Exploratory Assessment of the Relationship Between Dairy Intensification and Child Nutrition Among Small-Holder Farmers in Rift Valley Province, Kenya

Amanda Watkins¹, Amanda Wyatt², Anna Yearous-Algozin¹, Shreyas Sreenath³

¹Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, ²Rollins School of Public Health, Hubert Department of Global Health; ³Department of Economics, College of Arts and Sciences

Project Background
- Dairy farming interventions have potential to contribute to food security as sources of nutritious foods and as productive assets that generate income and buffer shocks.
- Conversely, these interventions have potential to hinder human health and nutrition when the allocation of land and labor to livestock systems reduces production, consumption, and sale of other food, and changing workloads require that women spend less time on the care and feeding of young children.
- In Kenya, small holder dairy households represent about 35% of rural households. About 40% of these smallholder dairy households’ income comes from dairy (TechnoServe Kenya).

Project Goal
- To carry out formative research, through focus group discussions and a household survey, that will inform efforts and future research of ILRI in the design of livestock interventions for low-income small holder households that maximize the benefits to nutrition and food security and minimize negative tradeoffs.
- To strengthen collaborations between ILRI and Emory.

Specific Aims
Explore the pathways by which dairy intensification affects child nutrition by examining:
- Changes in milk consumption, diet, and dietary diversity of target groups, particularly children under 5 years old
- Changes in time allocation of women or children’s primary caregivers
- Changes in income, including women’s control of income from dairy, and trade-offs between sales and consumption of dairy
- Changes in household expenditures (including health expenditures) and women’s decision-making in these expenditures
- Changes in community awareness and perceptions of prevalence of zoonotic diseases

Populations/Communities Served
Low-income small holder farmers in three rural communities in Rift Valley Province, Kenya:

- Cheborge in Buret District
- Kebenen in Kipkelion District
- Kipkelion in Kipkelion District

Project Timeline
- February – May 2010: Establish project goals, refine proposal, assemble team, and develop instruments
- June 2010: Meet with in-country partners to discuss project implementation, logistics and instrument development
- June – July 2010: Complete data collection
- July – August 2010: Conduct preliminary data analysis in Nairobi, and develop draft report and presentation for in-country partners

Progress to Date
- Conduct 27 focus group discussions with men, women and women with young children representing different levels of dairy production
- Administer household questionnaire to 94 households representing different levels of dairy production
- Conduct 8 key informant interviews with community leaders, public health workers, and animal health workers
- Conduct preliminary data analysis
- Complete draft report for in-country partners
- Develop presentation for key stakeholders

Next Steps
- Distribute final report to project partners
- Perform in-depth analysis of collected data
- Identify gaps in knowledge that will inform the development of a health and nutrition intervention for use in EADD project sites
- Continue collaboration with ILRI to enhance student/faculty exchange focused on impact-oriented research

Project Partners
- Thomas Randolph, PhD; Jemimah Njuki, PhD; and Isabelle Baltenweck, PhD; International Livestock Research Institute, Headquarters office in Nairobi
- East Africa Dairy Development project, Kenya country office
- Faculty from the Hubert Department of Global Health and Department of Anthropology, Emory University
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