Impact of privatization of artificial insemination delivery services on the productivity of dairy cattle in Kenya: a case of smallholder dairy farmers in Nyeri East District

Abstract:

Artificial Insemination service in Kenya has undergone tremendous changes from time it was introduced by the colonial government. At that time it was only available to the to the white farmers who were practicing dairy farming in the white highlands. After independence the government continued offering the service through donor support. Artificial Insemination has been used in large and small dairy and beef herds and its development has contributed to new knowledge on reproduction and fertility level in these animals. Artificial Insemination service has increased productivity in cattle thus providing livelihood to the growing human population. Increased demand of Artificial Insemination in the country made it difficult for the government to continue with its provision and by 1986 there was a policy change which recommended for cost sharing. This continued until 1991 when the service was privatized through the structural adjustment programme. The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of privatization of Artificial Insemination delivery service on the productivity of the dairy cattle of smallholder dairy farmers in Nyeri East district, Central Province. As a result of privatization of Artificial Insemination delivery service which occurred, there were changes in cost, accessibility, challenges of breeding diseases, quality of dairy breeds and provision of extension services. This study examined how these changes affected productivity of dairy cattle in the district. A representation sample dairy farmers in the six locations of the district was selected using stratified random sampling technique. A sample of 120 households was obtained using proportionate random sampling from each of the stratum. The impact of privatization of Artificial Insemination delivery service was assessed using qualitative and quantitative research methods. The data which was obtained from the farmers using semi-structured questionnaires was coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Secondary data was obtained from the Ministry of Livestock Development monthly and annual reports, related literature review and relevant Journals. The results obtained in the study showed that the cost of Artificial Insemination delivery service increased after privatization and that farmers were willing to pay for the service despite the high cost. The productivity of dairy cattle increased as shown in the increased milk production, and improved calving intervals. Accessibility of the service improved after privatization while more farmers started taking dairy farming as a business enterprise. The findings obtained in the study are useful to the Ministry of Livestock Development and other stakeholders involved in the delivery of Artificial Insemination Service.