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“Solidarity in a competing world —
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Food Safety and Hygiene Knowledge and Practice Along the Pastoral Camel Milk Value Chain, Kenya

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Abstract

Camel milk is faced with a number of challenges, especially poor handling practices that contribute to milk post-harvest losses due to poor quality and safety. The handling practices have been associated with poor knowledge and practices on food hygiene and safety among the camel milk handlers along the pastoral value chain. The study aimed at determining the level of knowledge and practices on food hygiene and safety of camel milk actors along pastoral value chain. Structured questionnaire, focused group discussions and key informant interviews were used to collect data on handling practices along the camel milk value chain. The study focused on three points which include herdsman who do the milking, women at the cooling and collection centres in Isiolo town and those retailing camel milk in Isiolo and its environs. The study established that herdsman had significantly ($p < 0.05$) lower knowledge than those retailing and bulking milk in Isiolo town with a mean score of $49\% \pm 9\%$. The retailing women in Isiolo scored $62\% \pm 9\%$. The women at the collection centre had the highest knowledge with a score of $69\% \pm 10\%$. The average score along Isiolo camel milk value chain was $60\% \pm 9\%$. Each point showed significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in various questions of knowledge in food safety and hygiene. The respondents showed low knowledge in questions regarding spoilage microorganisms and also effective cleaning of containers. The food safety risk is compounded by consumption of rejected/spoiled milk with 53% of retailers using it. There was no washing of hands by the herdsman. Training of the stakeholders can be a way of improving their knowledge on food safety and hygiene

Keywords: Camel milk handlers, food hygiene, food safety, hygiene practices