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Farm-level impacts of business development support to last-mile providers of dairy inputs and services in Tanzania

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Abstract

The productivity of livestock in intensifying small-holder dairy systems is often constrained by limited access to inputs and services as well as low levels of technical knowledge due to the inadequacy in public extension systems. So far, private sector providers of inputs and services have not been able to penetrate small-holder markets as costs for delivering specific products to dispersed and small-scale producers are high. On the other hand, livestock technologies deliver greatest benefits when adopted in combination. For instance, the potential of genetic improvements through artificial insemination can only be achieved with appropriate feed management and nutrients can only be utilised if parasites are controlled. However, private sector providers are often restricted to specific inputs and services and have also limited technical understanding of all aspects of dairy production to provide appropriate advice to small-scale producers. Therefore, the CGIAR initiative on Sustainable Animal Productivity (SAPLING) has introduced interventions to support last-mile providers in developing more holistic businesses and strengthening their technical capacity in several countries. In Tanzania 100 existing local agripreneurs were recruited into a programme introducing them to a digital communication and sales platform, which eases transactions with their dairy farmer customers and up-stream suppliers. Half of these agripreneurs, randomly selected, were then included in a 15-week business incubation and technical training programme, beginning in December 2023. A survey of farmers, sampled from those linked to all agripreneurs at the beginning of the incubation programme, allows the causal determination of the intervention's impacts on farmers' purchases of inputs and services, their livestock management, and their success in dairy farming. The results highlight the benefits of bundling inputs and services for the development of the agripreneurs' businesses and for the productivity of the farmers' livestock.

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