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Role and Value of Milk in Diets of Children in Pastoral Community

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In Laisamis, malnutrition (GAM) is 17% with highest burden in dry season. Targeted feeding interventions have given minimal results. Children are nutritionally vulnerable and due to poor post-harvest management excess milk production spoils and wasted. Milk for nutrition project aims to maximize benefits and utilize milk and products as preventative approach to (1) improve nutrition status of 200 children 6-59 months and 100 pregnant lactating mothers (2) improve household income. Key interventions; building capacity of households on animal husbandry practices, milk value addition, innovative techniques for milk transportation, processing, storage and sensitize households to consume milk and products. Methods: The project is implemented in Laisamis (intervention) and North Horr (control), Marsabit County. Descriptive cross-sectional design utilizes quantitative and qualitative data to compare impact. Results indicate milk household production increased twofold (40 litres) while quality improved due better milk handling practices including testing[1]. Caregivers (265) process butter, ghee, yoghurt and cheese using simple technology. Awareness (96%), access and consumption of milk products increased-153 children and 97 PLM. Overall nutrition status of children receiving milk stabilized over the dry season. Conclusion: Nutrition status of children consuming milk & products improved in intervention site. Scale up of this interventions is most sustainable way to reduce malnutrition.

[1] Milk test done by community on site include: California mastitis test (CMT), Clot-on-boiling test (COB) test, and physical: Solid matter, smell, colour and foreign matter, lactometer tests