Cattle Farmers' Preferences for Disease-Free Zones in Kenya: An application of the Choice Experiment Method

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Abstract

Management of livestock diseases is important in ensuring food safety to consumers in both domestic and export markets. Various measures are prescribed under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) agreement of the World Trade Organization. In order to prevent the spread of trans-boundary cattle diseases, the SPS agreement recommends the establishment of Disease-Free Zones (DFZs). These have been implemented successfully in some major beef-exporting countries, but in Kenya are still at a pilot stage. To understand Kenyan farmers' preferences on the type of DFZ that would be readily acceptable to them, a choice experiment was conducted using a D-optimal design. Results show that farmers would be willing to pay to participate in a DFZ where: adequate training is provided on pasture development, record keeping and disease monitoring; market information is provided and sales contract opportunities are guaranteed; cattle are properly labelled for ease of identification; and some monetary compensation is provided in the event that cattle die due to severe disease outbreaks. Preferences for the DFZ attributes are shown to be heterogeneous across three cattle production systems. We also derive farmers' preferences for various DFZ policy scenarios. The findings have important implications for policy on the design of DFZ programmes in Kenya and other countries that face similar cattle disease challenges.