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## Awareness of Farmers and Traders on Newcastle Disease in Kenya

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### Abstract

Newcastle disease is the most prevalent chicken disease in Kenya. It accounts for over 80% of chicken mortality rates thereby depriving farmers and traders of their source of income and livelihood. The disease is a main challenge for farmers who rear indigenous chicken under the free range production system. This is worsened by most farmers lacking information about the disease. In Kenya, there is limited information regarding farmers' awareness, outbreaks and socio-economic impacts of the disease on livelihoods. The current study aimed at assessing farmers' and traders' awareness on Newcastle disease. A focus group discussion (FGD) consisting of chicken farmers, traders and veterinary officers was conducted to get insights on the chicken value chain practices and new castle disease. A total of 311 respondents consisting of 192 chicken farmers in six sub-counties and 119 chicken traders in seven live bird markets were randomly interviewed. Awareness of new castle disease was demonstrated by the respondents' ability to present symptoms consistent with the clinical signs of the disease. Means, percentages, graphs and frequencies were used to present the findings. Results revealed that 64% of chicken farmers were female while about 83% of chicken traders were male. This shows that chicken production is a female dominated activity while chicken marketing is male dominated. Only about 20% of farmers and 18% of traders had received training on the disease. About 25% and 23% of farmers and traders had received credit access to institutional support through formal training and credit is crucial in helping farmers invest in proper preventive and management and practices. Awareness to Newcastle disease was high with about 85% of the farmers and 78% of traders being aware of the disease. Results also reveal that approximately 78% of the traders and 46% of farmers had experienced outbreaks of the disease. Outbreaks of ND were higher among traders than farmers due to poor market infrastructure and lack of biosecurity measures. These findings showed that training about the disease is important to help increase awareness. There is need therefore to invest in improved biosecurity measures, good husbandry practice and proper hygiene and disease surveillance to prevent ND outbreaks and spread.

**Keywords:** Awareness, bio-security, Newcastle disease