

Abstract

In Kenya, about 80,000 dairy goats are reared and about eighty percent of these are reared in Mt Kenya Region. They provide a quick source of milk for consumption or sale and are thus of immense value especially to poor households. The fact that they can be reared in small land holdings is especially useful in these highly populated areas. Although there has been a lot of research on problems faced by dairy cattle farmers, there has been little on problems faced by dairy goat farmers. In a cross-sectional survey, one hundred farmers were interviewed on major constraints and 100 milk samples obtained and analyzed. The main problems were lack of market of milk and goats, problems of buck rotation, unavailability of commercial feeds formulated for dairy goats and poor group dynamics. The main health problems are pneumonia, mastitis, stunted growth, and diarrhoea. The main pathogens from milk samples were Gram positive, coagulase positive and negative staphylococcus. Others were streptococcus spp and actinomyces spp. Further investigation is underway but indications are that coping strategies including farmer awareness, treatment and control measures need to be developed in order to enhance the productivity of goats in the region.