

PPR VACCINATION CAMPAIGN REPORT

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PESTE DES PETITS (PPR) VACCINATION CAMPAIGN (2021) _WOMEN REAR PROJECT

Introduction

In Ghana, ownership of agricultural assets such as farm land, farm machinery and large ruminants is predominant among men than women. Within Northern Ghana, the most cultural norms allow women's access to and ownership of poultry and small ruminants especially goats. Livestock vaccines are more accessible to male farmers partly because of existing gender inequalities, inadequate veterinary technicians especially women veterinarians among others. The consequence of the prevailing situation includes but not limited to; high small ruminant and poultry mortality which can be curbed through women's access to timely vaccines.

The Women Rear Project therefore aims to determine what it takes to develop a vaccine delivery system that improves the livelihood of women livestock farmers.

As part of implementing the project, peste des petits (PPR) vaccination campaign was run in June 2021, in two project districts (Pusiga and Bawku West) in the Upper East region of Ghana to protect small ruminants of project participants from the PPR virus.

PPR CAMPAIGN RESULTS

The PPR campaign delivery was launched for all ten project communities each in Pusiga and Bawku West Districts in the Upper East Region of Ghana. However, eight and nine communities in Bawku West and Pusiga districts respectively, received the PPR vaccines. Reasons for not vaccinating in the remaining three communities are highlighted under challenges.

Farmers reached under PPR Campaign

A total of 1,523 participating farmers owned small ruminants in the 17 communities out of which 0.3% and 99.7% were males and females respectively. Out of this number, 176 farmers vaccinated their animals against PPR virus representing 11.6%. Table 1 below presents farmer reach results for PPR campaigns in the project locations.

Table 1: Farmer profile under PPR campaign

| Districts | Frequency of farmers owning small | Percentage of farmers owning small | Frequency of farmers who vaccinated | Percentage of farmers who vaccinated |
|------------------|--|---|--|---|
|------------------|--|---|--|---|

| | ruminants (counts) | ruminants (%) | small ruminants (counts) | small ruminants (%) |
|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Pusiga | 756 | 49.6% | 101 | 13.4% |
| Bawku West | 767 | 50.4% | 66 | 8.6% |
| Total | 1523 | 100% | 176 | 11.6% |

Small ruminants reached under PPR Campaign

Generally, the farmers' participation the first PPR vaccination campaign in the project locations was low. The project targeted a total of 12,776 small ruminants for the PPR vaccination campaign but achieved only 1,120 representing 8.8%. Specifically, 12.5% and 6.8% of small ruminants were vaccinated against PPR virus in Pusiga and Bawku West districts respectively. Percentage wise, more animals were vaccinated in Pusiga than in Bawku West but the number of animals vaccinated in Bawku West recorded the highest as shown in Table 2 below. The variation is in the number of targeted animals, thus Pusiga has about double the target for Bawku West district. The reasons for the low number of animals vaccinated against PPR virus is highlighted under challenges encountered during the campaign delivery.

Table two: PPR vaccination delivery updates in project locations

| Districts | Targeted # of small ruminants | Actual # of small ruminants vaccinated | %small ruminants vaccinated per district |
|------------------|--|---|---|
| Pusiga | 4458 | 557 | 12.5% |
| Bawku West | 8318 | 563 | 6.8% |
| Total | 12776 | 1120 | 8.8% |

- **Challenges and Actions taken**

- **Cold chain land acquisition:** scouting for suitable land for cold chain system installation was quite challenging because the available land locations were relatively far from reach. This delayed the PPR delivery campaign in both project districts. The challenge was resolved through mutual collaboration with District Departments of Agriculture (DdoA) to install the system in their premises in both project districts.
- **Unable to restrain animals:** About 99% of the reasons for not reaching our targeted number of small ruminants were farmers' inability to restrain their animals.
 - **Reasons for farmers' inability to restrain their animals include**
 - **Farmers' inability to pay:** About 40% of farmers stated that they had no money to pay for the vaccines. We, therefore, initiated a credit model to allow farmers access vaccines, yet only 5 (3 in Pusiga and 2 in BW) farmers utilized the credit option.
 - **Cost of vaccines:** About 30% of farmers could not access vaccines because of the relatively high cost of vaccines. Farmers could not differentiate vaccination from other forms of treatment and therefore are content with treatments received from hawkers at relatively lower prices. Through constant sensitization over a period of time, farmers' perceptions will change.
 - **Extensive system of animal rearing:** about 95% of farmers practice an extensive farming system where no structures are built to confine animals. Two communities in Bawku West (Salpiiga and Galaka communities) for eg. could not get their animals vaccinated because they were far from homes and reach. Although farmers were pre-informed and accepted our visitation, the farmers were reluctant to restrain their animals even with the help of our vet officers.
 - **Farmer attitude about free service:** about 50% of farmers deliberately release their animals because they prefer free products to paid products. A COVID-19 relief package in the form of livestock drugs were freely delivered in the project areas and recorded over 70% of participation of farmers, but farmers' participation in the paid PPR vaccination was low. This highlights farmers' availability and participation in free services

compared to paid services.

- **Lack of awareness on vaccination:** About 80% of farmers lack knowledge on the importance of livestock vaccination (PPR) which contributed to the low uptake of the PPR vaccines. Although PPR campaign education was conducted before and during campaign delivery to educate farmers on the need to participate in the PPR campaign, we realized the impact will emanate over time because technology (vaccination) adoption occurs over time.
- **Gender inequality:** mostly, men are the sole decision-makers in the project locations, and in Northern Ghana at large, PPR vaccination campaign could not be held in one community in the Pusiga district because the women farmers stated that their husbands were against the vaccination activity. A further probe revealed that the husbands engaged public vets and community health workers to attend to their livestock because of the delay in our campaign delivery.

- **Lessons**

- **Farmer interest in the campaign:** some men and women showed interest in the PPR vaccination campaign. There were instances where women project participants with no interest in the campaign were motivated and educated by their husbands. On the other hand, we encountered situations where women participants were interested and willing to vaccinate their animals but did not have their husbands' support to do so. This clearly shows the need for more sensitization on livestock vaccination delivery.
- **Men should be involved in women's empowerment and livelihood improvement programs/projects:** the successful implementation of women's livelihood improvement programs requires men/husbands engagement. It is anticipated that subsequent gender transformative activities that will be undertaken by the project will strengthen the engagement with men.
- **Need to bundle vaccines with other inputs:** bundling vaccines with agro-inputs has proven to increase vaccine uptake in locations Cowtribe has piloted the scheme . Farmers begin to realize improvement in livestock health with time when the only condition for accessing agro-inputs is by allowing for livestock vaccination.
- **Sensitization on livestock vaccination:** More sensitization needs to be done on livestock vaccination in the project sites because our engagement with farmers revealed

that farmers could not differentiate between prophylactic treatment, local treatment, and vaccination.

- **Farmer preference for self-medicating animals:** indigenous knowledge plays a vital role in livestock farming in our project locations. We found out that farmers treat their sick animals locally in situations where they cannot access veterinary care either because of financial constraints or the unavailability of vet technicians.
- **Encourage subsidies on livestock vaccines:** subsidies on livestock vaccines can help reduce the cost of vaccines for farmers and boost vaccine uptake.