

Pastoral women’s information needs and gaps in milk marketing: A case study from Walda, Northern Kenya

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Background

- Pastoral women’s collective action (milk marketing) support income generation, strengthen social ties and allows creation of context based marketing strategies
- Income from the milk sales directly contribute to household welfare
- In this study location, there are three milk marketing groups classified into two categories
 - M1 (Trained group): One formally registered Self Help Group (SHG) trained in milk value addition by local institutions (goes by the name “Machesa Walda women group”)
 - M2: Two informal, unregistered women groups received no training or external support (“Darara” and “Baliti/New Dawn”)

Research question: What are the information needs and gaps of pastoral women involved in the milk marketing value chain?

Methodology



Introductory session at Walda



Focus Group Discussion



Role-play with Machesa SHG (M1)

Introductory and feedback session and Participatory methods including Daily Activity Clocks (n=3), Focus Group Discussions (n=2), Role-plays (n=6), and semi-structured interviews (n=3) (involving 41 Borana women in total), and analysis of data using MAXQDA

*Photos were taken with the informed verbal consent of all participants

Conclusion

- Information needs and gaps differ widely between the women's milk marketing groups within the study area. These differences are influenced by the products they sell, their marketing methods, and external support.
- Trained women's group (M1) adopts more structured and strategic marketing practices, sell a wider range of value-added products, while untrained women's groups (M2) focus more on basic products and transactional elements, revealing that knowledge built after the training may enhance business planning, innovation and influence business sustainability.
- **Recommendation:** If training programs are implemented in only part of a village or with one selected group, parallel mechanisms for peer-to-peer learning or community knowledge sharing ought to be established.

Study area



Northern Kenya



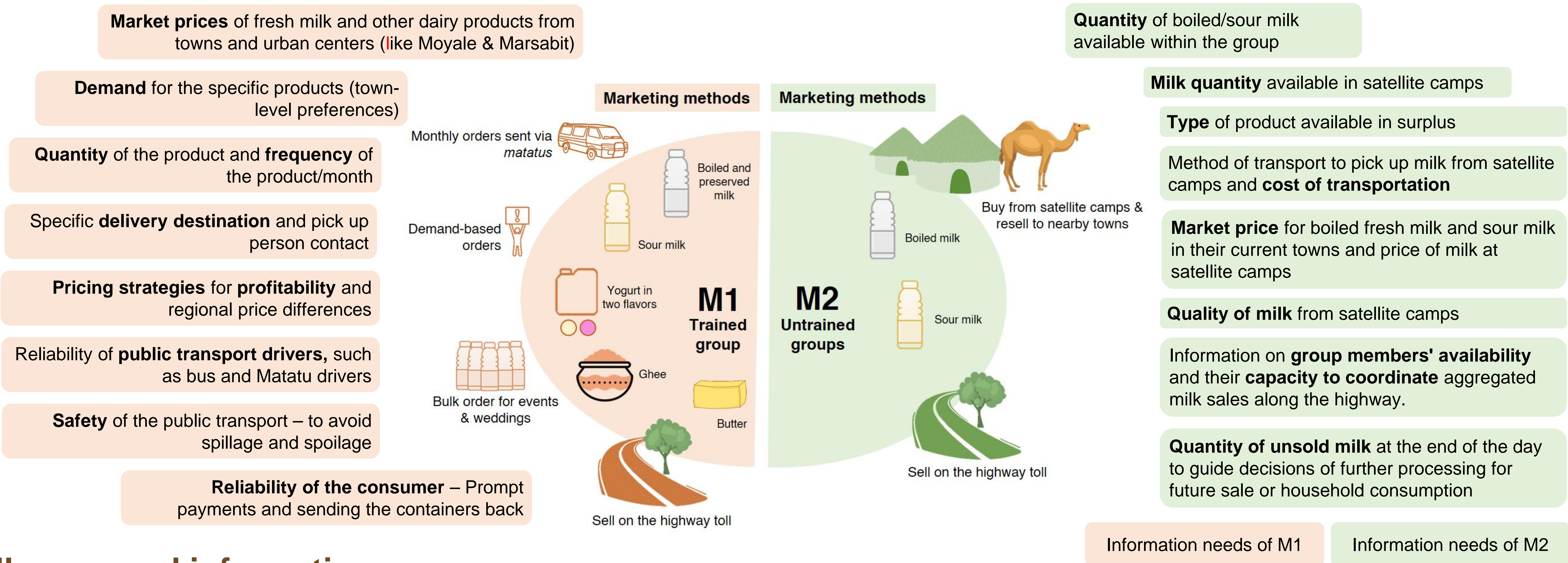
Location: Walda

*Maps created using QGIS

- Walda, Sololo, Northern Kenya
- Comprises around 450 households with 80 Female headed households (June 2024)
- Home to Borana pastoralists who keep cattle, camel and small ruminants

Results

Information needs (Information requirements of the groups to make informed marketing decisions, and improve their marketing methods)



Challenges and information gaps

- Challenges represent material, structural, and logistical barriers that directly affect milk marketing. Despite their efforts, these constraints often require support for either local innovations or collaborative action.
- Information gaps can be understood as missing links in the communication system of market actors or a lack of accessible information and skills to manage milk marketing effectively. They prevent women from optimizing milk sale profits and reducing risks.



Women waiting under the shade near highway toll to sell milk

Within/between the groups

Low aggregated milk volume to transport: Total volume from group aggregation is not sufficient to market to different sub-locations or towns.

Absence of storage infrastructure like storage freezers

Lack of access to market information due to information and skill inequality within the community

Lack of access to technical knowledge on milk processing and value addition: M2 groups wanted to learn milk processing but M1 group viewed them as a competition, therefore not willing to share their skills.

Transportation/During transit

High transportation costs - reduced profit margins

Loss or spoilage during transportation

No system for confirming quality and quantity of milk post-transportation

No tracking or communication systems to monitor the milk during transit

At the delivery location – post-delivery

Legend

- Mentioned by M1 (trained group)
- Mentioned by M2 (untrained groups)

Challenges

Information gaps

Delayed and denied payments

False spoilage claims

Fail to return the empty containers

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For further questions, please contact
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