



Community Animal Health Workers. Credit: DRSLP

Community-Based Animal Health Workers (CAHWS): Initiative for Improving Access to Animal Health Services in Pastoral Communities

Introduction

Livestock are the main financial asset of both poor and wealthier pastoral households. Improved basic veterinary care can help to reduce disease-related losses and as such protect and build assets as herd growth is the long-term strategy for poorer households.

It can also ensure food security and nutrition, particularly through consumption of livestock products, and enhance capacity to withstand and recover from drought. In Ethiopia, disease-related losses caused herd depletion of between 5% and 18% per year and this translates into approximately 3.6 million animals per year, valued at US \$ 798 million. Health services provision is a critical factor for livestock. In this regard in countries like Ethiopia, conventional fixed-point

service delivery is difficult in pastoralist areas due to their large physical size, weak infrastructure, and the need to reach mobile communities. With the conventional fixed-point health service centre, the transaction costs of service provision are relatively high.

Livestock death due to disease could be reduced significantly by using CAHWS who are recruited from, and deployed within their communities. As long as they are provided with detailed technical training and start-up capital such as kits and drugs, they can be an effective strategy for improving access to animal health services in areas where infrastructure is less developed.



INTERVENTION AREA

Enhanced production and livelihood diversification



LOCATION

All Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme (DRSLP) implementation woredas on Oromia, Afar, Ethiopia Somali and SNNP regions



STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

- DRSLP project as financier and coordinator of the CAHWs initiative
- Pastoralist development bureaus
- Animal health posts as suppliers of drugs to the CAHWs
- Private drug dealers who also provide drugs to CAHWs

Sustainability

Institutionally, regional and federal livestock development bureaus and the ministry need to institutionalize continuous support and technical capacity building for CAHWs on modern techniques of animal health services provisions.

When road infrastructure and transportation expands into these areas, big private farms will enter into the veterinary business. But ultimately, lack of infrastructure and transportation could affect effective delivery of veterinary services.

Sustainability could only be ensured when the private practitioner continues with his/her business. Government involvement in curative services with subsidised prices, could render the business unviable. To sustain the CAHWs service, government policies that delineate the public and private activity and implement proper emergency response with respect to drugs supply should be worked on.

Replicability and Up-scaling

The use of CAHWs has been replicated successfully in many woredas by different stakeholders and it has high potential as many educated unemployed rural youths could be trained to become CAHWs. The high demand for animal health services especially in areas where health posts are not well developed could be one important fertile condition for wider expansion of the practice.

Additional Information

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-bp230e.pdf>

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.584.2964&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Results

- Animal health services become accessible for pastoralist communities as every kebele of targeted pastoralist woredas already has CAHWs;
- Pastoralists have access to animal health services anytime as CAHWs are deployed at kebele level;
- Improved animal health, reduced livestock death due to increased access to health services.

Success Factors

- Provision of start-up capital/kits and drugs for CAHWs
- Detailed technical training on all aspects of animal health service provision
- High demand in the pastoralist communities for animal health services

Constraints

Limited infrastructure development particularly in remote pastoral areas is identified as a key constraining factor for rapid expansion of the service provision by CAHWs. Some CAHWs have already addressed this constraint by using their own motor bikes.

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