

National calf mortality reduction program in Ethiopia

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Introduction

Every year in Ethiopia over a quarter (27%) of our dairy calves from urban and peri-urban farms are lost due to fetal death and pre-weaning mortality combined. The annual mean calf mortality from birth-to-weaning only was reported as 18.5% (Fentie, T et al. 2020). In pastoral system its estimated to be 41.6. % Hence the calf mortality reduction intervention package has been developed and being implemented for the first time in Ethiopia. intervention package is production system specific (mixed crop-livestock, urban-peri-urban(dairy cattle) and pastoral/agro-pastoral.

Project / programme objectives

The overall objectives of the intervention program is to reduce dairy calf mortality in Ethiopia

Milestones/achievements

PHASE I : PILOT PHASE:

Pilot district: The intervention package has been piloted for its practicability and affordability on 900 house hold in six districts.

The intervention focus areas: The intervention prenatal management(pregnant cow care, newborn care (colostrum feeding, navel care, breathing assistant) and pre-weaning calf management. In addition

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH:

Training: ToT training provided for 30 Lead livestock extension agent and training is cascade to 900 farmers.

Veterinary care: vaccination provided for common disease of the area and deworming of calf for internal parasite , diagnosis and treatment of sick cow

Monitoring: Biweekly evaluation, regular field visits and reporting) with continuous coaching and mentoring of trained LEAs and livestock owners for the adoption of the intervention activities.

Baseline and final evaluation: Data mainly on birth and death of young stock; incidence of diarrhoea and respiratory disease; and intervention up-takes of farmer were collected at baseline and final evaluations.

FINDINGS: Calf mortality reduced from 19.5 to 8.2% , incidence of calf diarrhoea reduced from 18.7 to 5.9% and respiratory disease from 8.9 to 2.8%

Phase II: SCALING UP PHASE

Based on the finding of the pilot , currently the program is being implemented on 50 district

- ToT training given for 100 animal health and production district professionals
- Over 810 model farmer trained on calf rearing and health management and currently under continuous follow –up and coaching on the adoption of the intervention practice
- Standard operation procure and farmer training manual prepared in local language and distributed.

Conclusion

The degree of reduction in youngstock mortality achieved by this interventions program highlights the importance of adequate adoption of basic improvements in pregnant cow care, newborn care (colostrum feeding, navel care, breathing assistant) and pre-weaning management practices are first line-interventions recommended to reduce calf morbidity and mortality in Ethiopia.



Calf milk feeding demonstration



Practical demonstration dairy cow management for farmer



Sample collection form sick calf



Farmer training program on calf management

Future Plans

In the coming years the ministry of Agriculture , Ethiopia has planned to implement the holistic calf mortality intervention program throughout the country and further more to expand the intervention program to other species of livestock (lamb, kid and camel calf).



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