

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The demand for pork is increasing in Africa with the increasing need for animal protein in the household diets. But pork safety and quality remains a pervasive concern that needs intervention to assure consumers of protection from Porcine Cysticercosis (PC) contamination. This study assessed among farmers, butcher-owners and consumers in Western Kenya about their awareness, attitudes and perceptions about safety practices regarding risk of PC.

**Materials and methods:** Data were obtained using structured questionnaires in cross-sectional survey interviews with 162 farmers, 26 butcher-owners and 92 consumers from Busia and Kakamega Counties. The data were in binary response, so were analyzed with Chi - square test.

**Results:** Only two in ten farmers had knowledge of *Taenia solium* parasite (24.1%), risk factors in PC transmission (21.6%) and could associate pig management system with PC (17.3%). A larger proportion ( $p < 0.01$ ) of the butcher owners perceived pork from slaughter slabs (76.9%) and home slaughters (73.1%) as presenting high risks but considered pork from the butcheries (69.1%) and eateries (61.5%) as presenting no risks. Among the consumers, majority strongly agreed ( $p < 0.05$ ) that pork in the market (85.9%), from slaughter slabs (92.4%) and butchery (81.5%) was safe but a larger proportion strongly disagreed that pork from the eateries exposed them to cysticercosis (64.1%).

**Conclusion:** The awareness about risks of PC was low among farmers. Butcher-owners and consumers perceived pork safety differently along the value chain. Strengthening public education about PC risks and pork safety among all actors in the pork value chain in Western Kenya is recommended.

**Keywords:** Pork; *T. solium*; porcine cysticercosis; quality; safety; value chain actors.