Abstract

The effects of replacing milk with maize/field bean gruel on calf performance on-farm were investigated. There were no statistical differences in calf growth rates between the gruel and the control although the gruel calves performed better than the control. Fifty percent of the calves attained growth rates greater than or equal to 300 g per day on average, the farmers saved 2 to 3 litres of milk per calf per day. This translates to a saving of between KES 3290 to ICES 4935 (1 USD = ICES 77). These savings range from 145 and 218 percent higher than those through early weaning schedules do. All the farmers in the experiment were very positive about the gains brought about by the gruel. According to the farmers, the major benefits from gruel feeding were (i) the increase in available milk for home consumption and/or for sale and (ii) positive performance of calves without any adverse effects. In terms of technology transfer, these farmers were already training their neighbours on the use of gruel to rear calves.