

The Impact of Training and Facilitation of Farmers in Livestock Rearing and Farmer's Experiences of the Livestock Development Program in Kamuli, Uganda

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Summary and Implications

For several years Iowa State University's Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) has conducted a livestock development program in Uganda by giving animals and training very poor farmers in animal management. A study was carried out by interviewing 113 farmers to determine the impact of the program. A total of 40(G1) farmers had received considerable facilitation and training, 33(G2) had received some facilitation and less training, and 39(G3) had not received any facilitation or special training. Data were analyzed using standard statistics. Results indicated that members of G1 performed better than members of G2 and G3 on several measures including they had fewer sick pigs in the 6 months preceding the study ($P<0.05$), they had sold more animals ($P<0.01$), and they felt that their households consumed enough livestock products ($P<0.01$). These results demonstrate that training and facilitating farmers had a positive impact on their livelihoods and nutrition.

Introduction

Livestock rearing has been shown to be a major pathway out of rural poverty and including animal source foods in the diets of the rural poor improves the nutrition status especially of children. The hypothesis that by giving farmers basic training in animal production, helping them acquire animals and helping them build housing structures would improve the farmers' income and nutrition is behind the livestock development program of the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in partnership with Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO) a Ugandan development organization. Kamuli district is one of the poorer districts in Uganda; it has a high incidence of malnutrition especially among children. Farmers in the program are trained in animal management and given pigs, goats or chickens as well as technical support such as in building animal structures. This study was conducted to assess the impact of the livestock program on the livelihoods of the farmers particularly as regards improvement of nutrition and income. The key questions

were; have the farmers seen an improvement in their income and an improvement in their nutrition?

Materials and Methods

Personal open ended interviews were conducted with three groups of farmers (G1, G2 and G3) for a total of 113 interviews. Group 1 (G1, n=40) had received more training and facilitation from the program. Group 2 (G2, n=33) had received less training and facilitation from the program. Group 3 (G3, n=39) had not received special training and had not received animals from the program. Data were summarized into frequency tables and chi square tests were performed to determine relationships between variables.

Results and Discussion

More members of Group 1 than members of the other groups ($p<0.01$) felt that their households consumed enough livestock products. Farmers rated the program highly mainly because it had improved their lives and/or they had learned a lot. More members of Group 1 reared chickens for home consumption than members of Group 2 and Group 3, probably because more members of the group had learned from the training the value of consuming animal source foods ($p<0.05$). More members of Group 1 than members of the other groups had sold animals in total ($p<0.01$). . On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most favourable, more members of Group 1 rated the program between 8-10 ($p<0.05$).

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