

Gender, perceptions and behaviour towards health risks associated with urban dairy farming in Dagoretti Division, Nairobi, Kenya.

Abstract:

To determine the socio-cultural, economic and environmental factors that encourage urban dairy production and the factors which may predispose the producer, consumer and other handlers to risks associated with dairy farming. To assess the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of men and women towards health risks and benefits associated with urban dairy farming in smallholder dairy farming and their immediate non-dairy farming neighbour households. A cross sectional study and participatory urban appraisal (PUA). Urban and peri-urban Three hundred dairy farming households, and 150 non-dairy farming neighbour households and six participatory urban appraisals, 58 males and 45 females. There were more females than males dairy farmers. Both women and men had equal access to resources and benefits obtained from dairy farming but the men had the greater control over the resources. Low levels of knowledge on the specific health risks related to urban dairy farming were observed. Less than half of the respondents believed they were at risk of being exposed to the health hazards, while 63% sensed they could protect themselves from the health risks. There was an association between knowledge levels, perceptions and behaviour of men and women toward risks associated with dairy farming. Apart from giving treatment to animals most men did less dairy farming activities. Women rated men lower in all dairy activities but when the men did the scoring for the same activities they rated themselves higher, arguing that their participation was indirect such as providing cash to buy the feed supplements and veterinary services. There were gender differences in all important tasks associated with dairy keeping. Farmers stated that older children, when not in school sometimes assisted but in general children did not show much enthusiasm in dairy work.