

ABSTRACT

East Coast fever (ECF), caused by a protozoon and transmitted by ticks, is the most critical cattle disease in Eastern and Southern Africa. Farmers have used the Infection and Treatment Method (ITM) to control ECF in Kenya since 2012. Yet, the differences in terms of perceptions and benefits accrued between men and women remain unclear. This study sought to understand how men and women perceive ITM effectiveness and to evaluate its impact on their livelihoods. The study included 29 gender-disaggregated focus group discussions with cattle keepers, the transcripts of which were subjected to systematic text analysis. This analysis indicates that women are highlighting the cost of the vaccine and inadequate awareness as the main obstacles to ITM adoption, while men describe the package size of 40 doses as the greatest constraint. Women benefit from increased milk sales resulting from growing herds and shifts to dairy breeds, but their workload increases with more animals to manage. Men benefit from additional cattle sales and extend their involvement in milking and controlling milk sales. The results demonstrate that vaccinating with ITM has the potential to transform the livelihoods of cattle keepers. However, appropriate gender-sensitive strategies should be put in place to enable both men and women to benefit from the vaccine while avoiding increases in women's workload and intra-household gender competition.

Keywords:

- **Gender**
- **infection and treatment method**
- **East Coast fever**
- **cattle**
- **livelihoods**
- **Kenya**