animal husbandry, follow-ups on animal health after treatment, vaccination and deworming of animals, and offered by the dairy hubs rather than by private agents not affiliated to the hubs. Farmers would like some flexibility in payment systems which include input credit. These findings reveal that farmers attach different values to different animal health service characteristics and would therefore inform policy makers and development agents, of the types of services to prioritise in cases of resource constraints. By quantifying the welfare impacts of the preferred animal health service characteristics, the findings of the study can inform the design of the delivery of high quality and cost-effective animal health services.

Keywords: Animal health services, choice experiments, dairy hubs, Kenya, priority setting