

Limitations of mass deworming of livestock during drought in Kenya

Large-scale deworming of livestock is a common veterinary response during drought in northern Kenya. For example, during 2008–09, no fewer than 474 emergency livestock interventions took place across six countries, and mass deworming was one of the most common activities. In 2012, researchers who wanted to measure the impact of deworming during drought conducted 120 household interviews in five districts. The study design showed the technical difficulties of measuring the impact of disease caused by worms in livestock because different types of worms have different impacts on animal health. However, the study managed to conclude that ‘There was clear evidence that administration (of worm medicines) within the drought itself was perceived to have little to no effect on livestock output. Although there was perceived to be an improvement in output after administration during the rains, it was not possible to attribute changes to anthelmintic [worm medicine] use because of the improvement in concurrent pasture quality and water availability’. The study report advised further impact studies to better understand the value of mass deworming of livestock during drought.

Source: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) (2012) *An Assessment of the Impact of Emergency De-worming Activities*, FAO report OSRO/ KEN/104/EC – FAOR/LOA NO. 008/2012, FAO, Nairobi <https://www.livestock-emergency.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/RVC-WSPA-FAO-ILRI-2012.pdf>