Reducing lamb and kid mortality

Key messages and solutions

• High lamb and kid mortality negatively impact the overall contribution of small ruminants to small holder livelihoods.
• Improving neonatal survival is a key strategy to increases herd productivity.
• Systematic follow-up on cases of neonatal mortality to identify causes generates evidence for decision making.
• Involving communities in developing and implementing proper reproductive and health management is very important for optimizing reproductive performance of small ruminants.
• Implement longitudinal monitoring and evaluation of lamb/kid survival rate.

Benefits

• Improved awareness on importance of good herd health management for productivity.
• Increased lamb/kid survival percentages.
• Increased small ruminants’ contribution towards rural livelihood security.
• Increased involvement of the veterinarians and extension agents in herd health management.
• Generate evidence to inform research and policy.
• Identifying of the causes of lamb/kid mortality using a scientific approach provides the basis for evidence-based decision-making.

Problem statement

• Increasing reproductive performance of small ruminants is an important pathway to reduce poverty, improve nutrition and may help to empower women given their role in small ruminant production.
• However, lamb and kid mortality is a major problem that make this goal difficult.
• The death of lambs and kids before weaning is likely among the biggest causes of economic loss to sheep and goat producers in Ethiopia. About 50% of all lambs/kids born die due to various causes.
• Thus it is important to implement targeted interventions aiming at improving lamb/kid survival through good flock management.
Evidence
- Studies elsewhere proved that targeted supplement feeding of pregnant ewes/does leads to healthier and more resilient offspring.
- Effective treatments to deal with most infectious causes of young stock mortality are known and can be made available once the causes are understood.

Suitability
- The intervention is suitable in all production systems.
- Ideally implementation is coordinated with interventions targeting abortions, breeding, internal parasites control, gender and feeding systems.

Resource requirements (low to high)

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<td>Knowledge and skills</td>
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Impact areas (low to high)

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<td>Market linkages</td>
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Value chain focus

- Input & services
- Production
- Processing
- Marketing
- Consumption

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