

Field Notes – Livestock Welfare, Supply Chain Management, and Logistics in Rural Kenya

Registry Ref:	WH – 002 – MHJ – KE	Disciplinary Focus:	Biology, Ecology, Geography, Zoology
Geographical Location	Kitege, Kasigau, Kenya	Target Entity:	Meat goats on rural homesteads
Project Timeline:	Visit-July 2026 (14yrs) Log-Oct 2026 (14yrs)	Media Link:	Goat Drenching in Rural Kasigau
Operational Framework:	One Health	Collab:	Camps International, Kenyan Livestock Agents

Synopsis:

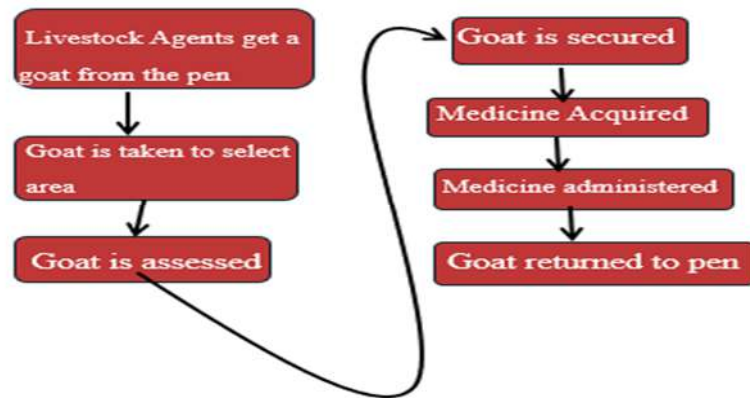
In July 2026, I spent a month in Kenya with Camps International where – along with around forty other 15-18yrs olds – I learned about marine ecology, environmental issues, livestock welfare, animal conservation, community outreach, Maasi culture – and so much more. Work we conducted included microplastics surveys on Diani Beach with Olive Ridley Project, diving off artificial reefs with Reefolution, and drenching goats with Kenyan Livestock agents. This journal entry focuses on the goat drenching process and the reasons behind it.

Our goal for this project was for our team (Team Umeme) to drench – or deworm – as many goats as possible within a four hour window. In total we drenched 148 goats as we travelled on foot between eight different homesteads in rural Kitege, Kasigau, (near Tsavo). The homesteads had herds ranging from around eight to thirty goats, with some homesteads also rearing cows and chickens.

The goats were meat goats – not dairy goats – raised to be sold at market or consumed by the family, therefore their only value was in their weight.

Stage 1: Learning how to drench

Workflow Chart:



At the first homestead, which kept a herd of approximately twenty goats, a member of the Camp Kitege staff demonstrated the procedure before we began drenching the animals ourselves.

We were told we would be working in pairs, with each member of the pair having designated roles. We were shown how one member of the pair would lead a goat from the pen, either by holding its ear or by guiding it between our legs while walking to our individual work areas. Then the other member of the pair would secure the goat between their legs to prevent it from escaping whilst their partner dosed the animal.



Goats in one of the homestead pens

This method was not entirely foolproof, and several goats broke free over the course of each visit.

Each returned to its pen, however, where it recognised a reliable source of food, water, and shelter

Students and expedition leaders/school staff were not permitted to enter the pens, so local staff or the farmers themselves brought out each goat and passed it to one member of the pair. The other person assessed the animal's size, weight, and age to

determine whether it required 3 ml, 5 ml, or 10 ml of medicine. A member of the camp staff checked this assessment and dispensed the dose. Ideally, the drenching partner returned to the designated area before the goat arrived, although in practice this did not always happen.

Once the goat was secured between one partner's legs, the person administering the drench knelt beside it and placed their index finger and thumb on either side of its jaw, where it meets the skull. Goats have a dental pad rather than upper front teeth, and applying slight pressure at this point encouraged the animal to open its mouth without allowing it to bite.



It is important to emphasise that, when carried out correctly, the procedure is quick and painless. The aim is to keep the goat as calm as possible while protecting it from harmful parasites. The handler must use sufficient control without becoming unnecessarily forceful: too little restraint can prolong the procedure, increase the animal's distress, and prevent the dose from being taken.

When the goat opened its mouth, the person conducting the drenching inserted the syringe far enough to reduce the possibility of the medicine being spat out. Once the dose had been given, the handler could relax their grip and reassure the animal by stroking it.



Monty and Jason drenching a goat while Harry (in green) marks its side to prevent a second dose and maintain an accurate tally. likely number 124.

When space became available, we guided the goat back to the pen, where the livestock agents returned it to the herd

Stage 2: Learning about the Goats



The practical work also raised broader questions about the goats we were treating and the importance of drenching within the local farming system.

Because Kitege is a semi-arid area, the goats kept there are raised primarily for meat rather than dairy production. They are consequently lean and hardy, but the loss of body weight to parasites, or the death of an animal as a result of infection, can have a serious impact on a household.

For example, a goat that has been treated for worms can be worth twice as much at market, while an infected animal may lose up to 40% of its body weight. Drenching therefore protects both the health of the herd and the farmer's livelihood. On commercial farms, treatment may follow a seasonal calendar structured as follows:

- **January–March:** During the long dry season, parasite infection rates fall sharply. Larvae may survive on remaining vegetation and in faecal pellets, but high temperatures and low humidity cause many to desiccate and die, reducing their ability to infect goats. Some large commercial farms may carry out pre-emptive mass drenching in preparation for the long wet season.
- **April–June:** The long wet season brings both mass and targeted drenching on commercial farms. Parasite populations increase rapidly because vegetation, humidity, and stagnating water create optimal conditions for parasite transmission. In rural areas such as Kitege, however, treatment is often impossible for two reasons:

- Local transport routes are often made from compacted earth rather than paved surfaces. During the rainy season, these roads can become impassable, preventing the vehicles that carry medicine from reaching remote homesteads.
- The total cost of treatment includes both the medicine and, in many cases, the attendance of a Kenyan livestock agent. The latter can make the overall cost comparable to the market value of a single goat. Treating a large herd allows this expense to be spread across many animals, but the same arrangement may be unaffordable for a small homestead.
- **July–August:** This is the main breeding season. The condition of the herd influences both the likelihood of does becoming pregnant and the survival of newborn kids. Roads become somewhat more accessible, although parasite pressure remains relatively high.
- **September–October:** The short dry season follows breeding, when adult goats may be depleted and young animals can be particularly vulnerable to stunting caused by parasites. As pastures dry, the risk of hoof rot decreases, but the remaining vegetation contains less water, fewer nutrients and minerals, and is more difficult to digest.
- **November–December:** The short wet season heralds some of the highest casualty rates of the year. Although the rains are less intense than those from April to June, parasite populations can still increase quickly. Goats may enter this period in poor condition after the short dry season, making infection especially dangerous. Commercial farms can respond with pre-emptive mass or targeted drenching before the following dry season.



Communities that cannot easily access government or veterinary services benefit substantially from support provided by organisations such as Camps International. Free drenching carried out every three months helps protect both livestock and household livelihoods. For those of us taking part, the project also provided valuable, practical fieldwork experience, and it became one of the most memorable days of my month-long expedition in Kenya.



This image is of a dog on one of the homesteads eating a pair of bull testicles - given that farming in Kitege is subsistence farming, muscle meat and most offal will be eaten by the family, with bones used for broth or various jewelry applications, hides used in practical or decorative areas in the home or sold to market, and unwanted resources given to the dogs.

I hope this field note has provided a useful account of the experience. Until the next video, field note, or short:

STAY WILD!