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The impact of COVID-19 lockdown on milk production and marketing activities in Kiboga district

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Abstract

High and sustained milk production in dairy can only be sustained by regular rainfall, good farming practices such as adequate feeding of cows, disease and pest management and selection of superior animals for breeding. Marketing of milk on the other hand is an important component for achieving profitability and sustainability of a dairy enterprise. World over especially in sub-Saharan Africa, production and marketing of agricultural products were impacted by COVID-19 in various ways. This study therefore was conducted to assess the impact of COVID-19 on production and marketing of milk in Kiboga district. Data was collected from 156 farmers who were randomly selected from the three sub counties in Kiboga district. The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics, t-tests and regression models. All the interviewed dairy farmers reported that COVID-19 had affected the production and marketing of their milk. There was a significant difference in the price per litre of milk sold before COVID-19 and after the lockdown was lifted. There was a decline of 1.4% in the productivity per cow per day during the lock down compared to before the pandemic. There was also a decrease in the average price of a litre of milk sold to dairies 34.9%, cooperatives 37.3% and spot markets 10% during the lock down. After lifting the lock down, the productivity of cows is seen to have gone back to the way it was before the lockdown and the price of a litre of milk is reported to have gone higher than it was before COVID-19. This was because of the increase in the costs of production. There was an increase in the weekly costs of production especially spraying (45%), and treating cattle (77.6%). Most of the farmers did nothing to cope up with the decrease in milk prices, reduced the prices charged per litre in order to cope up with the reduction in the number of customers. Government and other stake holders should reduce on the taxes imposed on inputs like pesticides which have resulted into high production costs.

Keywords: COVID-19, dairy farmers, milk prices, volume of milk sold