

Indigenous chickens: the best “crop” for farmers in Nzaui District

Project update: April 2011



Background: Nzaui district is located in the lower parts of Eastern Province; one of the driest parts of the country. Farmers from the region have faced continuous food insecurity for many years. Indigenous chickens can however thrive in this environment. The Newcastle disease is the major constraint to keeping chickens which may result in 100% mortality of chickens

FIPS-Africa through the support of KARI's KASAL Programme established a network of 14 self-employed Village-based Advisors (VBAs) to help farmers get access to the appropriate farm inputs and information on their best management. The VBAs were involved in vaccinating chickens against Newcastle disease to prevent disease attack, and dyeing young chicks with Gentian Violet to prevent predation by avian predators. Vaccination was administered throughout the months of April-December 2009, June-December 2010 and January-February 2011.

During the months of June-December 2010, the VBA's vaccinated 8,899 chickens. A total of 793 farmers (365M, 428F) benefitted. A further 6,645 chickens were vaccinated during the January-February 2011 period; which benefitted 223 farmers (110M, 113F). Chick dyeing programmes were implemented between May-August 2010 whereby 1,147 chicks were dyed. A total of 510 farmers (190M, 320F) benefitted.

Farmers who had their chickens vaccinated did not report any death to the disease. In May 2011, farmers were visited and interviewed to determine the impact of vaccination on farmers' livelihoods. Some testimonials follow.

1. Georgina Mulinge, Mithini Village, Mutiliku Location



In April 2010, Georgina lost 66 chickens to the Newcastle disease. In June, FIPS-Africa District coordinator, Maundu, vaccinated her surviving 10 chickens. She now has 65 chickens and collects 11 eggs per day unlike before when she would collect 2. She sells one tray per week for KES 300 and keeps some of the eggs for brooding. One of her hen is sitting on 12 eggs whereas another has 12 newly-hatched chicks.

2. Sarah Katheo, Ngagani village, Matiliku Location



Serah lost her entire flock of 70 chickens in May 2009 to the Newcastle disease. The chickens were worth KES 40,000. In November 2009, she bought 3 hens and 2 cockerels. She had them vaccinated against the disease by Maundu. By December 2010, she had 45 chickens. She sold 26 chickens for KES 6,900. The farmer collects 6 eggs a day.

3. Mary Nthenya, Uuni Village, Matiliku Location



Prior to the vaccination, Mary had lost 1,000 chickens to Newcastle disease. She had the surviving 15 chickens vaccinated in June 2009 by her District coordinator, Maundu. By the end of August 2010, she had 60 chickens. She sold 25 of the chickens for KES 8,500 in September and a further 5 cockerels in December for KES 3,000. Currently, she has a flock of 45 chickens and collects 9 eggs per day. Once in a while, she slaughters a chicken for her family.

4. Mary Mutua, Wee Village, Kiliki Location



Between 2006 and 2009, Mary lost over 200 chickens to the Newcastle disease. This prompted her to have the surviving 25 chickens vaccinated against the disease in March 2010. By December 2010, she had a flock of 120 chickens. She sold 30 chickens for KES 11,850 during the same month. She is currently collecting 9 eggs per day and sells two trays of eggs after every two weeks.

5. Josephine Ndinda, Kiinze Village, Matiliku Location



Josephine lost her entire flock on two separate occasion; 30 chickens in March 2008 and 40 chickens in May 2009. They were worth KES 35,000. In June 2009, she had the remaining chickens vaccinated. By March 2011, she had 80 chickens. She sold 40 chickens in April for KES 9,000. She sells 20 eggs on weekly basis and uses the money to buy foodstuff. Three of her hens are currently incubating 10, 12 and 13 eggs.

6. Susan Masaku, Uuni Village, Mutiliku Location



Before the Newcastle disease struck, Susan had a flock of 80 chickens. In June 2009, she bought 6 hens and 2 cockerels that she had vaccinated against the disease by FIPS-Africa District coordinator, Maundu. In June 2010, the flock had increased to 60. She sold 30 chickens for KES 9,000 and a further 20 cockerels for KES 12,000 in December. Previously, Susan would collect one egg in a day but now, she gets 12 from her 36 chickens, and sells 2 trays per week for KES 600.

7. Cecilia Kavisi, Kawala Village, Kiliki Location



Prior to the vaccination, Cecilia lost over 100 chickens to Newcastle disease. She had the surviving 20 chickens vaccinated against the disease in June 2010. By December, she had 90 chickens. She sold 30 chickens for KES 10,000 in the same month. In March 2011, she sold another 13 chickens for KES 3,100. She has been using the money to pay for her children’s school fees. She also sells 10-20 eggs in the local market every week.

8. Ruth Mainga, Ngaa Village, Matiliku Location



In early 2009, Ruth lost 60 of her chickens to the Newcastle disease. She had the remaining 18 chickens vaccinated against the disease in June. One year later, she had 70 chickens. She sold 20 chickens for KES 8,000 and a further 15 in December for KES 6,000. She now has 32 chickens and collects 9 eggs a day. Since she started vaccinating, she hasn’t lost any chickens to the disease

9. Joyce Mulie, Kukoi Village, Kiliki Location



Within a period of one year, Joyce had lost over 50 chickens to Newcastle disease. She had her surviving 30 chickens vaccinated against the disease in March 2009. In August 2010, she sold 20 chickens earning her KES 9,600. By the end of December, she had 80 chickens. In February 2011, she sold 30 more chickens for KES 8,000. She re-invested some of the money in the chickens and used the rest to pay school fees for her children. Joyce collects 9 eggs per day unlike before when she would collect one or two eggs. Per fortnight, she sells two trays of eggs for KES 600. Four of her hens have just hatched 42 chicks and she has 3 more sitting on a total of 38 eggs.

10. Kilemba Munyao, Nthwani Village, Matiliku Location



In March 2011, Kilemba lost over 70 chickens to the Newcastle disease. In April, she had the surviving 27 chickens vaccinated against the disease. By December, she had 80 chickens. She sold 13 cockerels for KES 600 each, earning her KES 7,800. She also sells 10-20 eggs per week and keeps some of the eggs for brooding purposes. Two of her hens are currently incubating 13 and 14 eggs, respectively

11. Loise Kavenyi, Uuni Village, Matiliku Location



On two separate occasions, Loise lost over 105 chickens; 60 chickens in 2007 and 45 in 2008. In July 2009, she had the surviving 7 chickens vaccinated against Newcastle disease. Since then, her flock has increased to 40 chickens. In November 2010, she sold 17 chickens for KES 5,250. Unlike before when she would collect an egg per day, she now collects 5.

12. Stella Nduvyo, Kiinze Village, Matiliku Location



Stella lost a total of 130 of her chickens to Newcastle disease on two separate occasions. In June 2008, she lost 80 chickens and in March 2009, 50 chickens. Four months later, she had her surviving 18 chickens vaccinated against the disease. By December 2010, she had 36 chickens. She sold half of the flock for KES 5,900. She used the money to pay for her children's tuition and buy some household goods. Unlike before when she would collect one egg in a day, she now collects 6.

13. Ruth Kivungi, Nthwani village, Mutiliku Location



Ruth lost 80 chickens worth KES 40,000 in early 2009. Her surviving 25 chickens were vaccinated in March. When the disease struck a year later, her chickens were among the few that survived because she had them vaccinated and penned up. In December 2010, she sold 40 chickens for KES 12,000. She now has 60 chickens. She sells at least 2 trays of eggs per month. Three of her hens have just hatched 8, 9 and 11 chicks, respectively, and has two more sitting on a total of 24 eggs.