Improving productivity in Kenyan Smallholder Dairy systems through selective, intensive education and supported adoption

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Introduction

- Improving productivity of smallholder dairy has the potential to improve milk supply and quality and rural incomes.

- Average milk yield is 1.8-3. 0 l/d in W. Kenya.

- Low milk yield is often attributed to poor genetics, BUT we discovered that frequently production is constrained by a lack of knowledge, regarding husbandry and feeding.

- Currently existing training, but is short-term, narrow and untargeted in terms of recipients.

Demonstrating the use of scythes for mowing hay to farmers

Methods

- Target early adopters.

- Identifying innovators in a number of communities in Western Kenya.

- Provide an 1mth intensive course covering:
  - husbandry,
  - animal nutrition,
  - forage/crop agronomy
  - dairy technology
  - business analysis skills.

- Farmers will be supported to implement knowledge and technology in his/her community.

- Beneficiaries of training will serve as a focal point and source of knowledge in their communities.

(First) Results

- 83 farmers trained (2 schools); follow-up concluded on 1st School (33 farmers). (Table 1)

Table1: Practice adoption and training given by course attendees

Technology/ Practice	Trainee Adoption	Farmers trained by trainees
Forage Preservation (Hay making/Silage production)	17	152
Forage/ Fodder Cultivation	21	124
Improved feeding/ Milk yield	10	197
Improved Husbandry	9	75
Improved milk Handling	2	26
Manure handling/ Compost Production	3	0

Small –scale silage making demonstration

Conclusion

- Targeted selection of course participants results in high rates of adoption and dissemination.
- In-depth training improves comprehension and allows individuals to select interventions that best apply to their situation.
- Uptake and persistence of adoption will be improved by providing ongoing logistical support.

Farmers using a manual hay baler