

VELD SANITATION

Good Sanitation and Hygiene Practices for Herders in the Veld



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AFRICA BIODIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE GROUP



COVER PHOTO: © Trond Larsen

CAPTION: With Veld Sanitation, herders safeguard the health of their herds, themselves and surrounding communities.



This manual was made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-A-15-00060 - WCS. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. This publication was produced by Conservation International and Conservation South Africa on behalf of ABCG.

INTRODUCTION

The “One Health” initiative integrates water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities with livestock improvement and conservation programs to improve the health of people, animals and ecosystems. Conservation South Africa (CSA) is applying this framework in the upper reaches of the Mzimvubu Catchment to improve water resources sustainability and resilience to threats, including climate change with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG). Water points throughout the country are linked to natural resources that are being degraded and have high bacterial counts from poorly managed/maintained upstream sanitation infrastructure, resulting in illness outbreaks downstream. Livestock also use the same water points, particularly in times of drought (which happen more frequently due to climate change), increasing the chance of animal-human disease transmissions. These areas often have poor sanitation and hygiene facilities and awareness. Disease outbreaks are a regular occurrence and place significant pressure on the few health facilities and services available. Livestock herders need training on good hygiene practices for themselves and the herds they manage to reduce contamination and degradation of water sources.

Informed by the health baseline and monitoring protocol established in early 2017, One Health aims to empower the livestock herders to improve sanitation, hygiene and grazing practices for human and livestock health. Consultations with local sanitation experts and Alfred Nzo District Municipality (ANDM) officials have indicated that water quality is being impacted by herders and livestock in the upper reaches of the high yield catchments. Stock posts, often located near water, are also point sources of contamination. With education, training, and the right incentives, these impacts could be reduced.

CSA’s intention is to promote behavior change around hygiene practices and improve people’s understanding of how their sanitation and hygiene practices are connected to protecting water resources. This manual is the basis for a capacity building program for peer-to-peer education on improved sanitation and hygiene practices for herders—to protect their health, the health of the surrounding communities and water resources—which CSA calls “veld sanitation”.

ENGAGING IN A DISCUSSION ABOUT VELD SANITATION

Start off with discussing the linkages between water, livestock and health (people and animal health). Some questions to pose to get the discussion going could include:

- Where do you get your water when out in the veld?
- Do animals drink water from the same water source as humans or different ones? Why?
- Where do you defecate when you are away from a latrine?
- Does it matter where animals defecate?
- Is it important to wash your hands?
- Are there any tips to keep in mind about handwashing?

Because water, livestock and health are connected, action must be taken to protect human and livestock well-being. Herders play an important role in safeguarding themselves, their herds and surrounding communities from harm. One way to be aware of these connections and act on them is to practice good sanitation and hygiene behaviors, especially if out in the veld. CSA calls this veld sanitation.

Veld sanitation is centered on 6 key messages at the intersection of good practices for sanitation, hygiene practices, land-use and water resource protection. Each of the key messages has three sections: “Why it matters”, which offers an explanation, “What to do”, which focuses on practical actions that can be taken and “keywords” which is intended to help trainers remember key concepts. Let’s get started!

MESSAGE 1: KNOW WHAT PATHOGENS ARE AND WHAT CAN THEY DO TO PEOPLE AND ANIMALS.

Why it matters: Pathogens are very tiny microorganisms—so small they cannot be seen by the naked eye—that cause disease. They can make people and animals sick.

What to do:

1. The best way to prevent the spread of pathogens and protect yourself from disease is to wash your hands with soap and clean water.

Keywords: illness, disease, soap and water

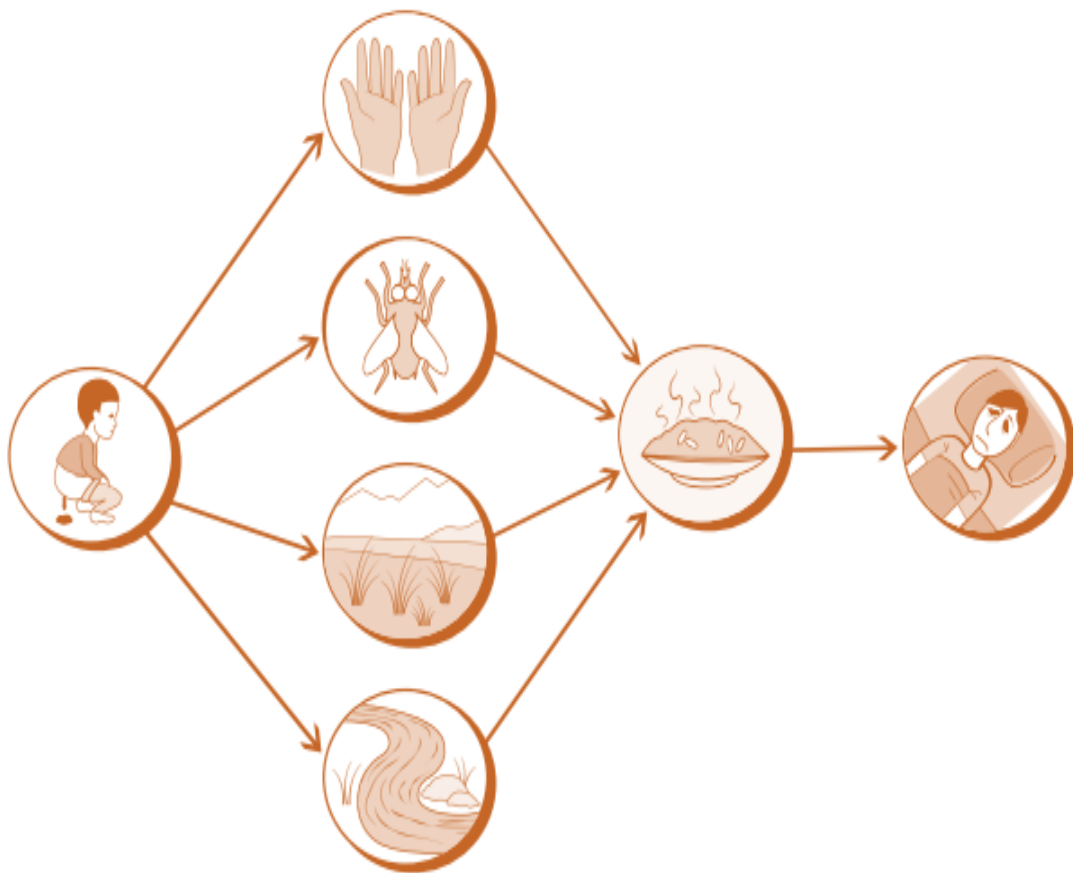


Photo credit: UNICEF—WASH in Schools / https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CFS_WASH_E_web.pdf

MESSAGE 2: WASH YOUR HANDS PROPERLY.

Why it matters: Knowing the “proper way” to wash your hands ensures the practice of handwashing is as effective as possible.

What to do:

1. Use hand soap or—if soap is unavailable—ash or clean, dry soil.
2. To wash properly, follow these steps:
 - a. Wet your hands.
 - b. Put soap on your wet hands.
 - c. Scrub all sides of your hands, including - palms, back of your hands, in between your fingers—for 20 seconds.
 - d. Rinse well with clean water, and
 - e. Dry them with a clean cloth or waving your hands in the air to dry them.
3. Try singing the “Happy Birthday” song 2 times to help you remember to spend 20 seconds washing your hands.

Keywords: handwashing, protection, soap, ash, effective

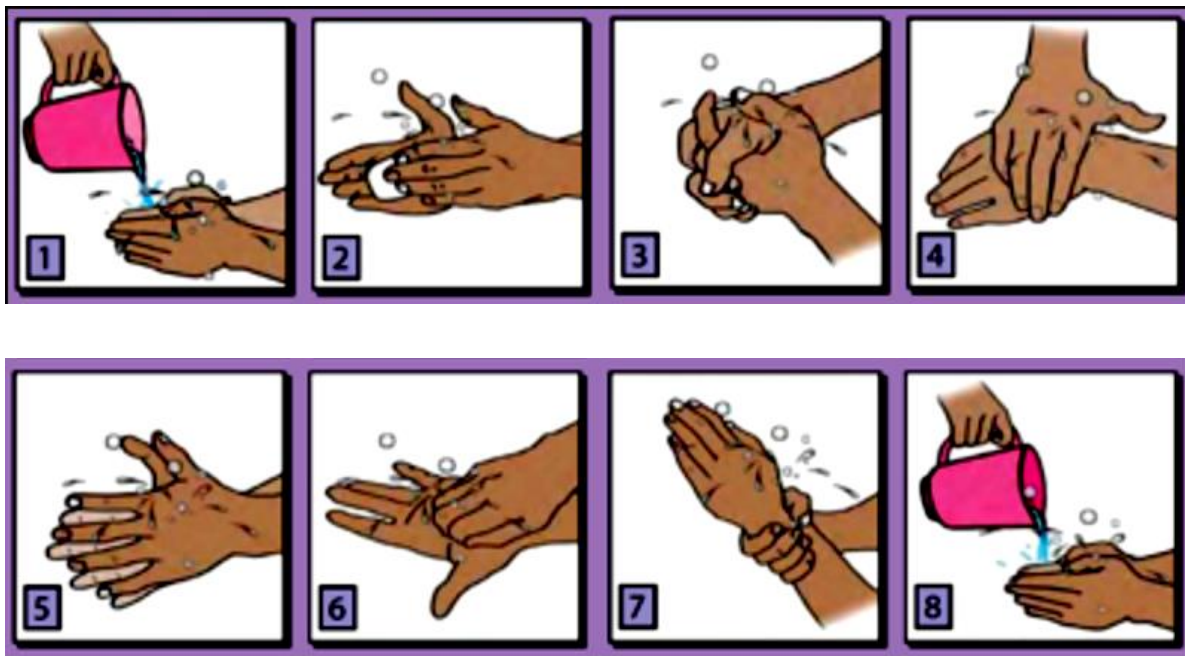


Photo credit: Another Option / <https://another-option.com/a-simple-prevention-practice-for-a-complex-illness/>

MESSAGE 3: REMEMBER THE CRITICAL TIMES FOR HANDWASHING.

Why it matters: The best way to prevent the spread of pathogens and protect yourself from disease is handwashing. There are 5 times that are especially important for protecting yourself and others from pathogens.

What to do:

- I. Wash your hands with soap and clean water frequently, especially:
 - a. Before preparing food or eating.
 - b. After defecating.
 - c. After returning home from the mountain.
 - d. After changing a nappy or cleaning a child.
 - e. Before feeding a child.

Keywords: protection, 5 critical times, handwashing



Photo credit: Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology/ <http://resources.cawst.org/>

MESSAGE 4: BE AWARE THAT WATER CAN BE “CONTAMINATED” OR UNCLEAN EVEN IF IT LOOKS CLEAN.

Why it matters: Water contamination happens when water becomes impure from pollution or pathogens. Sometimes water that is contaminated looks clean, but it can still be harmful. Water contamination can happen at the water source, while transporting water and/or at the household level. Water source contamination can happen due to the following:

- Human waste (poo) is washed into streams when it rains, usually from defecating in the open.
- Pit latrines that are constructed without considering water—latrines can contaminate water sources and rain water can wash what’s in the latrine into water channels.
- Rubbish in water channels.
- Livestock or other animals—drinking, defecating near or degrading soils near water sources.
- Cattle dip tanks.

What to do:

1. Use latrines or dig a hole for your feces and cover it with soil when unable to access a latrine.
2. Construct latrines away from water sources and where water naturally floods.
3. Handle trash, human waste and animal waste carefully— including use of latrines, dig a hole and cover feces when not near a latrine and proper dumping of rubbish.
4. Designate different springs for livestock and other springs for human use.
5. Protect water for human use from animal contamination by fencing areas where livestock are not permitted.
6. Dumping dip tank waste far from water channels, springs and streams and encouraging other herders to use the same site to dump their dip tank waste.

Keywords: water contamination, latrines, defecation, rubbish, dip tanks, protect water, fences

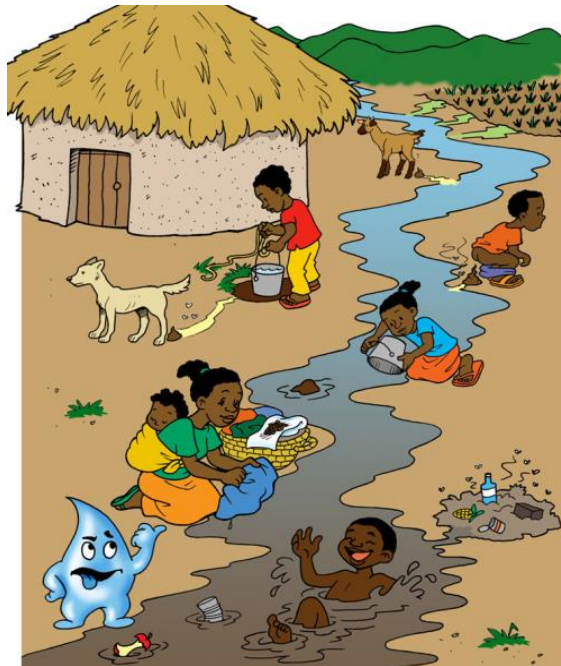


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MESSAGE 5: BE AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER HERDERS.

Why it matters: Livestock herders spent most of their day in the veld where there are no latrines or structures to wash hands. If they have poor sanitation and hygiene practices, they are at increased risk for exposure to pathogens. The behavior of herders also impacts the health of people in nearby villages because they herd their animals through mountains and open fields, where springs, streams and rivers start.

What to do:

1. Use latrines at stock posts or bury feces when unable to access a latrine.
2. Wash your hands as soon as you are able—ideally at the 5 critical times for handwashing—but especially when you return to the homestead.
3. Bring clean water for drinking.
4. Separate your drinking water and hand wash water.
5. Pass on these practices to your peers.

Keywords: latrines, village health, bury feces, separate water, handwashing, share knowledge

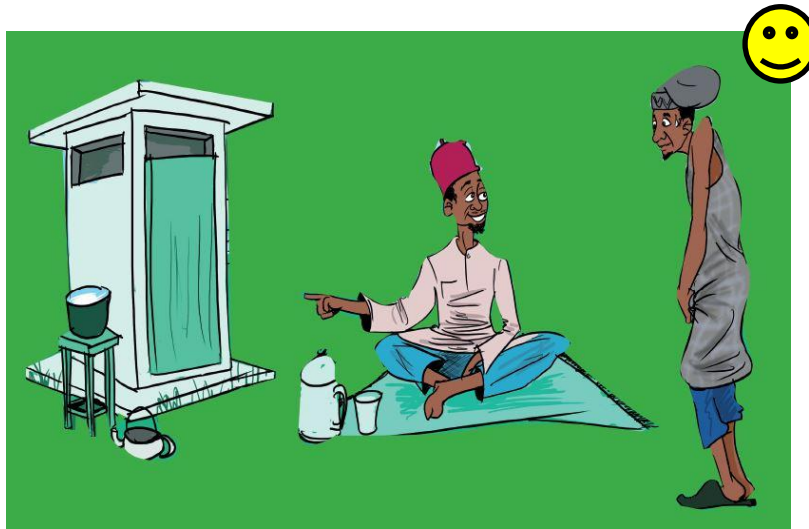


Photo credit: World Vision/
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MESSAGE 6: PREVENT RUBBISH—LIKE DEAD ANIMALS, DIRTY PAMPERS, AND OTHER RUBBISH FROM THE HOME—FROM BEING DUMPED IN WATER CHANNELS

Why it matters: Dumping rubbish into water channels makes people and animals sick and allows pathogens to spread.

What to do:

1. When out on the mountain, keep rubbish until it can be disposed of in a village trash site or— if that's not possible—dig a hole and cover rubbish with soil so that cannot potentially wash into water channels.
2. Work with your village members to decide where rubbish can be collected and put into a hole in the ground.
3. Remind peers not to dump rubbish in water channels.
4. If your village does not have a system for disposing rubbish, dig a hole within your homestead for rubbish, as far from people as possible.

Keywords: keep rubbish, dig holes, rubbish location, community or homestead collection site



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<https://www.csir.co.za/integrated-waste-management>

Thank you – Enkosi Kakhulu!