



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Community based service improves livestock health in Karamoja

A community based service is helping to improve livestock health among the pastoral and agro pastoral communities in Karamoja.

It involves training community-selected representatives called Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWS) in basic animal health care and livestock production techniques, equipping them with basic inputs and deploying them to advise or train pastoralists in general livestock health care. They also carry out disease surveillance, treat sick animals, de-worm, spray, and vaccinate livestock under the supervision and guidance of district veterinary officials.

The objective is to supplement the existing professional system for delivering such services to communities.

Livestock is an integral element of food security and livelihood in Karamoja. According to the Uganda national livestock census report (May, 2009), 80 percent of households own livestock in the region, representing approximately 20 percent of the national cattle herd, 16 percent of goats and 49 percent of sheep.

However, the prevalence of livestock diseases and natural calamities such as drought undermine the performance of the sector. Moreover, the region has inadequate human, logistical and laboratory capacity to provide sufficient veterinary services to the pastoralists. The whole region is served by eight veterinary doctors and seven paravets employed by government.

FAO trained and equipped over 600 CAHWS who have been deployed throughout the region. Each CAHW is given a starter kit that comprises drugs, needles, syringes, protective gears, a bag and a bicycle. By charging the community for their services, the CAHWS are able to replenish the contents of the kit, expand their enterprises and pay for other household expenses.

Where possible, the CAHWS have confederated into asso-

ciations, through which they pool funds to purchase drugs and equipment and share experiences. They are also using local fora to seek collaboration from development partners, build synergies and advocate for assimilation of the CAHW system into the government's professional system, among other things.

Besides their direct engagement with the pastoralist communities, CAHWS are contracted by FAO's implementing partners to carry out livestock health training in Agro Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) at a fee.

The role of CAHWS in animal disease management in Karamoja region has been crucial. They played a pivotal role during the mass vaccination campaigns against "Peste des Petits Ruminants" (PPR), an acute highly contagious viral disease of goats and sheep, and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) in the region between 2008 and 2010.

Because of their regular interaction with communities and sentinels for surveillance, CAHWS significantly contribute to monitoring the emergency and progression of new and endemic livestock diseases in the region.

Edward Okori, FAO's Programme Officer, Livestock Production, says "animal disease surveillance through the CAHW system has enhanced timely reporting and response to disease outbreaks. As a result, outbreaks have been localized".

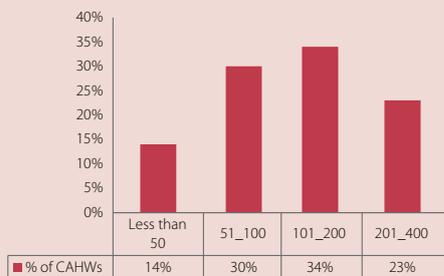
The process of identifying CAHWS is participatory, involving the respective community members. They recommend people who are flexible and can move with the pastoralists wherever they travel in search of water and/or pasture.

In 2011, FAO carried out a comprehensive exercise to map out all CAHW and veterinary drug supply points in Karamoja. This exercise enhanced planning and coordination of community animal health services by providing the geo-spatial distribution and status of the existing CAHWS and veterinary drug shops in the region in a digitalized format using smart phone technology.

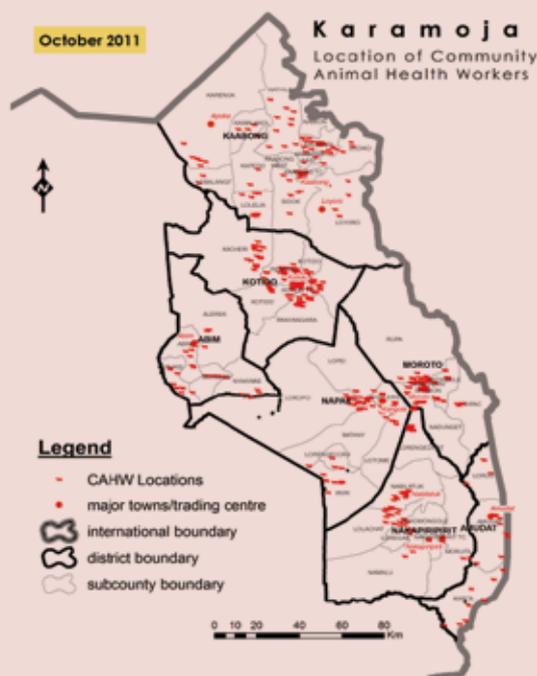
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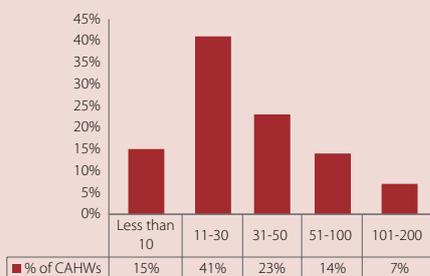
Households covered by each CAHW



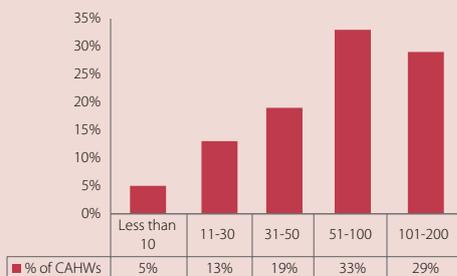
Spatial distribution of CAHWs in Karamoja



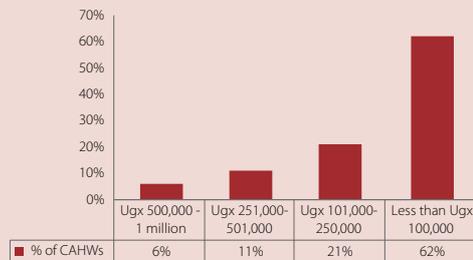
Number of cattle treated by each CAHW per month



Number of shoats (goats and sheep) treated by each CAHW per month



Average annual net income from veterinary services



Although she dropped out of school, Christine's life has been transformed and she is earning a living from serving her community. She is a Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW).

Being a female, Christine was assigned to serve pastoralists nearby in Kangole Sub County in Napak district. Male CAHWs serve communities that are farther away or on the move in search of water and/or pasture.

In the process of dispensing her duties, she maintains a line of communication with the professional veterinarians based at the district headquarters.

"The major livestock diseases that I encounter are Loukoi (CBPP), Lopid (Anaplasmosis), Lokit (East Coast fever), Ekitbwon (abdominal bloating), Lowal (foot and mouth disease), worms, brucellosis and edit (trypanosomiasis)", she says.

"I earn between Ush 50,000 and 100,000 per month in profit," she says.

Besides providing a vital service in her community, having her own income is empowering.



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